A CRITICAL EVALUATION OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN POLICY ON RELIGION AND EDUCATION (2003)

By

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submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of

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at the

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

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JOINT PROMOTER: PROF J.S. KRÜGER

JUNE 2008
I declare that

A CRITICAL EVALUATION OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN
POLICY ON RELIGION AND EDUCATION (2003)

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.

Signed

17 June 2008
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND DEDICATION</th>
<th>10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF FIGURES</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF TABLES</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROLOGUE TO THE THESIS</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHAPTER 1</strong> TOWARDS A CRITICAL EVALUATION OF THE POLICY</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1 INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH QUESTION</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 A PERSONAL NARRATIVE</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 THE POLICY IN A BROADER PHILOSOPHICAL CONTEXT</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3.1 Postmodernity</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3.2 Religion in a post secular age</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3.3 Educational policy and the nation-state: looking for cohesion and allegiance</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4 OVERVIEW OF THE CHAPTERS TO FOLLOW</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5 (IN)CONCLUSIONS</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHAPTER 2</strong> IN SEARCH OF A METHODOLOGY</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1 INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS AS A SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONIST APPROACH</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3 POLICY EVALUATION</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4 EXPLORING THEORY-BASED EVALUATION AS HERMENEUTICAL FRAMEWORK</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5 POLICY ANALYSIS</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6 ETHICAL AND QUALITY CONSIDERATIONS</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.7 NEXT STEPS</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.8 CONCLUSIONS</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPeR 3</td>
<td>TOWARDS A CRITICAL EVALuATION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>INTRODUCING CRITICAL THEORY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>INTRODUCING CRITICAL PEDAGOGY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>TOWARDS A CRITICAL EDUCATIONAL FRAMEWORK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>THE STUDY OF RELIGION: AN OVERVIEW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5.1</td>
<td>The discourses in and surrounding Religionswissenschaft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5.2</td>
<td>Approaches to the study of religion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5.2.1</td>
<td>Anthropological approaches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5.1.2</td>
<td>Feminist approaches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5.1.3</td>
<td>Phenomenological approaches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5.2.4</td>
<td>Philosophical approaches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5.1.5</td>
<td>Psychological approaches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5.1.6</td>
<td>Sociological approaches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5.1.7</td>
<td>Theological approaches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5.1.8</td>
<td>Critical approaches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>CRITICAL THEORY, EDUCATION, AND THE STUDY OF RELIGION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6.1</td>
<td>The eschatology of the Frankfurt School as reference point</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6.2</td>
<td>Critical theory and the role and content of education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6.3</td>
<td>Critical theory and the study of religion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>CONCLUSION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section</td>
<td>Title</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>TOWARDS AN ARCHEAOLOGY OF IDEOLOGIES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>A SHORT OVERVIEW OF THE SOCIO-HISTORICAL CONTEXT PRIOR TO 1994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3.1</td>
<td>In the beginning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3.2</td>
<td>Native and Bantu Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3.3</td>
<td>Christian National Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3.4</td>
<td>Dismantling apartheid education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3.5</td>
<td>Transition through transformation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>THE TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION (TRC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4.1</td>
<td>A short overview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4.2</td>
<td>Reactions to the TRC: glimpses of developing patterns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4.3</td>
<td>Implications for the role of education Post-TRC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>PREPARATION FOR THE FIRST CURRICULUM MOMENT – CLEANSING OF THE CURRICULUM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>THE FIRST CURRICULUM MOMENT – CURRICULUM 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>CONCLUSION</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 5
THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE POLICY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>LOCATING THE POLICY</td>
<td>244</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.1</td>
<td>The constitutional state</td>
<td>247</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.2</td>
<td>The cultural state</td>
<td>248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.3</td>
<td>The transformational state</td>
<td>249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.4</td>
<td>The symbolic state</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>AN OVERVIEW OF THE PROCESSES RESULTING IN THE POLICY</td>
<td>254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.1</td>
<td>The processes preceding 1994</td>
<td>255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.2</td>
<td>Processes post-1994: the Bengu Committee</td>
<td>260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.3</td>
<td>Minister Asmal: a new draft Policy and values-education</td>
<td>262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.4</td>
<td>The Review of Curriculum 2005</td>
<td>278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.5</td>
<td>Public discourses and participation</td>
<td>284</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.6</td>
<td>SACRED: the process and public debates</td>
<td>291</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>AN ANALYSIS OF PATTERNS AND TRENDS</td>
<td>299</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>CONCLUSION</td>
<td>304</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CHAPTER 6
AN ANALYSIS OF THE POLICY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>PROLOGUE</td>
<td>305</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>INTRODUCTION TO THE CHAPTER</td>
<td>306</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>A POST-STRUCTURAL APPROACH</td>
<td>306</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>THE POLICY – RANGE AND DEFINITIONS</td>
<td>308</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.4.1</td>
<td>The range and application of the Policy</td>
<td>308</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.4.2</td>
<td>An analysis of the definitions used in the Policy</td>
<td>310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.4.2.1</td>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section</td>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.4.2.2</td>
<td>Confessional or sectarian approaches</td>
<td>314</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.4.2.3</td>
<td>Religion Education</td>
<td>315</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.4.2.4</td>
<td>Religious Observances</td>
<td>320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.4.2.5</td>
<td>Religious Instruction</td>
<td>320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.4.2.6</td>
<td>Religious Studies</td>
<td>321</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.4.2.7</td>
<td>The school day</td>
<td>321</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>ANALYSING THE POLICY ARGUMENT</td>
<td>322</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.5.1</td>
<td>Policy information</td>
<td>323</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.5.1.1</td>
<td>Policy problem</td>
<td>323</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.5.1.2</td>
<td>Policy alternatives</td>
<td>327</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.5.1.3</td>
<td>Policy warrants and backing</td>
<td>333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.5.1.4</td>
<td>The Policy claim</td>
<td>337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>POLICY IMPLICATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION</td>
<td>342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.6.1</td>
<td>Professional educators</td>
<td>342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.6.1.1</td>
<td>Their roles</td>
<td>342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.6.1.2</td>
<td>Attitude</td>
<td>343</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.6.1.3</td>
<td>Pedagogy</td>
<td>343</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.6.1.4</td>
<td>Religious literacy</td>
<td>344</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.6.1.5</td>
<td>Integration and creativity</td>
<td>345</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.6.2</td>
<td>Guest facilitators</td>
<td>346</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.6.3</td>
<td>The role of higher education</td>
<td>346</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.6.4</td>
<td>The development of resources</td>
<td>347</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.6.5</td>
<td>The role of religious and voluntary bodies</td>
<td>348</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.6.5.1</td>
<td>Development of the curriculum</td>
<td>348</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.6.5.2</td>
<td>Development of support materials</td>
<td>348</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.6.5.3</td>
<td>Support as guest facilitators</td>
<td>349</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.6.5.4</td>
<td>Extra-curricular involvement</td>
<td>349</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter</td>
<td>Section</td>
<td>Title</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>6.6.6</td>
<td>The role of School Governing bodies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>6.6.7</td>
<td>The role of school management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>THE LOGIC OF THE POLICY: IS THE THEORY REASONABLE?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>CONCLUSION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>THE CURRICULUM AND LEARNING PROGRAMME GUIDELINES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>AN ANALYSIS OF THE CURRICULUM AND LEARNING PROGRAMME GUIDELINES FOR LIFE ORIENTATION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>7.3.1</td>
<td>The profile of the Religion Studies learner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>7.3.2</td>
<td>Ways to attain the outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>7.4.3</td>
<td>Challenges to meaningful Religion Studies teaching and learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>7.4.4</td>
<td>Content guidelines for Religion Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>CONCLUSION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>MÜNDIGKEIT AS CRITICAL CRITERION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>THE POLICY AS CONTEXT-SPECIFIC RESPONSE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>8.3.1</td>
<td>South Africa as pluralistic society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section</td>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.3.2</td>
<td>The impact of globalisation</td>
<td>419</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.3.3</td>
<td>Postsecularism and religion in the public sphere</td>
<td>420</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.3.4</td>
<td>The function of religion in the lives of individuals and communities</td>
<td>420</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.3.5</td>
<td>Religion as vehicle for moral regeneration and values education</td>
<td>421</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>THE ASSUMPTIONS AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE POLICY</td>
<td>423</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>FINAL EVALUATION</td>
<td>426</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>(IN)CONCLUSIONS</td>
<td>428</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

EPILOGUE TO THE THESIS 430

BIBLIOGRAPHY 431
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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this thesis to Emeritus Professor Kobus Krüger. The Policy on Religion and Education (2003) may never, in his current format, have come into existence was it not for the tireless and selfless efforts of Prof Kobus Krüger.

In the early days of the new democracy in South Africa and the need for a new educational dispensation, the Policy addressed the need for a clarification of the relationship between religion and education within the specific domain of schools and their curricula. The Policy in its various drafts and accompanying processes were severely contested and discussed in the public sphere. In the process of the development of the Policy, Prof Krüger’s personal and professional integrity and expertise were often questioned and at times ridiculed. Despite these, he persisted with an intellectual honesty and truthfulness that shaped the Policy in a way no other contributor or organisation did.

The Policy encourages learners to encounter and celebrate religions as ‘concretised forms of … frontier experiences; the landmarks, through many millennia, of human beings’ intuitions of ultimate reality, truth, beauty and goodness. There is therefore every reason to treat such forms with great respect’ (Krüger 1995:59).

May this thesis, in a small but possibly significant way, provide testimony to the passion, dedication and intellectual and personal integrity of Prof Kobus Krüger.
## LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER 1</th>
<th>Figure 1.1: The critical evaluation of the Policy in context</th>
<th>24</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Figure 1.2: A genealogy of postmodernism, adapted from Firat &amp; Venkatesh 1995:241</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Figure 1.3: The securalisation thesis according to Boeve (2004:20)</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Figure 1.4: The changed gestalt of religion adapted from Boeve (2004:21)</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 2</td>
<td>Figure 2.1: The three elements of the methodology</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Figure 2.2: Fairlough’s dimension of discourse and discourse analysis</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Figure 2.3: Post-structural system of interpretation (Demetrio 2001)</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Figure 2.4: A political model of policy based in a theory of discourse (Taylor 1997:26)</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Figure 2.5: The black box of a policy</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Figure 2.6: The Kellogg’s Logic Development Model (W.K. Kellogg Foundation 2001)</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Figure 2.7: An illustration of the role of the black box of policy theory</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Figure 2.8: The different phases of policy analysis (Source: Dunn 1994:17)</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Figure 2.9: Problem structuring (Dunn 1994:148)</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Figure 2.10: The different elements of a policy argument (Dunn 1994:68)</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Figure 2.11: An example of applying Dunn’s policy argument schema</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Figure 2.12: Research quality criteria</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Figure 2.13: An overview of the different aspects of the proposed methodology</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Figure 2.14: A policy analysis process (Weimer &amp; Vining 1989:309)</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 3</td>
<td>Figure 3.1: An overview of Chapter 3</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Figure 3.2: Mapping the origins of critical theory (Sims &amp; Van Loon 2004:24-25)</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Figure 3.3: Moving to Phase 2</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Figure 3.4: Approaches to the study of religion</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Figure 3.5: Mapping our progress</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 4</td>
<td>Figure 4.1: The three 'curriculum moments'</td>
<td>188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4.2: Archaeology of the Policy – early years till 1998</td>
<td>189</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4.3: Overview of Chapter 4</td>
<td>192</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4.4: An overview of the nine glimpses of developing patterns</td>
<td>211</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4.5: Locating ourselves in Chapter 4</td>
<td>232</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 5</td>
<td>Figure 5.1: Locating the Policy</td>
<td>247</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 6</td>
<td>Figure 6.1: Post-structural system of interpretation (Demetrio 2001)</td>
<td>307</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 6.2: The Policy problem</td>
<td>323</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 6.3: The Policy argument according to Dunn (1994)</td>
<td>336</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 6.4: The Policy argument</td>
<td>341</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 7</td>
<td>Figure 7.1: The policy analysis framework (Dunn 1994:17)</td>
<td>357</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 7.2: An overview of the interrelated nature of the processes accompanying and following the formulation of the Policy</td>
<td>358</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 7.3: Overview of Chapter 7</td>
<td>360</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 7.4: The RNCS, Learning Areas and Learning Area Outcomes and content</td>
<td>364</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 7.5: Principles structuring the attainment of understanding in Religion Studies</td>
<td>379</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER 2</th>
<th>Table 2.1: Considering the outcomes of different policy alternatives according to set criteria</th>
<th>94</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 5</td>
<td>Table 5.1: Overview of the three documents addressing values, education and democracy</td>
<td>265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Table 5.2: Members of SACRED</td>
<td>293</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Table 5.3: An overview of some published articles</td>
<td>294</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Table 5.4: Four different positions</td>
<td>297</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 6</td>
<td>Table 6.2: The meta-alternatives for the relationship between state and religion</td>
<td>328</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Table 6.3: The meso-alternatives</td>
<td>330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Table 6.4: The outcomes and assessment criteria as per Grade</td>
<td>332</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 7</td>
<td>Table 7.1: Curriculum documents</td>
<td>356</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Table 7.2: Weighting in the Intermediate phase (DoE 2003b:22)</td>
<td>366</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Table 7.3: Weighting in the Senior phase (DoE 2003b:23)</td>
<td>367</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Table 7.4: Assessment criteria</td>
<td>368</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Table 7.5: The two sets of principles proposed by the NCS/LPG (DoE 2008b)</td>
<td>392</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PROLOGUE TO THE THESIS

In this critical evaluation of the National Policy on Religion and Education (Republic of South Africa 2003), I will invite a multiplicity of voices and opinions from various disciplines and discourses – a Bakhtinian carnival of heteroglossic play.

As opposed to the official feast, one might say that carnival celebrated temporary liberation from the prevailing truth and from the established order; it marked the suspension of all hierarchal rank, privileges, norms, and prohibitions. Carnival was the true feast of time, the feast of becoming, change, renewal. It was hostile to all that was immortalised and completed (Bakhtin 1984:10).

In this time of postmodern carnival, official ‘Truth’ is constantly questioned and treated with suspicion and replaced by new and unofficial truths (Scott 1986; Hiebert 2003). God (if not religion) has been proclaimed dead and yet at the same time seems to be more alive than ever. This is a time when ‘all the conventional norms and protocols are suspended, as the common life is invaded by a great wave of riotous antinomianism which makes everywhere for bizarre mésalliances’ (Scott 1986:6).

And the presiding spirit of blasphemy finds its quintessential expression in the ritual of the mock crowning and subsequent decrowning of the carnival king – who is the very antithesis of a real king, since he is in fact often a slave or a jester. In short, everything is topsy-turvy, and the disarray thus engenders an uproarious kind of laughter (Scott 1986:6).

In his presidential address to the American Academy of Religion in 1986 titled ‘The house of intellect in an age of carnival: some hermeneutical reflections’, Scott (1986:7) explores the impact of the “multiplicity and fragmentation and diversity” facing ‘the house of intellect’, and identifies the challenge of not resorting to the safety of ‘any sort of reductionism, [but] how to understand and

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1 Hereafter, for the rest of this study, when reference is made to ‘the Policy’, I will be referring to the National Policy on Religion and Education (Republic of South Africa. 2003).

interpret the multitudinous messages and voices that press in upon us, each clamouring for attention and for pride of place'.

After acknowledging the polyphony surrounding *Religionswissenschaft* on the one hand and on the other hand rejecting any hermeneutical attempts at a 'totalistic' synthesis, Scott proposes moving *among* the different ‘modalities … of interanimation between [the various] modes of discourse’ (Ricoeur quoted by Scott 1986:11). Scott (1986:15) closes his address by appealing for continued conversations and dialogue among discourses and ‘scatterings’ of truth (1986:15) as a hermeneutical method that would take the plurality and heteroglossia of this time in history seriously.

This thesis is an attempt – a personal but also a scholarly and academically responsible attempt – to plot many of the voices and contexts that would help to evaluate the specific understanding of the role of the study of religion in the broader contexts of citizenship in a postmodern age where nationalities, nation states and allegiances are constantly in flux and complex.

This thesis is also submitted as proof of the validity of my own voice as one of many voices in and surrounding the house of intellect in an age of carnival.

Paul Prinsloo
17 June 2008
CHAPTER 1
TOWARDS A CRITICAL EVALUATION OF THE POLICY

1.1 INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH QUESTION

Central to this research is the Policy on Religion and Education – its content, its processes and the public debates and participation in the drafting of the Policy. There are a number of equally valid scholarly approaches to engage with the Policy in a study such as this.

One possible approach would be to critically evaluate the options and alternatives the Policy considered within the context of the educational landscape in South Africa (see for example Roux 2000). Another approach would be comparative in nature, comparing the Policy to other countries’ approaches, for example countries like France and England. An example of such a comparative approach in investigating notions and practices of citizenship education is found in the work of Kerr (1999). Sterkens (2001) explored the impact of interreligious learning in primary education in the context of the Netherlands. Another equally valid approach would have been to analyse and write up the processes leading to and surrounding the Policy (see for example Chidester 2003b). This critical evaluation of the Policy could also have been equally at home in educational studies, religious studies, public policy analysis and political studies. As will be explored in Chapter 3, the critical nature of this evaluation is specifically embedded in a personal understanding of critical theory and critical pedagogy. In this study, I situate this critical evaluation of the Policy within the broader discourses of a specific discipline namely Religionswissenschaft3, or the study of religion(s). Yet, this choice to locate this study in a specific discipline does not indicate a singularity or reduction in focus. While locating the evaluation of the

3 The discourses in and surrounding Religionwissenschaft and/or the study of religion(s) will be explored and discussed in Chapter 3.
Policy from the discourses in and surrounding Religionswissenschaft, these discourses form part of a carnival of voices, polyphony in the Bakhtinian sense\(^4\).

This thesis’ central concern and focus is the question – *How does the Policy contribute to the shaping of a critical and autonomous citizenry?* In this study I will propose that a critical and autonomous citizenry means a citizenry who has a certain *Mündigkeit* in understanding their own religiosity and those of others. Such citizens understand religion as the result of a dynamic and complex interplay of various societal factors. Religion as social construct also understands religion in its dynamic relationship with power. Religion throughout the ages was an important ingredient in power-plays, and has perpetuated power- and meaning systems and structures that impacted and shaped citizens’ engagement with different cultural, socioeconomic, gender, political, and educational issues.

South Africa (since 1994) is a *rechtstaat* or constitutional state in which the constitution is regarded as supreme and the final authority (De Waal, Currie & Erasmus 2001). The new South Africa is furthermore a *deliberative* democracy referring to the fact that the Constitution is the result of extensive and painstaking processes involving elected representatives from every sector in South Africa. As a deliberative democracy, all policies and legislation should be the result of deliberative and transparent processes (De Waal et al. 2001). Since 1994 the Constitution has been the guiding force and litmus test in the dramatic revisioning of South African society. As such, all new policies and legislation must adhere to the principles *and* the spirit of the Constitution. Despite some objections against constitutional patriotism (as discussed later in this Chapter), constitutional patriotism (in its present South African gestalt) seems an appropriate response taking into account the legacy of colonialism and apartheid.

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\(^4\) The Policy itself allows for a ‘defined’ polyphony when it describes the scope of the teaching of religion to include religion as phenomenon, organised forms of religion *as well as* certain worldviews (1996:30). The emphasis in this critical evaluation will however focus on the study of *religion(s)*. The inclusion of ‘certain worldviews’ in the broad scope of the study of religion(s) will be explored in Chapters 6-8. Any reference to ‘religion’ as used by the Policy should be seen against the scope as defined by the Policy.
Constitutional patriotism is furthermore embedded in the broader discourses of the changing role of the nation-state, the impact of globalisation as well as increasing need for a *cosmopolitan* citizenship.

Citizenship and education has historically been in a reciprocal relationship. Education was and is historically key to any nation-state’s shaping of prospective citizens and their rights and responsibilities. In this study I will critically evaluate the Policy as a context-specific response against these broader contexts and discourses. I will attempt to theorise and evaluate whether the Policy can be considered an *appropriate* response taking into account the specific socio-historical context in South Africa as well as the broader discourses surrounding religion and citizenship. As Bakhtin (1981:428) suggests:

> At any given time, in any given place, there will be a set of conditions – social, historical, meteorological, physiological – that will ensure that a word uttered in that place and at that time will have a meaning different than it would have under other conditions; all utterances are heteroglot in that they are functions of a matrix of forces practically impossible to recoup, and therefore impossible to resolve.

The following sub-questions will guide this study in exploring the Policy as a context-specific attempt to contribute to the shaping of a critical and a *mündig* citizenry:

1. What were the context-specific socioeconomic, educational and political histories and processes shaping our new democracy and its educational policy framework?
2. What are the theoretical and philosophical underpinnings and assumptions of the Policy argument?
3. How does the Policy understand religion and the study of religion?
4. How does the Policy understand the study of religion as a compulsory part of the curriculum in preparing learners for citizenship? In other words, how will the study of religion prepare learners not only for citizenship in the national sense but also for an increasingly cosmopolitan citizenry?
In examining these questions, I will do a critical discourse analysis in the broader context of a social constructionist approach. I will attempt to show that the Policy should be understood and evaluated as a response to and resulting from larger discourses and systems of meaning. ‘Constructionism is concerned with broader patterns of social meaning encoded in language’ (Terre Blanche & Durrheim 1999: 149). In preparing to critically evaluate the Policy, this study will interpret the social world from which the Policy grew as well as the social world the Policy imagines. From a social constructionist point of view the Policy will be examined as a specific social construct embedding the ruling discourses of our time as well as re-enacting established relational patterns (Terre Blanche & Durrheim 1999: 152).

The academic rationale for the research question as indicated, can and will be motivated and explored. The research question has however also a personal history. From the start of this journey, two questions dominated my research as well as ‘defending’ my research in public conversations, namely the ‘why’ and the ‘how’ of my research project. Interestingly, lay persons (friends, colleagues and family) emphasised the ‘why’, while academic colleagues and especially colleagues busy with or having completed their doctoral studies immediately queried the ‘how’ of my research. Answering the ‘why’ was easier than answering the ‘how’.

In following a social constructionist approach, I acknowledge I am a bricoleur – selecting sources, including and excluding based on personal and scholarly considerations. The act of excluding and including is however not arbitrary. Though my choices are personal and subjective, I accept responsibility for including and excluding and will provide the rationale for my acts of bricolage.

In sharing this journey with you as reader I am also sharing what is private, in public. Although I adhere to the traditional professional conventions of scholarly discourse I will write in the first person in following Webb (1992:747) who said
‘The use of the neutral, anonymous third person is deceptive when applied to quantitative research because it obliterates the social elements of the research process’ (Webb 1992:747). The writing in the first person has become accepted in the broader discourses of qualitative research (see for example Berger 2001; Macbeth 2001; and Patton 2002a). I share the opinion of Ramsden (2002:12) that ‘the narrator has a critical place, indeed an obligation to provide some insight into the personal, social and emotional processes which have led to the particular intellectual and behavioural outcomes’. Weaving a personal narrative into this thesis is however not without its challenges, pitfalls and ethical dilemmas (see Patton 2002b). The inclusion of a personal narrative is an essential ingredient in any reflexive attempt at making and constructing meaning (Macbeth 2001).

Writing this thesis using the first person does constitute this research as an act of self-authoring (Ellis 2007; Macquire 2006) and a ‘write of passage’ (as explored by Noy 2003). Though I will write in the first person and share aspects of my personal narratives with you in this journey, this study is not primarily an autoethnography. I use the personal narrative throughout this study on the one hand as a way to establish rapport with you as reader (Berger 2001) and on the other hand to acknowledge my biases, assumptions and beliefs as part of my ethical framework for doing and sharing this research (Patton 2002b)\(^5\).

In the next section (1.2) I will briefly outline some aspects shaping this thesis as the result of and an ingredient in a personal journey.

### 1.2 A PERSONAL NARRATIVE

The ‘why’ of my research goes back to my own life taking shape due to the influences of religion, schooling and notions of citizenship. I was born in 1959, four years after the Freedom Charter was accepted by the African National Congress (ANC). I was born 11 years after the National Party came to power. In 1960, when I was one year old, Police killed 68 people in Sharpville during

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\(^5\) I will plot the ethical dimensions of this personal approach in Chapter 2.
protests against pass-laws. In 1966, when I was seven years old and in Grade 2, the Prime Minister of South Africa and architect of apartheid, Dr H.F. Verwoerd was assassinated. I remember memorial services and different rumours that the Communists were behind the assassination.

My childhood was shaped to a large extent by the heyday of Christian National Education (CNE) and the reality of apartheid. During my primary and secondary school years I was a good pupil and a good citizen-in-the-making. None of my teachers questioned Christian National Education or apartheid. On the contrary. During school assemblies many representatives from the Afrikaans churches reiterated the fact that the Afrikaner was God’s chosen race and that we should never doubt our role in bringing light to dark Africa. Authority, whether at home, school or broader society, was never questioned. I accepted uncritically that God has selected my race, the Afrikaner, and me for a special purpose.

I grew up in a Christian home and did not know persons of any other denomination or belief except some Jehovah’s Witnesses (with whom we were anyway not allowed to mix) and Communists (who included basically everyone who was not Christian and White). The hegemonic character of the ideology of white supremacy and privilege was ‘invisible’, unquestioned and embedded in everyday life. My home and school religion furthermore sanctioned a certain notion of exclusive citizenship, encompassing citizenship for heaven and on earth, this life and the life hereafter. Citizenship and the privilege of staying in town (and not in the ‘location’) were fringe benefits of being white. I never questioned the fact that a siren would sound at 21:00 at night in my home town warning all black people that they should be outside the town’s parameters. I never knew (or really cared about) others, whether they were black, of another religion or Communist (or a combination of these). In 1976, my last school year, my father, the patriarch and cornerstone of our family died. Also in 1976 the Soweto uprisings took place. Children my age protested and were killed by
police. I did not and could not understand their issues. I was preparing to leave home to study theology.

Having left home I increasingly discovered a number of incommensurable aspects of my life. As I progressed through university life, I gradually became aware of the Other – those in townships and Bantustans. They were not considered to be citizens of the Republic and were objects of different missionary outreaches. I never knew any students of colour. I never interrogated my whiteness and its benefits. I also became aware of my growing insecurity of being male and possibly homosexual – encountering the reality of the incommensurability of being gay and entering the ministry. While I struggled intensely with the incommensurability of my gender and my ‘calling’ into the ministry, I dared not question the authority of the Scriptures, or the Church or societal norms and mores. I submitted to the will of God, society and the state as an exemplary ‘good citizen’. After completing my studies, I was conscripted to do my national service (like other white males) in the South African National Defence Force (SANDF). I had naïve concerns about joining but was advised that I should not shy away from serving God and my country. I was assigned to 32 Battalion as Chaplain, one of the most sophisticated and efficient battalions of the SANDF. I saw the sophisticated killing machine of the SANDF in action. While I prayed for safety and wisdom, the Colonel of the battalion wanted me to pray for victory against Satan and his forces. I completed my term as Chaplain and entered the civil ministry. I was awarded the Chief of the Defence Force’s medal for outstanding service as well as a Pro Patria medal for serving my country. My experiences of these times still haunt me. Although an exemplary

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6 Boellstorff (2005) explores incommensurability as a characteristic of the lives and choices gay, Muslim men are faced with in Indonesia. The concept of ‘incommensurability’ creates a space for me to voice the uncomfortable and liminal spaces I inhabited for a major part of my life.

7 Homosexuality was a paramount example of being ‘outside’ – outside the Kingdom of God and outside the accepted norms and mores of society. While the notion of ‘gay’ has become accepted in today’s public discourse, homosexuality was used as a derogative and seen as a deviation from what was considered to be normal (and saved).

8 Prior to the arrival of the democratic dispensation in 1994, these awards were the joy and pride of my family and community. After 1994 these awards have become uncomfortable reminders of my complicity in Apartheid.
citizen and Christian, the incommensurability of the layers or gestals of my identity was becoming intolerable.

In 1994 South Africa became a democracy in a peaceful transference of power from the previous regime to a newly democratically elected government. In 1995 the careful parameters of my being a ‘good citizen’ and a ‘good Christian’ disintegrated. I was confronted with deeply traumatic and life-changing choices and consequences of my choices. Through a painful process I learned to embrace my gayness and left the ministry. I was forced to question the validity of my previous structures of making-meaning and embraced atheism. As I gradually became conversant with my new identity and its implications (and limitations), I was confronted with a new (seeming) incommensurability of being white and African, white and South African. The public proceedings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) shattered my naïve beliefs and assumptions of growing up under the apartheid and Christian National Education (CNE) regimes. As the new state dramatically re-envisioned society, my history and implications of my whiteness often became and still are at times unbearable. My guilt comprised that I never questioned, never knew, never really wanted to know. I was a willing, obedient and uncritical ‘good citizen’. While I was a too good citizen in the old dispensation, no matter what I do to ‘fit’ in the new dispensation, my efforts are often regarded as never being good enough.

The ‘why’ of my research is therefore linked and grounded in my personal history of interrogating systems and structures of meaning-making the private and public spheres of my life. As a result I am intrigued by notions, definitions and expectations of citizenship in post-apartheid South Africa. I am fascinated by the role of education in shaping and perpetuating power and systems of meaning. I am mesmerised by the role of religion in the lives of my fellow-citizens and the increasing visibility of religion in public discourses. I live in awe of a tremendum I cannot describe and which I do not understand. It is therefore relatively easy to

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9 I will explore the dilemmas of personal and collective guilt in Chapter 3.
explain the ‘why’ of this research. I am captivated by the proposal that the study of religion in schools can somehow assist learners as would-be citizens to critically engage in the debates surrounding our new democracy, increasing xenophobia and interrogating the reasons for as well as the impact of the visibility of religion in the public sphere.

1.3 THE POLICY IN A BROADER PHILOSOPHICAL CONTEXT

Over the last three years this thesis has taken shape and changed its shape many times. Should I again attempt to provide a critical evaluation of the Policy in a few years’ time, I may do it differently. But for now, I want to critically evaluate the Policy within the context of the broader discourses on postmodernity, post-secularism and citizenship in the context of the changing role of the nation-state. These discourses impact on the roles, functions and gestalt of religion and the study of religion. The discourses in postmodernity and postsecularism also impact on the roles, functions and gestalt of educational policy as vehicle for shaping particular gestalts of citizenship. The following diagram illustrates a critical sense of location for this critical evaluation of the Policy (Figure 1.1).

Figure 1.1: The critical evaluation of the Policy in context
1.3.1 Postmodernity

Postmodernism is a slippery term, an unstable word with no clear referents. The industry which churns out postmodern texts, including endless attempts to distinguish the modern from the postmodern, makes it clear that theoretical pollution is rampant (Denzin, Geraghty, Green & Tenorio 1993:508).

The rationale for starting the locating of this thesis within the broader discourses of postmodernity, postsecuralism and globalisation is firstly because I suspect the Policy should be understood as a specific local response to the citizenship debate post 1994 in the context of the increasingly global crisis-of-identity of the nation-state. The Policy-as-response brings to the fore the changing role of the nation-state in an increasingly globalised world where identities and cultures are increasingly complex and changing. The second rationale for locating my evaluation of the Policy against these broader discourses is based on the evidence that various authors I will refer to in the course of this study, have used (and at times contested) terms like postmodernity and postsecuralism, e.g. Habermas and Bauman. Bauman, for example has been regarded as the ‘prophet of postmodernism’ (Smith 1999) but has since moved away from the use of the term postmodernism and prefers to explore the notion of ‘liquid modernity’ (Bauman 2000; Bauman & Yakimova 2002). It is therefore necessary to ‘map’ a personal framework for my understanding of these terms and concepts. Although these discourses function as backdrop to the critical evaluation of the Policy, a full critical interrogation of these discourses falls outside the scope of this thesis.

I prefer to use the term ‘postmodernity’ rather than ‘postmodernism’ as the latter seems to suggest agreement among theorists regarding the characteristics of this age. Postmodernism also seems to imply a ‘completed fact’. To speak of ‘postmodernity’ implies that the process of description and analysis is continuing, a work in progress – although ‘progress’ seem to imply a linear process in which our understanding becomes more complete and more clear as we ‘progress’. This is however not the case. While clarity and understanding may increase as we proceed, we are not so sure anymore. There are furthermore a number of
authors (e.g. Firat & Venkatesh 1995) who propose that there are actually a number of different postmodernisms. Hassan (2001) also makes a distinction (or several) between postmodernism and postmodernity. Among the distinctions he makes, is the emphasis that postmodernism refers especially to the ‘cultural sphere’, while postmodernity refers to the ‘geopolitical sphere’. Postmodernism furthermore refers ‘to affluent, high-tech, consumer, media-driven societies’ while postmodernity ‘refers to an interactive, planetary phenomenon wherein tribalism and imperialism, myth and technology, margins and centers – these terms are not parallel – play out their conflictual energies, often on the Internet’ (Hassan 2001).

Several authors provide a history of postmodernism (e.g., Bertens 1995; Jencks 1996). ‘Mapping’ postmodernity as a description of the times we live in has also been undertaken by a number of authors (e.g. Beck 1992, 1996; Best 1998; Biesta 1995, 2004; Burbules 1995; Firat & Venkatesh 1995; Gellner 1992; Jameson 1991; Kellner 1998; Lee 2005; Matthewman & Hoey 2006; Natoli & Hutcheon 1993; Strydom 2002). In the debate on postmodernism, without trying to reduce the complexities and richness, it would seem as if the main contested issue is whether postmodernity is a continuation of modernity or whether it constitutes a complete historical break with modernity. There is, as far as I could establish, no real contestation of the characteristics of this present age, whatever we call this age ‘late capitalism’ (Jameson 1991), a ‘risk society’ (Beck 1992, 1996; Strydom 2002) or ‘liquid modernity’ (Bauman 2000). Firat and Venkatesh (1995) provide a helpful overview of postmodernity/postmodernism by first describing what they understand as being the characteristics of modernity. They mention the following ‘conditions’ or characteristics of modernity:

1. the rule of reason and the establishment of rational order; 2. the emergence of the cognitive subject; 3. the rise of science and an emphasis on material progress through the application of scientific technologies; 4. realism, representation, and the unity of purpose in art and architecture; 5. the emergence of industrial capitalism; and 6. the separation of the sphere of production, which is institutionally controlled.
and public, from the sphere of consumption, which is domestic and private (1995:240).

One of the main criticisms against modernity was its reduction of the world ‘into simple dichotomous categories: subject/object, male/female, producer/consumer, culture/nature, signified/signifier, Occident/Orient, and so on’ (Firat & Venkatesh 1995:240). Firat and Venkatesh (1995:240) call these dichotomies ‘unsuccessful historical attempts to legitimise partial truths’. Modernity is furthermore accused of developing and canonising meta-narratives as the only representations of truth and reality. Postmodernity reacts strongly against the notion that any meta-narrative can represent the world in its complexities and dynamic diversity (Firat & Venkatesh 1995:242; Lyotard 1979). The following diagram (Figure 1.2) is adapted from Firat & Venkatesh (1995:241) providing an attempt to map postmodernity in relation to modernity\(^\text{10}\).

\textbf{Figure 1.2:} A genealogy of postmodernism, adapted from Firat & Venkatesh 1995:241

\(^\text{10}\) For a different ‘map’ of postmodernity, see Denzin et al. (1993:508-509).
After acknowledging that postmodernism is a ‘slippery term, an unstable word with no clear referents’ (Denzin et al. 1993:508), they continue to state that the term postmodernism is a ‘concept whose day and time have come and passed, but a term, for better or worse, which remains, because while it is difficult to take it seriously, “it is not easily dismissed”’ (Denzin et al. 1993:509). Hassan (2001) supports the notion of accepting the use of the term postmodernism, because ‘postmodernism has become, consciously or unconsciously, for better or for worse, an interpretive category, a hermeneutic tool’, a ‘way we view the world’. Denzin et al. (1993:513) conclude as follows:

We need this deadly term called the postmodern to remind us that we have yet to make sense out of the present for the keys to its meanings are not in the modernist past. They are in the present, the here and now. As long as theorists attempt to make sense of this moment we have hope, even if their theories are flawed. And this moment, call it, following Lyotard, ‘the pastmodern’. The ‘pastmodern’ is that which comes back on the present from the standpoint of the past. But this past is filtered through the present, a present that is littered with the past (Jameson’s pastiche and parody), so that the boundaries between the past, the present and the future are now obliterated.

An inauthentic (commodified) Heideggerian temporality defines the present. Post and past, before and after, modern and postmodern, now slide alongside one another, each longing for a nostalgic footing in a past that no longer is. Each seeks a firmly bounded present with certain meanings. Firm footings are no longer available and the postmodernism that was will remain as a pastmodern moment that has yet to understand itself. There is still time to catch the last boat for postmodernism. It remains to be seen how cultural studies will locate itself on this Titanic vessel (italics in the original).

Bauman (Bauman & Yakimova 2002) proposes a different conclusion. Bauman has moved from a position where he was considered being the ‘prophet of postmodernism’ (Kellner 1999; Smith 1999), to promoting an understanding of the present as ‘liquid modernity’ (Bauman 2000; Bauman & Yakimova 2002). He explains his move with a number of reasons. I quote and discuss his reasons not for the sake of getting involved and choosing in the debate, but as a way to explore possible implications for the role of the nation-state and education policy
in South Africa. Bauman (Bauman & Yakimova 2002:2) explains his first objection to the continued use of postmodernism as follows:

   To start with, the concept of 'postmodern' was but a stop-gap choice, a 'career report' of a search – still on-going and remote from completion. That concept signalled that the social world had ceased to be like the one mapped using the 'modernity' grid (notably, the paths and the traps changed places), but was singularly un-committal as to the features the world had acquired instead. 'Postmodern' has done its preliminary, site-clearing job: it aroused vigilance and sent the exploration in the right direction. It could not do much more, and so it shortly outlived its usefulness; or, rather, it has worked itself out of the job... About the qualities of the present-day world we can say no more than it is unlike the old familiar one. We have, so to speak, matured to afford (to risk?) a positive theory of the novelty (italics in the original).

   From this Bauman's first pointer it would seem as if postmodernity\(^\text{11}\) tried to 'map' a world that has changed under the influences of technologies, capitalism and a reenchantment of consumption (Firat & Venkatesh 1995). It is as if postmodernism tried to make everyone notice that things have changed, that the map of the world and of society as once was accepted by all has changed. His second motivation of opting out of promoting the concept of postmodernism is that he feels that

   'Postmodern' was also flawed from the beginning: all disclaimers notwithstanding, it did suggest that modernity was over. Protestations did not help much, even as strong ones as Lyotard's ('one cannot be modern without being first postmodern') – let alone my insistence that "postmodernity is modernity minus its illusion". Nothing would help; if words mean anything, then a 'post X' will always mean a state of affairs that has leaved the 'X' behind (Bauman & Yakimova 2002:2).

Bauman (Bauman & Yakimova 2002: 2-3) adds that the same argument applies to using the term 'late modernity' and 'reflexive modernity'. He says

   I had (and still have) reservations towards alternative names suggested for our contemporaneity. 'Late modernity'? How would we know that it is 'late'? The word 'late', if legitimately used, assumes closure, the last stage (indeed – what else one would expect to come after "late"?). Very late? Post-late? – and so it suggests much more than we (as sociologists, who

\(^{11}\) The use of the term postmodernity does not imply that the different authors taking part in the discourses surrounding the term are all agreeing or that the concept itself is homogenous, to the contrary. For the sake of discussing Bauman however, I will continue to use the term as Bauman refers to the term and the concept.
unlike the soothsayers and clairvoyants have no tools to predict the future and must limit ourselves to taking inventories of the current trends) are entitled responsibly to propose. "Reflexive"? I smelled a rat here. I suspected that in coining this term we are projecting our own, the professional thinkers', cognitive uncertainty upon the social world at large, or reforge our (quite real) professional puzzlement into (imaginary) popular prudence – whereas that world out there is marked, on the contrary, by the fading and wilting of the art of reflection (ours ist [sic] culture of forgetting and short-termism – of the two arch-enemies of reflection). I would perhaps embrace George Balandier's surmodernité or Paul Virilio/John Armitage's hypermodernity, were not these terms, like the term 'postmodern', too shell-like, too uncommittal to guide and target the theoretical effort (italics in the original).

As a way out of the impasse on what to call this present day and age in the light of the fundamentally changed society, Bauman proposes using the term 'liquid modernity' which he motivates as follows – ‘What sets liquids apart from the solids is the looseness and frailty of their bonds, not their specific gravity’ (Bauman & Yakimova 2002:3). In an earlier essay Bauman (1995) explores the impact of the lack or loss of specific gravities on the nation-state and the reinvention of identities (to which we will return in the third section of this chapter).

Before we proceed to investigate postsecularism as specifically addressing the roles and functions of religion in postmodernity or 'liquid modernity', it is necessary to briefly discuss claims made by opponents to the notion of postmodernism, namely

- the embedded relativism in postmodernism
- the stark contrast between the general assumptions of postmodernism and emancipatory education as a modernist project12.

With regard to the accusation of relativism, Biesta and others see the ‘abandonment of universalism’ and the proliferation of pluralities as

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12 The Policy has been accused of relativising doctrinal truths and also of indoctrinating children with specific worldviews. It is therefore necessary to provide a literature background for interrogating these accusations.
characteristics of the postmodern (Biesta 1995:162). The ‘abandonment of universalism’ and the reality of pluralism do not imply relativism.

Postmodernism confronts us primarily with a tension, a tension which expresses itself in the unstable relationship between contingency and commitment. Postmodernism does not show us the fundamental impossibility of any commitment; it only shows us the impossibility of a certain type of commitment, namely grounded commitment, a commitment based upon universal truth, rationality, or identity, a commitment that claims to be in the right automatically (Mouffe, 1989, p. 34). Postmodernism means the end of the metaphysical grounding of human action; it shows us the fundamental vulnerability of all commitment (Laclau, 1989, p. 72) while at the same time making us aware of the fact that any commitment can always be offensive (Biesta 1995:166; italics in the original).

In a later article, Biesta (2004) reiterates his opposition to the claim that postmodernism equals relativism. He states

I wish to argue, however, that it is a mistake to equate postmodernism with relativism. It is first of all a category mistake. The postmodern questioning of foundationalism, essentialism, transcendentalism, and other forms of objectivism only implies relativism if one believes that objectivism and relativism are the only two options available. Yet postmodernism should not be understood as operating within the dualistic framework in which knowledge is either objective or subjective and where values are either universal or relative. We should rather think of postmodernism as an attempt to put this very framework into question. … Postmodernism, in sum, questions the framework from which relativism derives it meaning; it does not question one of the options within this framework. (Biesta 2004:308-309; italics in the original).

According to Biesta (2004:309) postmodernism has a clear and distinct ethical and political agenda, albeit not an agenda in which ethical and political questions are reduced to questions about knowledge, reality, and truth, but rather an agenda which wants to take ethical and political questions in their own terms (Biesta, 1995). Central to this agenda is postmodernism's exposition of the totalizing tendencies of modernism – in modern life, in modern philosophy, in modern science, in modern social theory, in modern education; in order to highlight the exclusion and injustice brought about by attempts to articulate a total, all-encompassing perspective. …To expose and question totalization only appears as relativism if we think of it within the modern, binary language game, in which everything is either objective or subjective, either universal or relative.
Burbules (1995) describes the incredulity of postmodernism towards metanarratives not as ‘denial or rejection or refutation; it is an inability to believe’ (italics in the original). Burbules (1995) traces the sources of this ‘postmodern doubt’ in three tenets of the present age. The first ‘source’ of postmodern doubt is ‘a growing awareness of the radical diversity and potential incommensurability of the different cultural forms of life that sustain groups and individuals’ (Burbules 1995). Although globalisation and different technologies have made contact despite and in the midst of all these differences (more) possible, Burbules (1995) calls it ‘arrogance’ to assume that ‘continued conversation can be successful in uniting or reconciling diverse perspectives and values’. This statement concurs with the statements Habermas made regarding the need for citizens to fulfil ‘epistemic duties’ in the public sphere to make communication possible (Harrington 2007:544). In chapter 3 we will explore the implications of Habermas’ proposal, but for now it would seem as if Burbules (1995) would argue that it is arrogant to believe that ‘continued conversation’ will eventually conquer the impact of all differences. The (im)possibility of the success of understanding through conversation is impacted by the second source of postmodern doubt, according to Burbules. He states that ‘the understanding that certain dynamics of asymmetrical power which distort and compromise even the best of human intentions are inherent to the institutional and informal patterns of life in which humans are engaged’ (1995). Although he does not refer to the work of Foucault (e.g.1979), Burbules seems to warn that postmodernism alerts us not to underestimate power in its different and often subversive configurations. This realisation should

sensitise us to the power dimensions of even apparently benign acts; to the limits of good intentions; to the deep culpability we all have within a world society that implicates us in a web of contingencies and interactions whose consequences are, to some degree, always harmful to someone; and to the dubious adventure of seeking a path toward any utopia that promises a better life for all (Burbules 1995; italics in the original).

Burbules’ third source of postmodern doubt is the realisation that language and the way we use language ‘colours and shapes our ways of living and being in the
world’. While we use language to explain the way we experience the world, not only are our experiences different, but also the languages and conventions of language in which we express our experiences are different from one another. Burbules (1995) states that because our languages are diverse, and non-congruent, there will always be a limit upon any particular discursive system as a standpoint, in a place and time, within which one can try to describe all matters of truth, value, and so forth; such matters will always be to some extent the expressions of this language, and this place and time. This realisation does not lead to relativism, necessarily; for there is usually a good deal of overlap and intertranslatability among different discursive systems. But there are also gaps and discontinuities.

Postmodern doubt therefore differs from Cartesian doubt which was always searching for certainty (Burbules 1995) while postmodernism requires living with ambivalence and uncertainty as a permanent feature of modern life. In the face of the ‘permanence’ of postmodern doubt, how is education then possible? This question is explored by a number of authors among which Beck (1993), Burbules (1995) and Biesta (1995).

With regard to the seeming tension between education as emancipation and postmodernism, Biesta states that ‘The postmodern affirmation of a radical plurality creates the space needed to bring the marginal, the repressed, and the unvoiced into view and into hearing’ (1995:163). Though postmodernity has ‘unmasked the Enlightenment triad of truth, rationality, and identity as a set of highly problematic universals’, those populations and groups of humans finding themselves on the margins may find themselves ‘neutralised in the flattery of publicity and imitation’ (Brooker 1992 quoted by Biesta 1995:164). Biesta (1995:165) refers to the fact that critical educators have complained about the ‘political impotency of postmodernism and the depoliticizing tendencies contained in it’. Biesta (1995:165) does not try to resolve the apparent tension in postmodernity between an appreciation of the diversity and plurality of life and a specific commitment to one form of diversity. To reiterate what he states
Postmodernism does not show us the fundamental impossibility of any commitment; it only shows us the impossibility of a certain type of commitment, namely grounded commitment, a commitment based upon universal truth, rationality, or identity, a commitment that claims to be in the right automatically.

Postmodernity also precludes metaphysics as foundation of any commitment of a universal value, but not metaphysics as foundation for a particular commitment. Yet Biesta states ‘Postmodernism means the end of the metaphysical grounding of human action; it shows us the fundamental vulnerability of all commitment (Laclau, 1989, p. 72) while at the same time making us aware of the fact that any commitment can always be offensive’ (Biesta 1995:166). I see no reason why the metaphysical should be excluded as foundation for a particular commitment – as long as the commitment is not claimed to have validity for all human life. While I would create a space that some commitments do claim to have a metaphysical foundation, such commitments should bear in mind the contingent nature of commitment as well as the possible offensiveness of such a commitment.

Biesta (1995:170) ‘resolves’ the possibility of education as emancipation within a framework that

anyone wishing to realize commitment within a contingent context, must abandon the hope that this can ever be done with neutral or nonpolitical means. This does not mean that truth, rationality, or identity are completely useless; it only means that we should not consider them as grand metaphysical narratives that can do the job for us, but only as small political ones that we can use in doing the job ourselves.

This framework also requires of us, who still believe in the emancipatory potential of education that ‘we will have to give up the idea that there exists one emancipatory point of termination that can be reached by a conflict free trajectory’. The emancipation of one person or group of persons does also not resolve all historically embedded inequalities and power relations (Biesta 1995:170). Biesta concludes regarding education as emancipatory project that ‘a postmodern emancipatory commitment can not fall back upon the grand
narratives of truth, rationality, or identity, but is tied up completely with small political narratives, located in the domain of human intersubjectivity’ (1995:176).

After exploring his understanding of postmodernism and its implications for pedagogy and a philosophy of education, Beck (1993) plots a number of pointers for education within the broader framework of postmodernity. His pointers are as follows:

- Reality is much more complex and contingent than ever realised during the heyday of modernism. Our understanding of reality is furthermore the result of dynamic interaction between our ideas of the world (as formulated in formal and informal ways) and our experiences of the world.
- Knowledge ‘is neither eternal nor universal’ yet we should not deny “continuity and commonality where it in fact exists’ (Beck 1993).
- Though postmodernity is often proclaimed as the ‘end of metaphysics’, metaphysics is one of the ways of relating to and making sense of the world. It is, however, no longer the only way of making sense of human experiences.
- Individual identity and ways of thinking and being are shaped by ‘a network of beliefs, desires, and emotions with nothing behind it …constantly reweaving itself… not by reference to general criteria… but in the hit-or-miss way in which cells readjust themselves to meet the pressures of the environment’ (Beck quoting Rorty, 1993).
- Inquiry is no longer seen to ‘uncover a pre-existing reality’ but rather seen as ‘an interactive process of knowledge creation’ (Beck 1993).

With this discussion of postmodernity and postmodernism we continue to specifically interrogate a postmodern understanding of the roles and functions of religion in what is now called a postsecular age.
1.3.2 Religion in a postsecular age

‘Religion is dead! Long live religion’ – or so it would seem. Discussing religion (and the study thereof) against the backdrop of the broader context of postmodernity opens up the tensions, paradoxes and ambivalences that postmodernism is characteristic for (at least for some). In exploring the role and function of religion in this present age, one encounters a plethora of claims – often as contradictory as the phenomena they try to explain. There does seem to be agreement amongst a number of authors (e.g., Kyrlezhev 2008, McLennan 2007, Taylor 2007, Ward 2004) that the modernist claim or expectation that religion would disappear as humanity progresses – has been proved wrong. With regard to modernity’s claim, Ward (2004:8) writes

> Modernity does not seek to erase the sacred (Weber’s ‘disenchantment’, Marx’s ‘opiate’, Feuerbach’s ‘projection’, Freud’s pathological ‘illusion’) – it simply displaces it. And as with all displacement – the object being displaced then takes on the density of a certain denied concentration.

Religion therefore seems to be alive and well. Ward (2004:3) states ‘What characterises this ‘postsecular’ condition is not simply the refusal of religion to go away but, more significantly, the new public visibility of religion. And it is at this point, the point where religion has a public voice, that religion becomes political again’. Ward (2004:5-6) explores this new public visibility of religion (in Europe) and identifies three forms of this new visibility namely

- Religious fundamentalism referring to ‘various militant proselytizing’ strands in among others Christianity, Judaism, Islam and Hinduism.
- The return of religion to the public sphere, where religion was during modernity relegated to the private sphere, religion is demanding a presence in the once-neutral sphere.
- The ‘commodification of religion’, referring to the commercialization of religion and ‘religion as special effect’, and ‘religion as fetish’ and ‘symbolic capital’.
After exploring these three new gestalts of religion in the public sphere, Ward (2004:9-10) states ‘Today, it seems to me, there is a craving to believe the unbelievable; to transcend all human limitations and encounter the impossible. Perhaps we are no longer capable of unequivocal disbelief, of atheism. And I must say I find that dangerous’.

Boeve (2004) proposes the concept of ‘detraditionalisation’ instead of postsecularism. He states that ‘Modernisation in Europe has caused a transformation of religion, not its disappearance’ (2004:15; italics in the original). He discusses three elements regarding religion in the public sphere in the specific context of Europe and suggests that (1) the un-churching of Europe is continuing; (2) there is a tendency to identify oneself with ‘believing without belonging’ and (3) there is a new generation of young people who have never belonged to a religion and do not presently belong to a religion. Boeve continues to propose that detraditionalisation rather than securalisation gets to the core of explaining the changes in society. ‘Detraditionalisation as a term hints at the socio-cultural interruption of traditions (religions as well as class, gender, traditions), which are no longer able to pass themselves on from one generation to the next’ (Boeve 2004:18). Boeve (2004:20) describes and illustrates the traditional understanding of the securalisation thesis in Europe as follows (Figure 1.3):

\[\text{Figure 1.3: The securalisation thesis according to Boeve (2004:20)}\]
In discussing the illustration Boeve (2004:20) suggests the linear progression the illustration proposes "is far too simplistic a reflection of the current state, even if one would substitute the "post-Christian", or "pluralistic secularist" position, for the atheist stance". Boeve (2004:20-21) suggests that 'Christianity has not been replaced by a secular culture, but a plurality of life views and religions have moved in to occupy the vacant space it left behind as result of its diminishing impact'. He illustrates this different understanding of the changed role of religion in the public sphere as follows (Figure 1.4):

![Figure 1.4: The changed gestalt of religion adapted from Boeve (2004:21)](image)

One of the problems in exploring postsecularism is the fact that authors, even those claiming to provide an 'international' perspective on the role of religion, **exclude** huge parts of the human community. An example of this claim and its exclusions is the article by Keddie (2003). She provides a detailed and thorough description of the 'rise and fall of successive waves of secularism in the modern era' (2003:14), but she excludes in her comparative analysis China, Japan, Australasia, Africa and the South Americas. Although her discussion of the history of secularism and postsecularism of specific regions is extremely valuable, her claim that 'Taking the world as a whole' (2003:30) severely lacks
legitimacy and/or credibility. The 'major and highly original contribution\(^\text{13}\) of Taylor (2007) titled *A secular age* interprets (or re-interprets) history's so-called progression from a position in 1500 where not-believing in God was not even considered to the year 2000 where 'many of us find this not only easy, but even inescapable' (Taylor 2007:25). Taylor, unlike Keddie (2003) does not make claims to speak of secularism in the international realm, but specifically deals with secularisation in the context of 'the civilization whose principal roots lie in what used to be called “Latin Christendom”', the West, or the North Atlantic world (2007:21). He soberly acknowledges that we live in a world of 'multiple modernities' and that changes such as secularisation should be studied 'in their different civilisational sites before we rush to global generalisation' (Taylor 2007:21).

Already my canvas is on the verge of being too broad; there are many regional and national paths to secularity within the North Atlantic world, and I haven’t been able to do justice to them all. But I hope some light can be cast on general features of the process nonetheless (Taylor 2007:21).

Keddie (2003:14) warns that investigating secularism in the modern era 'reveals a more complicated and paradoxical picture of trends in Western countries and of the impact of these trends on societies struggling to emulate the economic success of the modern West'. Keddie (2003) does provide a very helpful overview of the history of the term secularism\(^\text{14}\). Without going into a detailed exploration of the historical development of the term ‘secular’, it is suffice to state that from the nineteenth century onwards the concept was used to describe the ‘belief that religious institutions and values should play no role in the temporal affairs of the nation-state’ (Keddie 2003:14-15). Keddie further indicates that present day use of the term ‘secularisation’ refers to

- an increase in the number of people with secular beliefs and practices;

\(^{13}\) According to Alasdair MacIntyre on the back flap of the book. Taylor’s work was also awarded the 2007 Templeton Prize.

\(^{14}\) Keddie’s (2003) historical overview of secularism is scant in comparison with the very detailed and rich exploration of the historical development of secularism in North Atlantic countries by Taylor (2007).
• a lessening of religious control or influence over major spheres of life;
• a growth in state separation from religion and in secular regulation of formerly religious institutions and customs (Keddie 2003:16).

Taylor (2007) indicates that the term secularisation in general refers to the change from a situation where ‘the political organisation of all pre-modern societies was in some way connected to, based on, guaranteed by some faith in, or adherence to God, or some notion of ultimate reality’ to a situation where ‘the modern Western state is free from this connection’ (Taylor 2007:1). Taylor also explores a second meaning of secularisation namely that of the general ‘falling off of religious belief and practice, in people turning away from God, and no longer going to Church’ (2007:2). Taylor (2007:3) plots a third possibility for understanding current secularisation as follows – ‘The shift to secularity in this sense consists, among other things, of a move from a society where belief in God is unchallenged and indeed, unproblematic, to one in which it is understood to be one option among others, and frequently not the easiest to embrace’.

In the discourses in and surrounding postsecularism, Weber’s notion of disenchantment and reenchantment plays a significant role (Kalberg 2005). Taylor (2007) explores the move from enchanted (pre-modern), to disenchantment (modernity/secularism) to a situation where enchantment is again an option (postmodernity/postsecularism). Keddie (2003) emphasises that the role and function of religion should be seen in the context of socioeconomic relations and the role, function and legitimacy of the modern nation-state. These interrelations are intertwined and complex. Therefore Keddie states (2003:18) ‘Nationalism created an ideological basis for nonreligious loyalties and also made it easier to extend equal rights to citizens professing different religious beliefs, and possible to encourage national networks of production and consumption’.
Borrowing from Bauman (1995), it would seem as if the modern *nation-state* of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (instead of religious institutions) became ‘the centre that holds’. Modernism at its heyday was a celebration of Newtonian science’s ability to order and classify (Bauman 1995:145). Nationalism and the modern nation-state became the new glue to hold modernism together. (We will return to exploring the changing role of the nation-state and the implications for educational policy and citizenship in the next section, section 1.3). Keddie (2003:20) states that the two world wars and following regional upheavals questioned notions of civilization and progress. ‘The civilised peoples’ capacity to commit acts of mass destruction, far worse than anything experienced in the nineteenth century, bred pessimism about progress’ (Keddie 2003:20). Keddie's comments about the impact of the world wars on notions of civilization and progress reveal her (and others') myopia regarding the destruction and havoc modernisation and ‘civilisation’ created in colonisation and the ‘discovering’ of the Americas and Australasia. The experience of the destruction of the world wars when the ‘dogs of war’ turned on one another, most probably was a sobering experience in thinking about progress and civilisation (from a specific European and North American view). Millions of Africans and other peoples however experienced the so-called progress and modernization in *other* registers and different vocabulary than the European colonisers.

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15 Though the results of slavery and colonisation are immense, one should not forget that slavery was not only a European or ‘modern’ endeavour. Slavery is as old as humanity. From the earliest days of the migration of peoples and specifically the trans-Sahara caravans (Briggs 2004:15), was slavery and the exploitation of the weaker tribes and societies an integral characteristic of life on the African continent. But Briggs (2004:16) states very clearly:  

Nevertheless, the trans-Atlantic slave trade is a singular event in human history, not simply because it operated on an unprecedented scale but also because it was so ruthlessly well-organised, and so shattering and wide-ranging in its effects. … It is estimated that between 12 and 20 million Africans were transported across the Atlantic between the late 17th century and the early 19th, a five-week trip in conditions so cramped and unhygienic that it was not unusual for a boat to lose half its human cargo in passage.

The mostly European discourses on modernism and civilisation, slavery and the impacts of colonisation of the inhabitants of Africa, the Americas and Australasia reveal a crucial and not-addressed myopia or blind-spot in Western theorising about modernisation and secularisation.
Interestingly, Keddie (2003:21-23) not only shows differences between countries in the so-called West, but also differences between secularisation in ‘traditional’ European countries and new members of the European Union like Turkey. Although Keddie does not address the issue of secularisation in previously colonised parts of the world, she does acknowledge that while the colonisers mostly celebrated secular ideals and values at home, they encouraged active roles for religious institutions in their colonies (Keddie 2003:21). Not only did the coloniser ‘expect’ religious institutions to partake in the colonising drive, religious institutions themselves saw colonisation as a ‘window of opportunity’ to save the lost.

Catholic orders continued to receive French government subsidies and support for colonial educational institutions by arguing that local nationalists would otherwise take over. Colonial policy sometimes favored certain religious groups, thus increasing sectarian strife – but it also introduced some leaders in colonised areas to Western thinking about secularisation and modernisation (Keddie 2003:21).

Not only does secularisation differ between the colonisers and the colonised, secularisation in Islamic countries look different from other gestalts of secularisation. Keddie (2003:22-25) explores secularisation in Islamic countries such as Turkey, Iraq and Iran and shows the notion of secularisation to be complex and interwoven with political and socioeconomic factors. After World War 1 in Turkey, for example, there was ‘The need for strong government action to establish a secular state [which] was due to the residual strength of existing Islamic institutions and the felt need to catch up with a West that had a long head start in centralization and modernization’ (Keddie 2003:22).

The official sanction of secularisation in Turkey was furthermore driven by Turkey’s ambition to become part of the European Union showing a complex interplay of economic, political and religious options (Keddie 2003:23). After exploring secularism in a number of Islamic countries, Keddie (2003:25) then states that
The fatal association of secularism with autocratic rule and Western influence helps account for the general trend against secularism in the Muslim world; when people want to be free of Western control, they don’t generally envision the path to their salvation in the secularist ideas sovereign in the West. The creation in recent decades of modernized and highly political versions of Islam encourages mobilization of the still-religious masses and provides the elements of an ideology that seems familiar, powerful – and untainted by Western influence.

I suspect an investigation into secularisation in an African context will most probably concur with some of the reactions against secularisation as found in Muslim countries. In a post-colonial Africa the drive to find an own identity and claim ‘back’ cultural and historical histories without the prescriptions and classifications of the West impact on the shaping of secularisation, modernisation and the democratisation of societies on the African continent.

Towards the end of her exploration of the development of secularisation (with the myopic exclusion of Africa, South America and Australasia), Keddie (2003:29) starts to explore the new role religion and religious institutions plays in different strategies of nation-states to address societal ills and challenges. ‘Some people find in revived religious ties and morality a partial or complete solution for such [e.g., crime] problems’. Keddie (2003:30) closes her exploration of the historical development of secularism by foreseeing a backlash against secularism will produce its own backlash.

Keddie (2003:30) does not attempt to describe the content of the backlash against the backlash against secularism. Although the first backlash against secularism is understood as postsecularism (as described for example by Habermas 2006; Harrington 2007; Lafont 2007), a specific gestalt of the second backlash may resemble the so-called militant (or even fundamentalist) turn in/to atheism and publications ‘celebrating’ the possibilities atheism or anti-theism holds (Gray 2008). While Keenan (2002:280) celebrates the end of the 'stranglehold of the secularisation thesis upon sociological imagination', Gray (2008) states ‘An atmosphere of moral panic surrounds religion. Viewed not so
long ago as a relic of superstition whose role in society was steadily declining, it is now demonized as the cause of many of the world’s worst evils.” The reason for this ‘moral panic’, according to Gray, is the ‘sudden explosion in the literature proselytizing atheism’ (2008). Gray mainly refers to the publication of the works of Dawkins (2006), Hitchens (2007) and others. Though Gray also acknowledges the publication of counter arguments, for example the work by Alister McGrath *The Dawkins delusion* (2007) and Charles Taylor *The secular age* (2007), Gray states ‘The urgency with which they produce their anti-religious polemics suggests that a change has occurred as significant as the rise of terrorism: the tide of secularisation has turned’ (2008). Gray (2008) quotes the work of Martin Amis (as an example of ‘anti-religious polemics’) who wrote ‘Opposition to religion occupies the high ground, intellectually and morally’. Gray (2008) closes his essay by saying

> Religion has not gone away. Repressing it is like repressing sex, a self-defeating enterprise. In the 20th century, when it commanded powerful states and mass movements, it helped engender totalitarianism. Today, the result is a climate of hysteria. Not everything in religion is precious or deserving of reverence. There is an inheritance of anthropocentrism, the ugly fantasy that the Earth exists to serve humans, which most secular humanists share. There is the claim of religious authorities, also made by atheist regimes, to decide how people can express their sexuality, control their fertility and end their lives, which should be rejected categorically. Nobody should be allowed to curtail freedom in these ways, and no religion has the right to break the peace.

> The attempt to eradicate religion, however, only leads to it reappearing in grotesque and degraded forms.

From the articles by Keenan (2002) and Gray (2008) it would seem as if the current debate on religion and atheism is far from over and, looking at the number of publications ‘celebrating’ atheism as a real alternative, the next number of years should indicate whether the second or third backlash (Keddie 2002) is a permanent gestalt of late modernity or postmodernity.16

McLennan (2007:859) therefore suggests the following:

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16 The liveliness of the debates surrounding religion in the public sphere is also characteristic of this age as an age of carnival, as described by Hiebert (2003) and Scott (1986).
As with the term postmodern, the 'post' in postsecular need not automatically signal anti-secularism, or what comes after or instead of secularism. For many, the key postsecular move is simply to question and probe the concept of the secular, and to re-interrogate the whole 'faith versus reason' problematic that has so consistently punctuated modern thought (italics in the original).

Kyrlezhev (2008:25) finds the start of the postsecular age to coincide with the start of the postmodern age. He says -

In the postmodern age, religion returns from the solitary confinement to which it was banished by the modern. This is not a return to the old ‘sacred-profane’ structure, however. The postsecular age does not mean desecularisation in the sense of a reversal of the results of secularisation and a return to the old. Restoration is impossible. … The world can no longer be divided into religious and nonreligious. Both spheres now coincide. They mutually penetrate each other to the degree that they are indistinguishable. Today, nothing is intrinsically secular or religious. Everything can be sacred and everything can be profane.

Kyrlezhev (2008: 26-31) attempts to describe some markers regarding the role of religion in this postsecular age. He refers to the support humans and societies find in religion against the uncertainties of the present age; religion ‘has lost its status as a universal lawmaker speaking in the name of God the Creator’; the role of religion as a ‘marker of tradition’ and belonging in the midst of a bewildering diversity. He concludes by stating that ‘God in the postsecular age has no normative image’ (2008:28).

Whatever one’s personal preferences in the different layers and textures of the debate and accusations of illusions (e.g. Hitchens 2003, 2007) and delusions (Dawkins 2006; McGrath 2007) and attempts to describe the (ir)religious character of the present age (or as Marty, 2003, suggests to describe the present age as ‘religio-secular’, I suggest that, for now, to accept the warning offered by Marty (2003:45) that ‘… social scientists have mistaken its [the religio-secular world] mixed composition, and underestimated the strength and durability of its religious components…’. We should, according to Marty (2003: 48) be very careful of ‘applying a single description to cover what has developed, [which] can lead to gross miscalculations and bad strategies’.
The exploration of secularity by Taylor (2007), although seen as a counter-narrative in the ‘moral panic’ (Gray 2008), is a more nuanced attempt to account for the changing fortunes of religion in this postsecular age. Taylor (2007) plots the historical development of secularism through distinctive ‘kairotic moments’ each signifying and resulting in a change, for example the Reformation which Taylor describes as ‘The rise of the disciplinary society’ (2007:90). Towards the end of his book, Taylor (2007:766-772) speculates regarding the future or demise of secularity and contemplates two possible scenarios. The first scenario, following the main arguments of the secularisation thesis ‘sees religion shrinking further’ but not disappearing altogether (2007:768). The second scenario as explored by Taylor (2007:768-769) proposes that humanity will continue to explore and seek for ‘modes of fullness’, re-converting to religions and secularity as thesis ‘will become less plausible over time’ (2007:770). 17

In preparation for our exploration of the role of educational policy in general and specifically the Policy it is important to consider the role of religion in the public sphere and within the specific context of democracy. The South African approach to envision the role of religion in our new democracy is but one example of many secular states trying to plot and regulate religion against the broader context of a postsecular society. Within this context, the author who immediately comes to mind is Jürgen Habermas (2006).

In discussing the contribution of Habermas to the debate on postsecularism, McLennan (2007:866) states that Habermas ‘is the most prominent social thinker to take up the notion of postsecularity’. McLennan (2007:866) calls Habermas’ approach to postsecularism ‘epistemic dialogism’. As discussed in more detail in Chapter 3, Habermas adopted a ‘methodological atheism’ to engage with the role religion plays in modern societies. As has been discussed by McLennan (2007),

17 Whether one agrees with Taylor’s exposition or critical evaluation on the future of secularity, his account based on a methodology exploring a wide variety of texts and discourses provides for a rich and rewarding experience.
Harrington (2007), Cooke (2007) and others, Habermas changed his position on the role of religion in the public sphere post 9/11. Though exploring the parameters of the function of religion in the public sphere, Habermas used to believe that ‘in the long run, religious communities will not be able to withstand the pressures of some unstoppable cultural and social modernization’ (2006:15). This belief in the eventual disappearance of religion from any function in the public sphere, shaped Habermas’ previous proposition which involved a certain asymmetry and discrimination towards religious citizens who should adapt in order to partake in discourse (McLennan 2007:867).

Habermas now proposes that both the religious and the secular should undergo a learning process (as explored more in Chapter 3). McLennan (2007:867-869) however discusses three ‘residual problems’ with Habermas’ postsecularism. McLennan’s first concern is the fact that Habermas seems to equate ‘secular’ with ‘non-believing’ which is empirically questionable (McLennan 2007:867).

McLennan’s second concern is that

Religion may cultivate a range of social and moral goods, but it may equally well poison them too, and meanwhile many of the qualities supposedly distinctive of religion – collective morality, existential meaning, love, creativity and imagination, social energy, and spirituality – are readily encompassed and celebrated within a secular humanist outlook (2007:868).

McLennan’s third concern regards Habermas’ proposal for an epistemic learning process. McLennan (2007:868) writes

It is implausible because from within the perspective of secular sociological naturalism (broadly conceived), the question of the ‘truth content’ of claims about heaven and hell, God’s grace, salvation and the rest cannot really be entertained: these items are not candidates for truth and explanation (italics in the original).

The conclusion McLennan reaches is that Habermas is ‘backing the wrong horse when he seeks to base democratic dialogue on epistemological reflexivity’ (2007:868). McLennan calls reflexivity ‘over-rated’ and ‘more effective in matters of ethics than of truth, and in relation to life-affecting events rather than
propositions’ (2007:868; italics in the original). McLennan proposes a return to Habermas’ previous position indicating that religious citizens and religious theorists ‘do indeed have a larger cognitive and political burden to bear in secular society’ (2007:869).

Although I agree with McLennan’s main ‘residual problems’ with the way Habermas resolves the tensions in postsecularism, I disagree with his statement that religious citizens have a ‘larger cognitive and political burden’ to bear in the secular public sphere. It seems to me that McLennan makes the same mistake when he accuses Habermas of defining secular singularly as meaning non- or anti-religious. Should secularism mean a clear separation between state and religions, there is no reason to expect believers to bear a ‘larger cognitive and political burden’. Especially when, and here I agree with McLennan, the public discourse does not discuss the truth claims of religions – these claims, as McLennan states are not ‘candidates for truth and explanation’ (McLennan 2007:868).

Now in a post 9/11 world, Habermas proposes a move away from a post-metaphysical vocabulary in the public sphere because the public discourse ‘is impoverished if it loses contact with religious sources of illumination and inspiration’ (Cooke 2007:226). In translating religious contributions in the public sphere it

is a matter of rescuing what is valuable from religious traditions while abstaining from judgment as to the truth of the validity claims raised by religious believers. The point of critical engagement with religious traditions is not to cast light on the truth of religious beliefs but to contribute to the semantic regeneration of postmetaphysical thinking (Cooke 2007:226).

Cooke (2007:227) is uncomfortable with Habermas’ suggestion that religious arguments are considered ‘valid’ in the public sphere, although the truth claims are not interrogated. Cooke (2007:227) proposes
a kind of state in which reasons that refer to ‘otherworldly’ sources of validity are deemed admissible in public deliberations about the validity of laws and political decisions, provided the reasoning in question satisfies the epistemological and ethical requirements of what I call non-authoritarian thinking.

Authoritarian thinking according to Cooke (2007:234) is ‘dependent on authoritarian conceptions of knowledge and justification’. Habermas, according to Cooke (2007:227), does not only ‘describe a secularised social order in which religious worldviews continue to shape the identities of many inhabitants; it makes a plea for a model of law and politics in which religious arguments are not excluded from political debate’ (italics in the original).18

As a way forward it would seem as if Ward’s (2006:180) suggestion that in discussing the function, content and role of religion in a postsecular society, we first have to acknowledge that our understanding of religion changes as geographical and historical trajectories of culture change. Ward suggests that any treatment and discussion of religion is per se ideological and that our description of religion should be at best a description of a set of ‘family resemblances’ (2006:180). He states, ‘There is no view from no where – religion is always studied from embodied perspectives, concrete situations, and specific standpoints’ (2006:181). Ward suggests the following trajectories in the future of the study of religion (given our previous discussion of postsecularism):

- Ward foresees firstly a rise (at least in Western Europe) of those who want to study religion. Ward foresees that present discourses in Europe pertaining to ethnicities and citizenship will encourage people to study religion (2006:184).
- Ward also proposes ‘the assumed relationship between secularity and neutrality will be increasingly questioned’ (2006:184).
- The third trajectory Ward discusses is what he calls the increasing ‘polarization between those who talk of spirituality and those who talk of

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18 For a further discussion on Habermas’ views and sources for his views on religion in the public sphere see Lafont (2007).
faith’. Against the backdrop of new forms of religions and new expressions of spirituality, ‘a collection of people will emerge (are already emerging) who are unable to tell the difference between orgasm, an adrenalin rush and an encounter with God’ (Ward 2006:185). Ward refers to the commodification of religion and religion ‘as special effect’ (2006:185).

Against these broader trajectories, ‘faith communities of the future will increasingly wish to distinguish between those who are in the way and those who may seem as if they are in the way and who are not in the way at all’ (2006:186). Ward is quick to state that he does not refer to fundamentalism, but that self-definition will, according to him, become increasingly important among religious groups.

Within the study of religion as discipline against the phenomenon of postsecuralism, Plaskow (1999) explores the ‘decentering’ of the study of religion since 1970. Plaskow (1999) specifically explores the ‘decentering’ that took place in the American Academy of Religion, but I suspect it may have relevance on a wider front. Plaskow states that in the 1970s and 1980s the Academy was still very ‘western and Christian focused’ (1999:526). In the years following the growth of feminist approaches to the study of religion impacted on the centre of the study of religion. The centre however remained Protestant and western (1999:527). With time ‘Catholics and Jews, lesbians and gay men, Hispanics, and Asian Americans’ sought a place in the Academy resulting in ‘different visions of collective life’ and the Academy becoming a ‘condensed form [of] the wider cultural malaise over the increasing fracturing of, and competition among, identities, the concern about where it will all end, and the desire to find something that holds us all together’ (Plaskow 1999:528). Plaskow emphasises that the study of religion is not and should not be separated from the broader discourses on gender, race, sexuality, and economic inequalities in the face of hegemony of the Market (1999:533-535).
King (2002) attempts to plot the future of religious studies ‘as we know it’ and contemplates the impact of postmodern, feminist and spiritual challenges to the study of religion. According to King (2002:366) the contemporary challenges facing the study of religion are ‘new thinking and new sensibilities’ and secondly, ‘numerous sociopolitical and institutional changes that affect the development of religious studies as an academic field’. King (2002:369) describes the present day context of religious studies as follows:

The frequent rejection of the notion of the classical, postcolonial critique and that of orientalism by contemporary religion scholars, the discursive shift from a Eurocentric to a more integrated global approach (though it could also be argued that we have moved away from a European hegemony to another one, namely, a North American dominance in the study of religions), and the widespread shift of interest from the study of ancient religions to that of living religious traditions and of new religious movements, together with a questioning of the excessive privileging of textual sources in the past study of religions, have made space for giving greater attention to a wide variety of comparative, oral, and other empirical data not taken into account by previous generations of scholars.

King (2002:369) describes the wider context of present day religious studies as ‘thoroughly global, cross-cultural, postcolonial, critical, and consciously interrogative of previous stances and modes of inquiry’. She (King 2002: 370-382) continues to analyse specific challenges from postmodernism, feminism and new spiritual sensibilities. Despite postmodernism containing ‘destructive and nihilistic’ elements, the radical critique against metanarratives in postmodernism also ‘provides new opportunities for studying and interpreting religion afresh’ (2002:370).

Postmodernism has dislodged the autonomous subject, but it has also undermined the false claims of a disinterested objectivity that has distanced and alienated human subjectivity from its very object, from specifically human ways of knowing, which are relational and dialogical, even when dialogue remains an inner one within the thinking subject (King 2002:371).

In her concluding reflections, King (2002:382) states that

All too often the dominant paradigm in religious studies has been to
understand religions through the collection, analysis, and explanation of historical, phenomenological, and comparative data, presented as some kind of objectified, neutral description, eschewing subjectivity as far as possible. For many scholars, this was linked to the aim of at least approximating, if not achieving in full, some form of objective, scientific knowledge.

In this journey to critically evaluate the Policy, it will therefore be necessary to understand the Policy not only against the broader backdrop of postmodernity and its (dis)contents and the discourses in the study of religion, but also to understand the Policy against the impact of postmodernity and more specifically globalisation on the function, identity and roles of the nation-state. With the changed status and role of the nation-state, educational policy is an important strategy of the nation-state to shape particular visions of democratic identities.

1.3.3 Educational policy and the nation-state: looking for cohesion and allegiance

In Chapter 4 and specifically Chapter 5 we will return to educational policy as a strategy in the broader legitimating crisis of the new South African democracy. In order to complete this Introduction, it is important to explore notions of citizenship against some of the broad features of the changed role and function of the nation state. In this section I will take as dialogue partners Zygmunt Bauman’s exploration of the nation-state against the broader context of globalisation and modernity (1995; 1998; 2000, 2004 and 2006) as well as discussions on Habermas’ (2001) proposal for constitutional patriotism as a way to address the crisis of legitimacy in the nation-state (Hayward 2007; Müller 2007).

Many nations are in processes of redefining their definitions of citizenship to address the increase in complexities and the dynamics of pluralism and migration (see for example Kerr 1999, Werbner 2002) but also to address insecurities of the nation-state with regard to the changed profile of their citizens. Concepts such as nationality, nation-state and citizenship are in flux and are the focus in

Jackson (2003) situates his exploration of citizenship, education and religious diversity against the re-visioning of citizenship in a world of increasing plurality as a result of globalisation and postmodernity. Jackson (2003:2) provides a short overview of the history of the notion of citizenship in which he shows some changes in prerequisites for citizenship ranging from property ownership to an emphasis on rights and duties. His overview does not account for the complex power-interrelationships based on socioeconomic, gender, racial and class factors. Other authors (e.g. Boellstorff 2005; Bernstein 1996; Fox 2006; Werbner 2002) have broadened the discussion of the histories of citizenship to include different requirements based on class, religion, education, gender, biological and racial characteristics19.

In his overview of citizenship education in 16 countries, Kerr (1999:11) identifies the following challenges facing citizenship education:

- the rapid movement of people within and across national boundaries;

19 The interrelatedness of gender, religion and citizenship is succinctly explored by Boellstorff (2005). He explores the ‘incommensurability’ of gender, religion and citizenship in the specific context of lives of gay Muslim men in Indonesia.
• a growing recognition of the rights of indigenous peoples and minorities;
• the collapse of political structures and the birth of new ones;
• the changing role of women in society;
• the impact of the global economy and changing patterns of work;
• the effect of a revolution in information and communications technologies;
• an increasing global population, and;
• the creation of new forms of community.

Kerr (1999:9-10) found that the countries investigated either had a ‘values-explicit’ or ‘values-neutral’ approach, with the first mentioned being favoured. Kerr (1999:28) further warns that citizenship education is context-specific and what works in one context ‘cannot be simply adopted and expected to achieve the same ends somewhere else’. Kymlicka (2002:284) plots the current debates on citizenship as being ‘linked to liberal ideas of individual rights and entitlements on the one hand, and to communitarian ideas of membership in and attachment to a particular community on the other’. Except for certain theoretical developments surrounding citizenship, Kymlicka (2002:284) also plots the following events and trends that influence the current debates on citizenship:

• increasing voter apathy;
• long-term welfare dependency in the United States;
• the resurgence of nationalists movements in Eastern Europe;
• the stresses created by an increasingly multicultural and multiracial population in Western Europe;
• the backlash against the welfare state in Thatcher’s England;
• the failure of environmental policies that rely on voluntary citizen cooperation;
• disaffection with globalisation; and
• the perceived loss of national sovereignty.

20 For a full discussion of different approaches to citizenship education, see Kerr (1999).
21 Kymlicka (2002) further discusses citizenship theory against the background of the discourses in/on utilitarianism, liberal equality, libertarianism, Marxism, communitarianism, multiculturalism and feminism.
He summarises that the ‘health and stability of a modern democracy depend, not only on the justice of its basic institutions, but also on the qualities and attitudes of its citizens’ (Kymlicka 2002:284-285) which he lists as

- their sense of identity, and how they view potentially competing forms of national, regional, ethnic, or religious identities; their ability to tolerate and work together with others who are different from themselves; their desire to participate in the political process in order to promote the public good and hold political authorities accountable; their willingness to show self-restraint and exercise personal responsibility in their economic demands, and in personal choices which affect their health and the environment. Without citizens who possess these qualities, democracies become difficult to govern, even unstable (2002:285).

Combine these expectations with the inability of the nation-state to provide sustainable healthcare, security and employment opportunities, and we need ‘a fuller and yet more subtle understanding and practice of citizenship’ (Cairns and Williams quoted by Kymlicka (2002:285).22 Except for locating this critical evaluation of the Policy in the context of the broader discourses on defining the ‘good citizen’, notions of the ‘good citizen’ are intrinsically linked to the changed experiences of nationality and the identity crisis in/of the nation-state.

In his 1995 essay, ‘Searching for a centre that holds’, Bauman plots the nation-state’s insecurity and impotence against on the one hand increasing globalisation and on the other hand new tribalism and ‘smaller-scale allegiances – territorial and non-territorial, claimed to be natural or self-admittedly contrived’ (Bauman 1995:152; see also Guibernau 2007). The actual power of present-day nation-states to control the flow of humans and capital is ‘withering away’ (Bauman 1998:56). Nation-states increasingly lack ‘real’ authority over internal affairs, and find their security in groups of states and alliances buying securities and comfort by prescribing to the rules of the game as prescribed by groups like the European Union, the International Monetary Fund, and others (Bauman 1998:63).

The military, economic and cultural self-sufficiency, indeed self-sustainability of the state – any state – ceased to be a viable prospect. In

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22 For a discussion on ‘active’ and ‘passive’ notions of citizenship, see Kymlicka 2002:288-291.
order to retain their law-and-order policing ability, states had to seek alliances and voluntary surrender ever larger chunks of their sovereignty (Bauman 1998:64).

Bauman (1998:66) quotes Castoriadis at length who wrote

In the cabaret of globalisation, the state goes through a striptease and by the end of the performance it is left with the bare necessities only: its powers of repression. With its material basis destroyed, its sovereignty and independence annulled, its political class effaced, the nation-state becomes a simple security service for the mega-companies...

The new masters of the world have no need to govern directly. National governments are charged with the task of administering affairs on their behalf.

Just as the nation-state is withering away, so too are the traditional communities that used to provide stability and security to individuals. Individuals are discovering more frequently that these communities are nothing more than temporal places of safety (Bauman 2000:169-172). In the past nation-states relied on a mixture of nationalism and patriotism to shape notions of citizenship (Guibernau 2007). Most nation-states had dominant groups with regard to language, culture and/or religion that shaped descriptions of citizenship and underscored a clear idea of what a ‘good citizen’ looks like. As the economic and political roles of nation-states changed, as well as with the increasing reality of pluralities in previously fairly homogenous states, nationalism and patriotism have changed and are in flux. In these liminal spaces that nation-states find themselves in – between what once was and what needs to be – constitutional patriotism as proposed by inter alia Habermas (2001) seems like a viable and legitimate option23.

Constitutional patriotism is proposed by Habermas (2001) as a possible ‘centre that holds’ in democracies dealing either with traumatized pasts and/or with democracies trying to provide a ‘centre’ in the light of increased pluralism24.

23 Constitutional patriotism as proposed by Habermas (2001) is part of a broader ‘deliberative turn’ in democratic theory as explored, for example by Dryzek (as quoted by Kymlicka 2002:291).
24 For a discussion on the German specific background to the debate on citizenship and constitutional patriotism in particular, see Feldman (2003).
Elveton (2003:131) summarises Habermas’ (2001) three claims as follows:

First, since the nation state is a contingent product of modern history, its essential characteristics cannot be assumed to be timelessly prescriptive. Second, the pressing challenges of globalisation reveal the vulnerability of the nation state to forces over which it ultimately has no control, forces that even today signal its eventual demise. Finally, a new, abstract and cosmopolitan consciousness is the only politically and ethically acceptable alternative to the tensions and contradictions of current international economics, politics, and society.

In her discussion of Habermas’ description of constitutional patriotism, Hayward (2007:182) states that democratic states and institutions need democratic citizens. Hayward (2007:182) explains this seemingly obvious fact by saying ‘It [constitutional patriotism] requires, …citizens who regard one another as political equals, who are motivated to engage one another in collective deliberation, and who are willing to accept as legitimate the laws that democratic processes yield’.

Citizens in a bounded space like a nation-state need to identify with fellow-citizens in the same bounded space – often with whom they do not share anything but being and living and being committed (often in varying degrees) to the same nation-state. Shared citizenship is a reality for citizens ‘only if they feel some sense of identification with those strangers: some sense of solidarity with them, some sense of sharing with them a collective purpose or collective project’ (Hayward 2007:182).

In the search for a cohesive force or ‘centre that holds’ we encounter ‘identity’ as a friend but also as a formidable enemy. Discovering and shaping identity requires per se ‘practices of other-ing’ (Hayward 2007:182). In defining ‘we’ we are by implication also defining those who are ‘not-we’, or the ‘other’. Hayward summarises this seeming catch-22 by stating ‘Thus, identity is a problem for democracy in the sense that democracy cannot work without it, and yet cannot unequivocally embrace it’ (2007:183). Habermas and others therefore search ‘for

25 Although I use Hayward (2007) as dialogue partner in exploring constitutional patriotism as proposed by Habermas, see also Canovan (2000), Elveton (2003), Feldman (2003), Lupel (2005) and Müller (2007),
forms of civic identification that meet the democratic polity’s need for allegiance and for solidarity, while at the same time fostering tolerance toward those defined as outside the civic “we” (Hayward 2007:183).

Habermas proposes that constitutional patriotism can be a strong enough cognitive as well as affective bond, stronger than individual differences, ethnicities and particularities of gender, culture, history and socioeconomic class. ‘A civic identity rooted in liberal and democratic constitutional principles, he suggests, can perform the integrative function that democracy needs without becoming vulnerable to strategic exploitation’ (Hayward 2007:183). According to Hayward (2007:184) Habermas’ proposition of constitutional patriotism should be understood against the discourses on German identity after the Holocaust as well as the discourses on identity and ethnicities in the broader context of European economic and political integration. In both contexts, namely establishing a German identity after the Holocaust and merging a number of identities in a new arbitrary administrative, political and economic construct – the European Union – the need to find and describe a ‘centre that holds’ is crucial. Such a ‘centre’ should not only stand the test of reason but also have an affective dimension.

If I understand Habermas correctly, (and here I am in agreement with Hayward 2007), Habermas proposes a citizenship that is not based on ‘passive inheritance’. Even if it was, citizenship should always be responsive to reinterpretation (Hayward 2007:184). Hayward summarises the views of Habermas by stating that citizenship is ‘an artifact of political practice’. Except for citizenship being an ‘artifact’, Habermas suggests that citizenship is always in process. ‘Citizen identity is an affiliation that people continuously create and re-create through a series of ongoing public conversations’ (Hayward 2007:184). Collective political societies are bound to the past – whether this bounding is comfortable or not. There are ample examples of a people’s link with the past. Germany, and Germans – even those Germans who are recently born or recently accepted as citizens, are bound to the legacy of the Holocaust. In the same way
are South Africans, and more particular Afrikaners, bound to the legacy of apartheid. Even though today’s generation feels that they were not responsible and that they did not benefit [sic] from the apartheid dispensation, they are bound to the past. Notions of nations and citizenship inevitably carry with them a history – a constant burden26. ‘Still, Habermas underscores, there is much room for collective agency as citizens debate with one another and as they decide together how to relate to their past’ (Hayward 2007:184; italics in the original). Habermas proposes (2001) that although the past and a political entity's relationship to a past is a fact, that citizens can examine and deliberate how they want to relate and remember the past27. Important though, Habermas suggests that these analyses and deliberations take place within the specific context and framework of ‘constitutional liberal and democratic principles’ (2001). A new identity can be collectively and deliberately (in more than one sense) constructed.

Thus constitutional patriotism, as Habermas conceives it, differs substantially from more conventional understandings of patriotic attachment. It is a form of identity citizens create and re-create by participating in collective deliberation about how to interpret and institutionalize principles of constitutional democracy: democratic principles of free, equal, and inclusive collective self-determination and liberal principles that support human rights (Hayward 2007:185).

Habermas (2001:10) writes ‘in complex societies it is the deliberative opinion – and will-formation of citizens, grounded in the principles of popular sovereignty, that forms the ultimate medium for a form of abstract, legally constructed solidarity that reproduces itself through political participation’. I suspect my unease with Habermas’ emphasis on the deliberative nature of democracy is the assumption that everyone in the democracy has an equal standing on this deliberative platform and that everyone’s voice counts and is listened to. As

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26 Feldman (2003:257) mentions the often overlooked factor of weariness of the lingering negative legacy of the Nazi period. In the debates surrounding the reshaping of a South African identity, the weariness surrounding the legacy of Apartheid and continued claims for apology and restitution play a similar fatiguing role.

27 In the book by Goldhagen published in 1996, he explored how the ordinary Germans ‘willingly executed defenceless civilians, women, children and old people, simply because they were Jews’ (Feldman 2003:261). Although Goldhagen tried to move the debate from collective guilt to collective responsibility, the debate surrounding the publication of his book reiterated the complexities and dynamics of a people coming to terms with their past (Feldman 2003:262).
Hayward (2007:182) indicated, a democracy needs ‘democratic citizens’ – citizens that can partake on an equal footing on this deliberative platform. Although Habermas (2001) positions this deliberative platform within the specific context of constitutional principles, I am not sure that the playing field is leveled enough for everyone to take part\(^{28}\).

Hayward (2007) summarises criticism against constitutional patriotism as proposed by Habermas in two categories. On the one hand constitutional patriotism is regarded as ‘too thin’ – not really inspiring ‘civic solidarity and trust’ and severely under-accounting for the affective dimensions of citizenship, and on the other hand she suggests that constitutional patriotism is maybe not thin enough – not really accounting for the impact of viewing national identity through the lenses of ‘particularistic identities’ and the dynamic historic interplay of language, culture and other dimensions of societal life. For the sake of our reflection on the role of religion and the study of religion in shaping a particular national identity in South Africa, it is necessary to take these criticisms as proposed by Hayward (2007: 186-189) seriously.

In discussing the criticism of constitutional patriotism as ‘too thin’ or ‘bloodless’ (Müller 2007:197), Hayward discusses three dimensions of national identity namely

- ‘For identity to perform the integrative function that democracy requires ... citizens need some compelling sense of why it is that they form a political “people” with some particular strangers and not with others’ (Hayward 2007:187).
- The second dimension Hayward (2007:187) finds lacking is that constitutional patriotism is ‘insufficiently constitutive’. Because

\(^{28}\) Interestingly, Feldman (2003:260) highlights that the disillusionment following the unification of Germany resulted in increased xenophobia and violence. ‘Germans blamed and ostracised those on the margins of society to protect a threatened body politic, a response to crisis that comes dangerously close to the Nazi practice of blaming, expelling and finally killing the paradigmatic outsiders, the German Jews’. To what extent the current increase in xenophobia in South Africa can be attributed to certain disillusionment regarding the ‘benefits’ of (or rather lack of shared benefits) a new South African identity may enrich the discussion on citizenship.
constitutional patriotic identity ‘is arrived at procedurally, through public deliberation, [it] cannot be understood to reflect an enduring truth about who I am and about my place in the world’ (Hayward 2007:187).

- The third dimension lacking with regard to national identity as proposed by constitutional patriotism is that ‘it is insufficiently naturalised. Even if identity is in fact a construct, some critics argue, if it is to perform the binding work that democracies require, it must appear to those who bear it to be natural’ (italics in the original). Hayward continues to state that civic identity must feel like ‘kinship’ and ‘destiny’ (2007:187). She continues, ‘Democratic citizens must experience identity, more often than not, pre-reflexively: not as something they consciously create, but as something that “just is”’ (Hayward 2007:187).

The counterargument that constitutional patriotism is not thin enough, the issue at stake is that constitutional patriotism does not take seriously enough that citizens partake in the debate through the lenses of their own ‘particularistic identities’. Hayward writes (2007:187-188)

There is a dominant language that citizens use when they deliberate. There are dominant ethical beliefs and cultural values, which shape the terms of deliberation. Hence the narratives that inform the thin political culture are necessarily influenced by a thick majority culture. The heroes, the holidays, the monuments the political society depends upon as mechanisms to foster civic identification are culturally particularistic, and inevitably so. Constitutional patriotism needs these mechanisms, the claim is. It leans on them to foster identification. Therefore, constitutional patriotism cannot escape the identity problem that plagues more conventional brands of patriotism. It always relies upon, it always tacitly assumes, ‘thick’ particularistic identities.

Habermas (2001: 102) suggests in response to these criticisms that identity always is a ‘learning process’ in which people always transcend some aspects of local and particularistic ethno-cultural identities. Elveton (2003:133) writes ‘Significantly, Habermas views the achievement of a cosmopolitan consciousness as a step along the same historical path that led from an earlier
period emphasizing cultural homogeneity to the more abstract democratic ideal of a self-legislating polity’ (Elveton 2003:133).

The formation of collective identities as ‘learning process’ is acknowledged by Hayward (2007:189) when she refers to experiments regarding the shaping of collective identities proving that collective identities can be learned. Although on the one hand providing support for interventions to shape national collective identity, it also warns about the ‘malleability of identification’ 29 (Hayward 2007:189). Elveton (2003:135) further questions the assumption that this ‘learning process’ as proposed and assumed by Habermas, will necessarily have a harmonious outcome, rather than ‘tragically conflicting’. She evaluates the issue of ‘compatibility’ and writes ‘The possibility that a harmonious over-lapping and expansion of life-worlds can be demonstrated on one or another historical scale does not rule out the possibility in principle that some life-world structures are ultimately incompatible’ (Elveton 2003:135).

Hayward (2007:189-192) continues then to explore ‘constitutional patriotism and its others’. Hayward explores the dilemma (and inherent dangers) in defining ‘us’, because in the act of defining the ‘we’, we also define and classify the ‘not-we’, the ‘others’. ‘To the extent that principles effectively motivate people to recognize some set of strangers as co-citizens, they can promote intolerance of, even violence directed at those they define as outside the civic “we”’ (Hayward 2007:189). There are furthermore enough examples throughout recent history of the impact of such classifications, for example in Rwanda, Kosovo and Kenya. According to Hayward, Habermas is aware of the fact that even if national identity is defined through a deliberative process based on constitutional principles, it will also exclude. According to Habermas (Hayward 2007:190) such exclusion is legitimate. With regard to the role of constitutional principles, Hayward (2007:190) writes ‘Hence they not only set the terms within which citizens

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29 For critical discussions on postmodern constructions of identity see Hiebert (2003), Bauman (2000) and Wilmsen & McAllister (1996).
deliberate with one another, but further counsel against intolerance and violence in all its forms, including intolerance and violence directed at those who do not endorse constitutional principles’.

If I understand Habermas and Hayward correctly, it would seem as if the primacy of constitutional principles and their legitimacy is the ‘only’ guarantee against abuse. Even so, Hayward points to the fact that these constitutional principles exclude ‘others’ on ‘normatively unobjectionable grounds’ (2007:190). Furthermore, the protection of such a constitution as well as the advancement of international democracy based on such constitutional principles, becomes questionable when these principles are used to ‘legitimize aggressive attacks against people who do not endorse those principles’ (Hayward 2007:191).

Hayward continues to provide examples of how constitutional principles are used for example in the North-American context to label people and nations as ‘rogue states’, ‘terrorists and tyrants’ and to legitimize the policing and surveillance of borders and private communications.

Hayward (2007:192) alludes to the fact that the category of citizenship unavoidably, ‘delimits an included and an excluded set’.

If understandings of ‘who we are’ that are rooted in universal constitutional principles indeed can motivate citizens to look beyond their private concerns and their particularistic identities, and to take into account the perspectives of those they regard as their interlocutors in processes of democratic deliberation, such identities are susceptible to strategic exploitation by elites who urge the exclusion and policing of, even violent aggressiveness directed at, those they claim threaten constitutional principles. As Habermasians emphasize, the principles that define constitutional patriotic identities can serve as powerful resources for those who would resist their strategic exploitation. At the same time, however, constitutional patriotism’s claims to universality can serve as powerful resources for those who would exploit them (Hayward 2007:192).

Hayward (2007:192) therefore concludes that constitutional patriotism should be ‘less a form of civic identity that solves democracy’s identity problem, than a practice of always resisting identification’ (italics in the original).
1.4 OVERVIEW OF THE CHAPTERS TO FOLLOW

Chapter 2 will introduce the methodology for this study as a specific social constructionist attempt to engage with the systems of meaning that resulted in the Policy as well as perpetuate selected systems of meanings.

While Chapter 1 has located this critical evaluation against the broader discourses of postmodernity, postsecularism and changing notions of citizenship and the role of the nation-state, Chapter 3 will provide a literature review on the discourses shaping the debate on the relationship between religion and education. The literature review will provide an overview of certain watershed debates and contributions in the development of the discourses around critical theory, critical pedagogy and Religionswissenschaft. The literature review will further attempt to result in a logical and scholarly argument that will successfully address the questions of this study. As already acknowledged earlier, throughout this study I have made choices. I have not only included and quoted, I have also excluded sources and perspectives other studies have included or will include in future. In the literature review (and the rest of the chapters) my biases will be acknowledged, and scholarly motivated.

In addressing the first question on the context-specific socioeconomic, educational and political histories and processes that shaped our new democracy and its educational policy framework, Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 will provide a genealogy as well as an archaeology of the political, socioeconomic and cultural process that necessitated and shaped the Policy as a context-specific response. These chapters will explore the ‘tectonic plates’ (Booth 1999) that shaped the need for as well as the processes surrounding and the content of the Policy. In Chapter 4 we will start the genealogical exploration of the socio-historical context of the Policy against the meta-motifs of memory and forgetting (Booth 1999).
Chapter 6 will constitute a policy analysis attempting to answer questions 2, 3 and 4 as suggested in section 1.1 of this chapter. The questions were (2) What are the theoretical and philosophical underpinnings and assumptions of the Policy argument? (3) How does the Policy understand religion and the study of religion? (4) How does the Policy understand the study of religion as a compulsory part of the curriculum in the preparation of learners for citizenship? In other words, how will the study of religion prepare learners not only for citizenship in the national sense but also for an increasingly cosmopolitan citizenry?

As the Policy provides a framework for the development of the curriculum, Chapter 7 will analyse the study of religion as conceptualised by the Revised National Curriculum Statement (NCS) Grades R-9, Life Orientation (2002) as well as the NCS Grades 10-12 Learning Programme Guidelines, Life Orientation (2008) as well as the NCS Grades 10-12 (General) Learning Programme Guidelines, Religion Studies (2008) in the Further Education and Training (FET) band.

As the concluding chapter of this thesis, Chapter 8 will set out to answer the fifth and remaining question underpinning this research – How will the Policy contribute to a critical citizenry who will have the necessary competencies (Mündigkeit) to understand their own religiosity and those of others in the dynamic and complex interplay of religion as a social construct resulting from and perpetuating power-structures that impact and shape our engagement with cultural, socioeconomic, gender, political, educational past, present and future environments?

1.5 (IN)CONCLUSIONS

The central figure in the carnival as explored by Bakhtin was the fool, the clown, the idiot-savants and savant-idiots (Hiebert 2003:116) who in the blasphemous hilarity of the carnival could comment on sacred and profane structures, beliefs
and institutions. In this act of humorous but serious play, the fool often acted as agent of an ‘anti-structure’ (Taylor 2007). The fool also translated the untranslatable, commented on the incommensurable and provided a new vocabulary or language for engaging with the serious and often traumatic nature of everyday-life.

During the carnival as diasporic, kairotic time, the fool could assume the role of the interlocutor ‘inhabiting – not resolving – incommensurability’ (Boellstorff 2005:583). As author, I will inhabit a number of incommensurabilities – personal as well as academic – in this act of writing this thesis. The carnival as proposed by Bakhtin (1984) therefore implies a self-reflexivity (Hiebert 2003:114). This self-reflexivity and self-critique implied by the carnival necessitates that the one doing the analysis can not remain outside of the analysis (Hiebert 2003:114).

In following Hiebert’s exploration of identity in an age of carnival (2003), I will assume various identities in performing this thesis as carnival in an age of carnival. At times I will be a parrot, ‘enacting someone else’s voice’ (Hiebert 2003:118), repeating what others have said, often out of context. During this thesis I will also become an organ-grinding monkey, ‘dressed in a dapper little costume and trained to collect money from passers-by’, and conditioned ‘to perform; conditioned out of the possibility of subversion’ (Hiebert 2003:118). In this heteroglossic carnival, I will inevitably also become medium – possessed of and speaking with many voices, often speaking in voices I don’t understand, becoming xenoglossic, speaking a foreign language without having learned it. And finally, performing this thesis as a glossolalic and often xenoglossic act in a xenoglossic world. Hiebert wrote ‘And the result is a carnivalesque nonsense. Not a meaningless nonsense, but an uncertain, gestural participation in which nothing makes sense, yet the gesture towards the unintelligible is all that matters’ (Goodman quoted by Hiebert 2003:123).
This thesis is on the one hand nothing more than a ‘gestural participation’ in the debates and future debates and discourses surrounding the Policy. On the other hand, this study will provide an example of policy analysis as genealogical discourse analysis. This study will provide some pointers to the possibilities and opportunities the Policy misses and the possibilities the Policy encompasses.
CHAPTER 2
IN SEARCH OF A METHODOLOGY

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter is called ‘In search of a methodology’ to suggest that selecting a methodology for doing this research was not a clear-cut issue. The title further proposes a making public of my own thought-processes looking for an appropriate methodology. In my selection of a methodology I was looking for a methodology that would be personally fulfilling as well as academically or scientifically appropriate. As such the search for a methodology became very much part of my research. My search for an appropriate and fulfilling methodology included exploring general social research methodologies (e.g. Babbie, Mouton, Vorster & Prozesky 2005; Terre Blanche & Durrheim 1999), discourse analysis and critical discourse analysis as specific methodologies (see Schiffrin, Tannen & Hamilton 2001; Van Dijk 1985, 1998) and the theories, politics and methods underlying policy analysis and evaluation (e.g. Fischer, Miller and Sidney 2007; Moran, Rein and Goodin 2006).

As shared in Chapter 1, the ‘why’ of this research was grounded in my personal history and interests, as well as my interests in the academic discourses on the role of religion in the public sphere in a postsecular age. The ‘how’ of my research was however a more difficult question to resolve. I was passionate and determined to explore the possibilities the Policy would open up for a future critical and mündig citizenry but I was not quite prepared for the search for an appropriate methodology to involve so many choices. Different research questions necessitate different methodologies. For example, a comparative evaluation of the Policy with other international examples would have necessitated a different methodology than for example, if the focus of this
research was an empirical exploration on the impact of the Policy on learners’
tolerance.

The answer to the question whether the inclusion of the study of religion in South
African schools can contribute to a more just and compassionate society is
difficult to establish. Yet, there must have been enough people who had believed
that the inclusion of the study of religions could in fact contribute to a more
compassionate and just society for the Policy to have been conceptualised and
processed. The Policy is the result of a consultative and deliberative process
which proposed the inclusion of the study of religions as a viable (and necessary)
option for South Africa with its deeply traumatised past and increasing pluralist
and cosmopolitan future. While there has been very little if any religious strife in
South Africa, there is enough evidence that religion played and still plays an
important role in South African society. The interesting aspect of the adoption of
the Policy is that the inclusion of the study of religions is not in reaction to a real
possibility of religious strife, but to prevent religion (as an important cultural
marker) of becoming a stumbling block in the formation of a new democracy.

To critically evaluate the Policy therefore encompasses taking seriously the
discourses surrounding and resulting in the Policy. The Policy-as-text is the
sedimentation of these discourses but the Policy has also included and excluded
discourses, becoming a discourse on its own. The Policy will also sustain and
perpetuate certain discourses. A critical discourse analysis of the Policy seems to
be an appropriate methodology. Policy analysis and evaluation\(^\text{30}\) is however also
a separate and distinctive discourse in its own right. Though a critical discourse
analysis of the Policy would have been a legitimate scholarly activity, an
evaluation of the Policy seems to call forth that the methods and theories
underlying policy analysis and evaluation should be taken seriously as part of my

\(^{30}\) The two concepts ‘analysis’ and ‘evaluation’ are often used interchangeably in the theories,
methodologies and practices surrounding policy.
methodology. Klein and Marmor (2006:892) say that pinning down a ‘chameleon’ concept like public policy tends all too often to become an exercise in anatomy rather than physiology. The bones are there, right down to joints of the little finger. They can be put together, rather like an exhibit in a natural history museum. But the creature itself, the sense of what drives it and shapes its actions, remains elusive: a victim of the academic drive to taxonomise everything in sight.

For the sake of my own understanding of the ‘physiology’ of policy as chameleon, I will make a distinction between policy evaluation and policy analysis. I will use policy evaluation as the purpose of policy analysis, with the latter taking on a more practical dimension. The following diagram (Figure 1) illustrates the combination of a critical discourse analysis, policy analysis and policy evaluation towards a critical evaluation of the Policy.

![Diagram illustrating the combination of Critical Discourse Analysis, Policy Evaluation, and Policy Analysis](image)

**Figure 2.1: The three elements of the methodology**

**2.2 CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS AS A SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONIST APPROACH**

The Policy is assumed to be a specific response to the specific context of shaping and legitimising of the new democracy in South Africa. The Policy-as-
response has been shaped by historical systems of meaning and power and as it impacts on teachers and learners it will create and perpetuate systems of meaning and power. This research therefore necessitates a social constructionist approach as explored by Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999) assuming that the Policy was shaped by larger discourses but will also shape future discourses. The language used in the Policy-as-text is therefore assumed to have resulted from certain patterns of social meaning (Terre Blanche & Durrheim 1999:149).

Babbie et al. (2005:495) quote Slembrouck as having described discourse analysis as being '(1) concerned with language use beyond the boundaries of a sentence or utterance, (2) concerned with the interrelationships between language and society and (3) as concerned with the interactive or dialogic properties of everyday communication'.

Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999:154) describe discourse analysis as ‘the act of showing how certain discourses are deployed to achieve particular effects in specific contexts’. These authors distinguish further between how discourses operate in the text, the effects the discourses achieve in the texts and the broader context in which the text operates (Terre Blanche & Durrheim 1999:154-156). This three-fold distinction reminds of the three-tier distinction made by Fairclough (1989, 1995) of the different dimensions of discourse analysis. He distinguishes between text analysis (description), processing analysis (interpretation) and social analysis (explanation). Parker (1992, as quoted by Babbie et al. 2005: 496) suggests seven criteria for distinguishing discourses namely the discourse (1) as realised in text; (2) is about objects; (3) contains subjects; (4) is a coherent set of meanings; (5) refers to other discourses; (6) reflects its own way of speaking; and (7) is historically located.

Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999:169) state that social constructionist methodologies (and discourse analysis as one example) are ‘most attuned to the real-world political consequences of texts’. To analyse discourse and make explicit the ‘unspoken, lived notions surrounding power’ (Babbie et al. 2005:495)
is regarded as a specific gestalt of discourse analysis, namely critical discourse analysis (CDA).

CDA 'is a type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance and inequality are enacted, reproduced and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context' (Van Dijk 1998). In her exploration of CDA as 'a research tool', Janks (1997:329) states that 'All social practices are tied to specific historical contexts and are the means by which existing social relations are reproduced or contested and different interests served'. CDA, for her, provides 'multiple points of analytic entry' that are 'mutually explanatory. It is in the interconnections that the analyst finds interesting patterns and disjunctions that need to be described, interpreted and explained' (Janks 1997:329). Van Dijk (1998) states that CDA focuses primarily on societal and political issues and problems, is multidisciplinary and focuses 'on the ways discourse structures enact, confirm, legitimate, reproduce or challenge relations of power and dominance in society' (italics in the original). Van Dijk (1998) furthermore states that since CDA 'is not a specific direction of research, it does not have a unitary theoretical framework' and therefore there are many types of CDA, which may be theoretically and analytically diverse. Despite this diversity, CDA has grown from critical theory and more specifically the Frankfurt Schule (Van Dijk 1998).

Janks (1997:330) shares her understanding of Fairclough’s (1989, 1995) critical model of discourse interpretation in the following illustration (Figure 2.2):
Janks (1997:330) states that Fairclough’s (1995) structure (Figure 2.2) allows for multiple entries into the discourse as text, process as well as sociocultural conditions in stark contrast to analysis as ‘tidily linear’. In applying Fairclough’s (1995) model, she suggests starting with the selected and available text (Box 3 in Figure 2.2) moving towards interpreting the text in the light of its function in the discourse as well as explaining the text in the light of situational, institutional and societal practices and gestalts (boxes 2 and 3).

In selecting documentary sources for this critical discourse analysis, I will focus on:

- The Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) Grades R-9, Life Orientation (2002a)
- The National Curriculum Statement Grades (NCS) 10-12 Learning Programme Guidelines, Life Orientation (2008a)
- The National Curriculum Statement Grades(NCS) 10-12 (General) Learning Programme Guidelines, Religion Studies (2008b)
- Correspondence between various stakeholders
In engaging with these data, I will focus on definitions and rationales, binary oppositions, recurrent terms, phrases and metaphors as well as themes and patterns. In analysing the context of these documents, I will specifically explore socioeconomic, cultural and political developments and contexts in the shaping of and responding to discourses and ideologies. I will also look for evidence on how the discourses changed over time.

2.3 POLICY EVALUATION

Policy evaluation is surrounded by and embedded in discourses of its own (Schwandt 2002, 2005). For the sake of this study, I will introduce the basic tenets of the discourses on policy evaluation as a broad context. I will then proceed to explore specifically Theory-based evaluation (TBE) as the approach I will apply in evaluating the Policy (section 2.4). I will then continue to explore the nature of policy analysis (section 2.5) and the praxis of doing a policy analysis (section 2.6).

Policy evaluation is normally ‘indexed’ within a particular epistemology resulting in prescribed methodologies. The majority of expressed thoughts on evaluation are within a framework of a ‘Cartesian-Kantian subject-centred, self-assertive view of reason’ (Schwandt 2005:76), which allocates to the evaluator the luxury of objectivity and a superior disengaged judgment according to normative criteria. This epistemology presupposes ‘a dichotomy of the mind… and object’ (Schwandt 2005:79) where ‘true’ knowledge of the object requires disengagement and the correct application of method (Taylor 1989). This epistemology assumes that there is a theory of evaluation that should govern all theories of practice; there is a ranked order of illegitimate to legitimate forms of evaluation; there is a progress and development from less sophisticated and informed constructions of evaluation practice in earlier generations of practice to
more sophisticated and informed constructions in later generations (Schwandt 2005:78).

Evaluation practices within the above modernist paradigm of reason have the following characteristics: (1) true knowledge begins in doubt and distrust; (2) engaging in the process of methodological doubting is a solitary, monological activity; (3) proper knowledge is found by following rules and method (rules guide us towards clear knowing, permit the systematic extension of knowledge, and ensure that nothing will be admitted as knowledge unless it satisfies the requirements of specified rules); (4) proper, i.e. scientifically respectable, knowledge depends upon justification or proof; (5) knowledge is a possession, an individual knower is in an ownership relation to that knowledge; (6) in justifying claims to knowledge there can be no appeal other than the appeal to reason itself (Bernstein 1983; Shotter 1993).

According to the views of Fournier and Scriven, (referred to in Schwandt 2005:75), ‘the general logic is principally concerned with the problem of how an evaluator can reason soundly from empirical premises to evaluative conclusions. This epistemological premise is sedimented in four formal steps to be followed, namely ‘(1) establish the criteria of merit, (2) construct standards, (3) measure performance and compare with standards, and (4) synthesise and integrate data on performance into a judgement of merit or worth’ (Schwandt 2005:75). These steps have strong links with ‘a philosophical anthropology built on the notions of an ideally disengaged subject free to treat the world instrumentally and construing society atomistically as constituted by individual purposes, analysably discrete events, and so on’ (Schwandt 2005:76).

Schwandt points to an alternative indexing of evaluation, which he calls practical hermeneutics (2002, 2005). ‘In practical hermeneutics, the human being is a situated, ethical on-going discussion of what we should, could, must be. Understanding is a way of being’ (Schwandt 2005:81). He quotes Gallagher (1992) ‘Interpretation is not something that I (the epistemological ego) do, but
something that I am involved in’ (Schwandt 2005:81; italics in the original).

Contra to the monological assumptions of the Cartesian evaluation mindset, a practical hermeneutics involves an engaged evaluator immersed in plural and heterogeneous views and beliefs. Schwandt (2005:82) elaborates by saying ‘A critical insight here is the knower does not stand as a solitary, subjective spectator over and against a self-contained, self-enclosed object, rather there is a dynamic interaction or transaction between that which is to be known and the knower who participates in it’.

Not only is the evaluator aware of her embeddedness in a specific context, but she is a participant in a dialogue. Schwandt (2005:82) points to the following characteristics of this meeting between the interpreter and that which she seeks to understand as follows:

(1) Interpretation is both constrained and enabled by traditions and preconceptions….In the process of interpretation, this tradition itself undergoes rearrangement and transformation. (2) The act of interpretation is structured as questioning. Questioning opens both the self-understanding of the interpreter and the meaning of the program, policy or project to be interpreted to possibilities and restructuring. (3) Interpreting or understanding always involves application.

Gallagher (1992:153) expands this notion to explain that this understanding of evaluation implicates involvement of the evaluator instead of disengagement. ‘We discover that the person who is understanding does not know and judge as one who stands apart and unaffected but rather he thinks along with the other from the perspective of a specific bond of belonging, as if he too were affected’. The object of questioning is not only the event and focus of the inquiry, but also the interpreter him or herself.

The questioning is not just unidirectional or monological; it is reflective or dialogical. All understanding is self-understanding. Interpretation is a questioning of ourselves not only with respect to the subject matter… it is also a questioning of ourselves with respect to ourselves and our circumstance (Gallagher 1992:157).

In this dialogue neither ‘the evaluator nor the practitioner is thought to face a problem to be solved as much as a dilemma or mystery that requires
interpretation and self-understanding’ (Schwandt 2005:84). Gallagher (1992:152) explains the difference between a problem and a mystery as follows:

A problem is something that can be totally objectified and resolved in objective terms because the person confronting the problem can completely detach himself from it and view it externally… A mystery is something that involves the person in such a way that the person cannot step outside of it in order to see it in an objective manner. She is caught within the situation with no possibility of escape, and no possibility of clear-cut solutions. Indeed, ambiguity is the rule within a mystery.

In opting for evaluation as practical hermeneutics, it is necessary to resist their modernist tendencies, according to Schwandt (2005:85):

- The tendency to conceive of knowledge only as the acquisition of power to control self, society and nature;
- The tendency to assume that method holds the key to knowledge;
- The tendency to define the individual knower as in complete control of self-nature and social arrangements.

This has a number of implications for the role of the evaluator – whether self-perceived or seen, namely

Instead of acting like external consultants, evaluators would seek to make their practice continuous with the work of clients and stakeholders by becoming partners in an ethically informed, reasoned conversation about essentially contested concepts like welfare, health care, education, justice, work life and so forth (Schwandt 2005:86).

This requires what Schwandt calls a ‘critical intelligence’. An operational intelligence ‘is instruction on the status of means and means-end reasoning; it is directed at helping a client get to there from here. Critical intelligence, on the other hand, is the ability to question whether the there is worth getting to’ (Schwandt 2005:87). Schwandt closes his argument for evaluation as practical hermeneutics by saying:

Practical hermeneutics affords a way of retaining a critical voice for evaluators – a voice informed by their special knowledge of what it means to evaluate – but it resituates that voice in a different kind of relationship between evaluator and stakeholders. Those relationships are reconceived as dialogical and aimed at self-transformation. The evaluator engages in critique as a second-person participant in a practice, not as a third-person neutral observer (2005:88).
I would like to use this notion of evaluation as a hermeneutical act as broad context for my evaluation of the Policy, and practical hermeneutics as my specific location. Demetrio (2001) has defined hermeneutics as ‘a theory, methodology and praxis of interpretation that is geared towards the recapturing of meaning of a text, or a text-analogue, that is temporarily or culturally distant, or obscured by ideology and false consciousness’ (online). He further suggests that hermeneutics has three layers of meaning and concerns. There is the theory of hermeneutics ‘which is concerned about the epistemological validity and possibility of interpretation’, also the methodology of hermeneutics ‘which is concerned about the formulation of reliable systems of interpretation’ and the praxis of hermeneutics, ‘which is concerned about the actual process of interpreting specific texts’.

In a critical hermeneutics, the point of departure is that the text to be interpreted is ‘infiltrated with power and forces that are formerly considered extraneous’ (Demetrio 2001). The goal of hermeneutics is therefore to ‘diagnose the hidden pathology of texts and to free them form their ideological distortions’ (Demetrio 2001). The goal of hermeneutics and of this act of evaluation is to engage with the Policy as text and discover (and expose) the ideologies and assumptions on which it is based. It is important to note that this exposé is not an act of judgement on the ‘truth’ of the Policy, but rather an act with the purpose to understand the possibilities existing in the Policy.

In his proposition of a post-structural hermeneutics, Demetrio (2001) combines different elements of dialectical and critical hermeneutics to arrive at his description and use of a post-hermeneutical system. In the act of interpreting, the interpreter engages not only with the text, but also with the historical and cultural context in which the text was produced and in which the interpreter finds him or herself. The act of interpreting is furthermore not a one-way action from interpreter to text, but also from text to interpreter. Out of this dynamic interaction between interpreter, historical and cultural context and text, a meaning
transpires, for now. In the following diagram, Demetrio (2001) illustrates a post-structural system of interpretation (Figure 2.3):

**Figure 2.3: Post-structural system of interpretation (Demetrio 2001)**

The location of this study is situated in a 'post-structural' hermeneutical discourse. Post-structural hermeneutics acknowledges that the subject or interpreter him or herself, is a 'mere intersection of point of the various socio-economic and cultural forces that shape the human individual' (Demetrio 2001). Therefore the interpreter or in this case, evaluator, is him or herself a text, engaging another text in a historical and cultural con-text. This results in the notion that texts (in more than one sense) may contain ‘an infinity of meaning’ (Demetrio 2001). Post-structural hermeneutics is therefore not concerned with ‘eternal truths’ or value judgements, but with ‘meaning of the here and now’ (Demetrio 2001). Post-structural hermeneutics ‘does not only explore the parameters of textuality, but also the institutional, social, and political structures that define the relationship between truth/meaning and power’ (Demetrio 2001).

Another author proposing an interpretive approach to policy analysis is Dryzek (1982:310) who calls for ‘policy analysis as hermeneutic activity’. Taylor (1997) echoes the work by Demetrio (2001) and Dryzek (1982) by calling for a critical
policy analysis in which contexts, texts and consequences are explored. In her approach to policy analysis, Taylor (1997) combines critical discourse analysis in engaging with the policy as text, in a specific context and with certain intended and unintended consequences. Taylor proposes a ‘political model of policy based in a theory of discourse’ (1997:26) and questions the relevance and impact of policy analysis over the last ten years (1997:24).

Taylor (1997:26) states that most of the analysis done conveyed ‘no sense of the political struggles involved in developing and implementing policy’. She continues to emphasise policy documents as texts, which are products of the ‘struggle over meaning’ and quotes Fulcher (1989:7) who alluded to policy process and documents as a ‘struggle between contenders of competing objectives, where language – or more specifically, discourse – is used tactically’ (in Taylor 1997:26).

Taylor illustrates policy-as-struggle as follows (Figure 2.4):

![Figure 2.4: A political model of policy based in a theory of discourse (Taylor 1997:26)](image-url)
In the above illustration (Figure 2.4) Taylor attempts to illustrate that the policy as text is the result of a political struggle in which different discourses clash or combine to have distinctive consequences.

Codd (1988:237) shares Taylor’s view and elaborates on the fact that policy texts are the results of political struggles over meaning and says:

…policy documents can be said to constitute the official discourse of the state (Codd 1985). Thus policies produced by and for the state are obvious instances in which language serves a political purpose, constructing particular meanings and signs that work to mask social conflict and foster commitment to the notion of universal public interest. In this way, policy documents produce real social effects through the production and maintenance of consent.

These texts, although embedded in the political discourses, do not have a single meaning but ‘produce a plurality of readings’ (Codd 1988:239). Discourse analysis is historically known to emphasise the linguistics of and in texts. Taylor (1997:27) quotes McHoul (1984:1-2) who calls this linguistic basis ‘narrowly formalistic’ and refers to policy texts that ‘constitute nodal points or networks of signifying practice generally; networks of discourse which constitute a field of power and knowledge…’ McHoul (1984) explores policy texts as ‘conditions of possibility… how they come to be’ (as quoted by Taylor 1997:27; italics in the original).

In engaging with the Policy it would seem that on the one hand the Policy will produce ‘a plurality of readings’ (Codd 1988), but, on the other hand, be as clear as possible as ‘condition of possibility’ (McHoul quoted in Taylor 1997) to ensure its claims. As I will explore in Chapters 4 and 5, the Policy under scrutiny is a specific ideological response in a specific context. Codd emphasises (1988:243-244) ‘Policy documents … are ideological texts that have been constructed within a particular context. The task of deconstruction begins with the recognition of that context’ (italics added). Policy documents are further evidence of which issues get on the political agenda and which issues are not on the political policy radar (Taylor 1997:28). The role of the analyst is to scrutinise a policy document for its
use of ‘symbolic language’ and ‘condensation symbols’ (Troyna 1994:70). Troyna sourced her use of the concept of ‘condensation symbols’ from the work of Edelman (1964, quoted by Troyna 1994:73) who stated that ‘condensation symbols’ function ‘to create symbolic stereotypes and metaphors which reassure supporters that their interests have been considered. But they are framed in ways that the proposed solutions may also be contradictory or ambiguously related to the way supporters originally viewed the issue’ (Edelman as quoted by Troyna 1994:73).

Interestingly, no matter how carefully policies are crafted and phrased, there are always ‘slippages between rhetoric and practice’ which Taylor defines as ‘policy refraction’ (1997:31, after Freeland, 1981). Policy refraction is not ‘simply a matter of a “gap” between policy objectives and implementation. As implementation evolves, “older and powerful meanings may emerge” which not only impacts on the implementation but, in fact, changes the policy objectives’ (Taylor 1997:32). She concludes her approach to analysing policy documents and processes as ‘contexts, texts and consequences’ (1997:33) by emphasising ‘the many layered nature of policy making and the importance of exploring the linkages between the various levels of the policy process with an emphasis on highlighting power relations’ (Taylor 1997:32).

The aim of this post-structural hermeneutical act is not to judge or evaluate the Policy in a modernist sense, but is an attempt to understand, to describe and explain the Policy as a particular context-specific response. The final evaluation of the Policy will determine to what extent the Policy creates possibilities for meaning-making, rather than judging the meaning of the Policy in itself. With this evaluation of the Policy set against the background of practical and post-structural hermeneutics, I will introduce a specific policy evaluation methodology, namely theory-based evaluation (TBE).
2.4 EXPLORING THEORY-BASED EVALUATION AS HERMENEUTICAL FRAMEWORK

‘Theory-based evaluation’ (TBE) originated in the 1970s and ‘can be described as the analysis and valuation of the contribution of intervention strategies to resolving or controlling social problems’ (Van der Knaap 2004:17). Carvalho and White (2004:141) define TBE as follows:

The theory-based evaluation approach documents the assumptions implicit in program design and points to the data required to test these assumptions. Collecting and analysing such data through quantitative and qualitative techniques enhances understanding of the validity of the assumptions and the relevance of key program processes.

Birckmayer and Weiss (2000:408) describe TBE as

an approach to evaluation that requires surfacing the assumptions on which the program is based in considerable detail: what activities are being conducted, what effect each particular activity will have, what the program does next, what the expected response is, what happens next, and so on, to the expected outcomes (2000:408).

TBE first investigates ‘the theories on which a policy is based, and then investigates whether the theories on which the program is based are realised in action’ (Birckmayer & White 2000:408). Where traditional approaches to policy evaluation would only evaluate the success of the activities of the programme, TBE suggests that there is a link between the objectives and the manner in which these objectives might be attained by the deployment of resources. The collection of assumptions on which policy measures are based constitutes the policy theory: a system of values, norms and assumptions regarding the causal links between actions and the results of actions and preferences (Van der Knaap 2004:17).

TBE has developed from a number of approaches, as explained by both Van der Knaap (2004) and Stame (2004). Van der Knaap describes the development of TBE as a constructivist approach versus a more positivistic approach. According to Van der Knaap the evaluator can either take a ‘positivist, rational-analytical stance’ – therefore seeing evaluation as seeking the ‘truth’ and whether the
policy theory was indeed the ‘right’ theory, implemented in the ‘right’ manner. On the other hand the evaluator can take a constructivist approach acknowledging that there is no universally ‘right’ theory or approach.

Stame (2004) on the other hand categorises the development of TBE from three different developments in evaluation praxis namely the theory-driven approach proposed by Chen and Rossi (1989), the theory-based approach as developed by Carol Weiss (1997) and realistic evaluation by Pawson and Tilley (1997). While both theory-based and theory-driven evaluation emphasise the central role played by the assumptions and theoretical framework of any policy, realistic evaluation states that

we cannot know why something changes, but only that something has changed from status ‘a’ (without stimulus, without programme) to status ‘b’ (with stimulus, with programme) in a given case. And that is why it is so difficult to say whether the change can be attributed to the programme. The realist approach is based on a ‘generative’ theory of causality: it is not programmes that make things change, it is people, embedded in their context who, when exposed to programmes, do something to activate given mechanisms and change… (Stame 2004:62).

TBE accepts there are numerous ways to ‘test’ whether a policy will indeed have the impact it is presumed to have. Many times however ‘outputs and outcomes are not readily observable, either because it is too early for them to have occurred or because they are not easily measurable’ (Carvalho & White 2004:141). According to Stame (2004:63) what makes TBE such an appropriate evaluation response is the fact that it has the capacity to deal with complexity. TBE treats reality as complex because it is stratified, and the actors are embedded in their own contexts; and each aspect that may be examined and dealt with by a programme is multi-faceted. Stame (2004:63-64) emphasises that it is always difficult to determine the impact of a single input. In most policies or programmes of intervention into social problems, policies and evaluators often assume a single, linear chain of influence between definite activities and results.
It is also often assumed that what works in one context, could be applied in different contexts, expecting the same results. For example, what works in one context to effectively address poverty or unemployment, is often duplicated in other contexts. Needless to say, the fact that a policy or intervention worked in one context, does not imply or secure success in another. This is illustrated by Stame when she interrogates an intervention to alleviate poverty by means of micro-credit in a specific region in India involving the Grameen Bank (Stame 2004:67)\textsuperscript{31}.

Often when Policies are evaluated, the evaluators find the Policy to be sound, but yet cannot understand why the Policy does not have the envisaged effect. Stame (2004:69) indicates that often the ineffectiveness of a Policy is the result of a dissonance in its implementation theories (2004:69). Often, according to Stame (2004:69), a policy acknowledges the fact that a multi-dimensional problem requires a multi-dimensional approach. In analysing such a policy’s implementation theories, it is often found that the implementation theories assume a mono-causal explanation and strategy (2004:69; italics added).

According to Stame (2004:58), the seminal dissonance between the policy theory and its implementation theories are to be found in the ‘black box’ of a policy – ‘The black box is the space between the actual input and the expected output of the programme’ (2004:58). In investigating a plane accident it is crucial to find the plane’s black box. The black box contains the flight detail up to the moment of impact, as well as all voice recordings of the conversations in the cockpit.

According to Stame (2004) and others (e.g. Van der Knaap 2004:17), TBE allows an investigation into the so-called ‘black-box’ of a policy. Van der Knaap describes ‘policy theory’ as follows ‘The collection of assumptions on which policy measures are based constitutes the policy theory: a system of values, norms, assumption’ (2004:29).

\textsuperscript{31} For an insightful exploration of the success of the Grameen Bank in India in the micro-credit industry see Stame (2004).
The following diagram (Figure 2.5) illustrates the underlying role of the ‘programme theories’ or ‘black box’.

![Diagram of the black box of a policy](image-url)

**Figure 2.5: The black box of a policy**

Stame (2004) therefore proposes that in comparing the ‘input’ of an intervention with the realised ‘output’, the ‘black box’ in the middle is mostly unexplored. This ‘black box’ however holds the key to understanding policy and its implementation, or lack of implementation.

The Kellogg’s Model of Logic Development (W.K. Kellogg Foundation 2001) looks at the impact of a programme through an analysis of the outcomes, outputs, activities and resources used, as illustrated in Figure 2.6:

![Diagram of the Kellogg’s Logic Development Model](image-url)

**Figure 2.6: The Kellogg’s Logic Development Model (W.K. Kellogg Foundation 2001)**
According to the Kellogg’s Logic Model (W.K. Kellogg Foundation 2001) an analysis of each of the first four different elements or steps can explain the significance of step 5, the impact of the programme. If we apply Van der Knaap’s (2004:17) definition of the black box of policy theory as ‘A system of values, norms, assumptions regarding the causal links between actions and the results of actions and preferences’ to the Logic Development Model proposed by Kellogg (W.K. Kellogg Foundation 2001) the result looks as follows (Figure 2.7):

![Diagram of Logic Model](Image)

**Figure 2.7: An illustration of the role of the black box of policy theory**

TBE (as proposed by Stame 2004 and Van der Knaap 2004) claims that all of these different aspects are influenced by the ‘black box’ of programme theories or put differently, that the black box impacts on all these different elements of a policy and/or programme.

According to Van der Knaap (2004:24), a programme theory (the ‘black box’) has a number of functions, namely:

1. It gives focus. It reduces complexity, which enables the policy maker to give her attention to the most important issues and to, indeed, develop a
clear vision on how to achieve what' (2004:24). This also necessarily has
the draw-back of the danger of tunnel vision and rigidity.

2. It also provides a frame of reference for argumentation, implementation
and the learning processes around policy development.

In following TBE, I will therefore not only explore the discourses that surrounded
the Policy, but specifically the discourses and assumptions that shaped the
Policy. In opening up the ‘black box’ of the Policy, it is necessary to explore
theories underlying the practice of policy analysis as well as looking at the ‘how
to’ of analysing a policy.

2.5 POLICY ANALYSIS

In my initial naïve understanding of policy analysis, I was confused by the fact
that the literature on policy analysis in general refers to the analysis as
encompassing policy formulation, implementation and evaluation. According to
Dunn (1994:75) there are three forms of policy analysis, namely prospective,
retrospective and integrated. Prospective policy analysis refers to the processes
before policy actions are initiated, retrospective policy analysis occurs after policy
actions and integrated policy analysis before and after policy actions. There are
furthermore different models of doing a policy analysis.

One of the models of doing a policy analysis is the rational model as described
of policy making as proceeding in the following stages:

1. Assessment of the environment
2. Identification of aims and objectives
3. Consideration of the alternative methods which are available
4. Selection of methods
5. Implementation
6. Evaluation
Spicker (2006:34) criticises the rational model of policy making and says although it is 'systematic and explicit' it demands more from policy makers 'than may be practical or feasible; the examination of alternative approaches and their consequences is time-consuming, expensive and often speculative'. The rational model of policy making also gives the impression that 'there is a smooth progression from one stage of policy making to the next' (Spicker 2006:34).

Spicker’s third criticism against the rational model is that ‘it ignores the realities of policy making. Policy makers learn as they go along, and even if they do not learn, the things they do are likely to be changed by the experience of doing them’ (2006:34).

Another model of doing policy analysis is the ‘eight-step model’ as proposed by Bardach (1996). Acknowledging that his proposed eight-step framework may be too mechanistic, Bardach proposes some specific steps to remind the analyst ‘of important tasks and choices’ (1996:1). His eight-step process looks as follows:

1. Define the problem
2. Assemble some evidence
3. Construct the alternatives
4. Select the criteria
5. Project the outcomes
6. Confront the tradeoffs
7. Decide!
8. Tell your story

Bardach (1996:4) suggests the analyst’s final product to contain the following:

In a coherent narrative style you will describe some problem that needs to be mitigated or solved; you will lay out a few alternative courses of action which might be taken; to each course of action you will attach a set of projected outcomes that you think your client or audience would care about, suggesting the evidentiary grounds for your projections; if no alternative dominates all other alternatives with respect to all the evaluative criteria of interest, you will indicate the nature and magnitude of
the tradeoffs implicit in different policy choices; depending on the client’s expectations, you might state your own recommendations as to which alternative should be chosen.

He warns however that the problem-solving process is iterative ‘so that you usually must repeat each of these steps, sometimes more than once’ (1996:2). Dunn proposes that ‘Problem solving is a key element of the methodology of policy analysis’ (Dunn 1994:2). Wildavsky (1987:2-3) is however critical of the problem-based nature of most policy analysis. He says ‘…formulating the problem was more like the end than the beginning of analysis’ (1987:3). He continues to state: ‘Policy analysis, however, is one activity for which there can be no fixed program, for policy analysis is synonymous with creativity, which may be stimulated by theory and sharpened by practice, which can be learned but not taught’ (Wildavsky 1987:3).

Dunn (1994:14) proposes a ‘procedural’ five-step model for policy analysis that incorporates five procedures, namely ‘definition’ (problem structuring – conditions that gave rise to the policy problem), ‘prediction’ (forecasting – the future consequences of acting on policy alternatives – including nothing), ‘prescription’ (recommendation – the relative or worth of these future consequences in solving or alleviating the problem), ‘description’ (monitoring – yields information about the present and past consequences of acting on policy alternatives), and ‘evaluation’ (provides information about the value or worth of these consequences in solving or alleviating the problem).

Dunn (1994:17) illustrates the different policy-analytic procedures to different phases of policy-making as follows (Figure 2.8):
Let us briefly consider the different phases as proposed by Dunn (1994).

**Problem structuring:** According to Dunn the process of actually identifying and describing the problem is crucial. Structuring the problem can supply policy-relevant knowledge that challenges the assumptions underlying the definition of problems reaching the policy-making process through agenda setting. Problem structuring can assist in discovering hidden assumptions, diagnosing causes, mapping possible objectives, synthesizing conflicting views, and designing new policy options (Dunn 1994:17; italics in the original).

Dunn proposes the following phases of problem structuring namely problem search, problem definition, problem specification, and problem sensing (Dunn 1994:148). He illustrates it as follows (Figure 2.9):
Figure 2.9: Problem structuring (Dunn 1994:148)

The ‘problem situation…’ is the recognition or “felt existence” of a problem situation’ (Dunn 1994:148; italics in the original). Dunn describes the development as follows:

In moving from the problem situation the analyst engages in problem search. At this stage, the goal is not the discovery of a single problem…; it is rather the discovery of the many problem representations of multiple policy stakeholders. Practicing analysts normally face a large, tangled network of competing problem formulations which are dynamic, socially constructed, and distributed throughout the policy-making process. In effect, analysts are faced with a metaproblem – a problem-of-problems that is ill structured because the domain of problem representations held by diverse stakeholders seems unmanageably huge (italics in the original).

According to Dunn (1994:149) the analyst moves from the problem situation to acknowledging the metaproblem. Only then does the analyst move to the substantive problem defining the problem ‘in its most basic and general terms’ (Dunn 1994:149). With regard to defining the ‘substantive problem’, Dunn warns (1999:149) that the analyst’s worldview would influence his or her selection and definition of the substantive problem.

Once a substantive problem has been defined, a more detailed and specific ‘formal problem’ may be constructed. The process of moving from substantive to formal problem ‘is carried out through problem specification…’ (Dunn 1994:150).
According to Dunn (1999:150) the analyst moves from the substantive problem to the formal problem through the development of ‘a formal mathematical representation (model) of the substantive problem. … Most methods for specifying problems in formal mathematical terms are inappropriate for ill-structured problems, where the main task is not to obtain the correct mathematical solution but to define the nature of the problem itself’.

Dunn emphasises the necessity to deal with the various phases of defining the policy problem with care. It speaks of ‘errors of the third type (E_iii)’. He explains it as follows:

A critical issue of problem structuring is how well substantive and formal problems actually correspond to the original problem situation. If most problem situations in fact contain whole systems of problems (messes), then a central requirement of policy analysis is the formulation of substantive and formal problems that adequately represent that complexity. The degree of correspondence between a given problem situation and a substantive problem is determined at the problem definition phase. Here the analyst compares characteristics of the problem situation and the substantive problem, which is often based on implicit assumptions or beliefs about human nature, time, and the possibilities for social change through government action. Equally important, however, is the degree of correspondence between the problem situation and the formal problem, which is often specified in the form of a mathematical formula or a set of equations (Dunn 1994:151).

He continues to explain the margins for error on the different levels of the problem definition. If analysts, for example, fail to engage with the problem search or stop prematurely, they ‘run the risk of choosing the wrong boundaries of the metaproblem’ (Dunn 1994:151). Dunn describes Type III error by referring to the work by decision theorist Howard Raiffa (Dunn 1994:151). Error of the first type is when a researcher rejects the null hypothesis when it is true, or accepts the null hypothesis when it is false or ‘practitioners all too often make errors of a third kind: solving the wrong problem’.

Only once the problem has been defined does the analyst move to policy formulation, which involves forecasting. According to Dunn (1994:151),
forecasting ‘can provide policy-relevant knowledge about future states of affairs which are likely to occur as a consequence of adopting alternatives, including nothing, that are under consideration at the phase of policy formulation’ (italics in the original).

‘Forecasting’ as described by Dunn (1994) and Spicker (2006) also involves considering non-intervention. ‘Policy analysts routinely have to consider what the effects of non-intervention might be, even when non-intervention is not genuinely being considered a policy option’ (Spicker 2006:111).

In the language of Bardach’s (1996) eight-step analysis, what Dunn (1994) and Spicker (2004) describe under ‘forecasting’, Bardach lists as

1. Construct the alternatives
2. Select the criteria
3. Project the outcomes

With regard to selecting criteria, Bardach warns that criteria for choosing between policy options should be applied to outcomes not alternatives (1996:25). Criteria usually include comparisons in cost-effectiveness, or benefit-cost analysis, or efficiency, or values like equality, equity, fairness, justice. Bardach (1996:45) proposes a matrix in which the alternatives and their outcomes are listed and the outcomes evaluated against the criteria. His proposal looks as follows (Table 2.1):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alternative 1:</th>
<th>Criterion 1:</th>
<th>Criterion 2:</th>
<th>Criterion 3:</th>
<th>Criterion 4:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outcome 1</td>
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<td>Outcome 2</td>
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<td>Alternative 2:</td>
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<td>Alternative 3:</td>
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<td>Outcome 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Outcome 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alternative 4:</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 2.1: Considering the outcomes of different policy alternatives according to set criteria

According to Dunn (1994:18) only once the alternatives have been considered, the analyst gets to ‘recommendation’. ‘Recommendation helps estimate levels of risk and uncertainty, identify externalities and spillovers, specific criteria for making choices, and assign administrative responsibility for implementing policies’ (Dunn 1994:18). ‘Monitoring’ in the implementation phase ‘provides policy-relevant knowledge about the consequences of previous adopted policies… and helps assess degrees of compliance, identify implementational obstacles and constraints, and locate sources of responsibility for departures from policies’ (Dunn 1994:19). Policy ‘evaluation…yields policy-relevant knowledge about the discrepancies between expected and actual policy performance’ (Dunn 1994:19).

In analysing a policy, it is important to demarcate the policy argument which functions as ‘main vehicle for conducting debates about public policy issues’ (Dunn 1994:66). Policy arguments, according to Dunn (1994) have six elements, namely

1. **Policy-relevant information (I):** all evidence at the analyst’s disposal. ‘Information about policy problems, policy futures, policy actions, policy outcomes, and policy performance.’

2. **Policy-claim (C):** The conclusion of a policy argument. The claim follows on the policy information by implying ‘therefore…’. ‘Hence, policy claims are the logical consequence of policy-relevant information’ (Dunn 1994:66).

3. **Warrant (W):** ‘… an assumption in a policy argument which permits the analyst to move from policy-relevant information to policy claim’ and ‘The role of the warrant is to carry policy-relevant information to a policy claim.'
about which there is disagreement or conflict, thus providing a reason for accepting the claim’ (Dunn 1994:66; italics in the original).

4. **Backing (B):** ‘additional assumptions or claims or rebuttals form the substance of policy issues… The consideration of rebuttals helps the analyst anticipate objections and serves as a systematic means for criticising one’s own claims, assumptions, and arguments’ (Dunn 1994:68).

5. **Qualifier (Q):** ‘expresses the degree to which the analyst is certain about a policy claim’ – expressed in the ‘language of probability’ (Dunn 1994:68)\(^{32}\).

Figure 2.10 illustrates the different elements of the policy argument as Dunn proposes (1994:68):

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**Figure 2.10: The different elements of a policy argument**

In the next section I will tentatively apply Dunn’s (1994) proposal on how to analyse the policy argument to the Policy. The following figure (Figure 2.11) provides a glimpse of my analysis using Dunn’s proposal.

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\(^{32}\) In my analysis of the Policy in Chapter 6 I will use these elements proposed by Dunn (1994) to analyse the Policy-argument.
2.6 ETHICAL AND QUALITY CONSIDERATIONS

Patton (2002a:542) explores ‘five contrasting, and to some extent competing, sets of criteria’ with which to evaluate the quality of a qualitative inquiry. Each of those sets of criteria flows from specific perspectives or philosophical frameworks for research. Patton (2002a:542) lists the five frameworks as follows:

- Traditional scientific research criteria
- Social constructivism and constructivist criteria
- Artistic and evocative criteria
- Critical change criteria
- Evaluation standards and principles (utilitarian).

Figure 2.11: An example of applying Dunn’s policy argument schema
Patton (2002b: 265-266) also states ‘diverse approaches to qualitative inquiry… remind us that *issues of quality and credibility intersect with audience and intended inquiry purposes*’ (italics in the original). Patton (2002b: 268-269) continues then to list the criteria originating in the five different approaches to and frameworks of research as follows:

**Traditional Scientific Research Criteria**
- Objectivity of the inquirer (attempt to minimize bias)
- Validity of the data
- Systematic rigor of fieldwork procedures
- Triangulation (consistency of findings across methods and data sources)
- Reliability of codings and pattern analyses
- Correspondence of findings to reality
- Generalisability (external validity)
- Strength of evidence supporting causal hypotheses
- Contributions to theory

**Constructivist Criteria**
- Subjectivity acknowledged (discuss and take into account biases)
- Trustworthiness
- Authenticity
- Triangulation (capturing and respecting multiple perspectives)
- Reflexivity
- Praxis
- Particularity (doing justice to the integrity of unique cases)
- Enhanced and deepened understanding (*verstehen* )
- Contributions to dialogue

**Artistic and Evocative Criteria**
- Opens the world to us in some way
- Creativity
- Aesthetic quality
- Interpretive vitality
- Flows from self; embedded in lived experience
- Stimulating
- Provocative
- Connects with and moves the audience
- Voice distinct, expressive
- *Feels* ‘true’ or ‘authentic’ or ‘real’

**Critical Change Criteria**
- Critical perspective: Increases consciousness about injustices
- Identifies nature and sources of inequalities and injustices
- Represents the perspective of the less powerful
- Makes visible the ways in which those with more power exercise and
benefit from power
• Engages those with less power respectfully and collaboratively
• Builds the capacity of those involved to take action
• Identifies potential change-making strategies
• Praxis
• Clear historical and values context
• Consequential validity

Pragmatic, Utilitarian Evaluation Standards
• Utility
• Feasibility
• Propriety
• Accuracy (balance)
• Systematic inquiry
• Evaluator competence
• Integrity/honesty
• Respect for people (fairness)
• Contributions to program improvements
• Responsibility to the general public welfare (taking into account diversity of interests and values)

The methodology I propose is situated in Patton’s (2002b: 267) ‘social construction and constructivist’ approach, but my approach also borrows selectively from the other four approaches. In discussing the possibility of mixing perspectives and approaches to research, Patton (2002b: 272) states that although various mixes are possible and even desirable in certain contexts, a particular research project is often dominated by one paradigm and supported by others33.

The following figure (Figure 2.12) illustrates my approach to these criteria:

33 For a discussion on the inherent dangers in mixing approaches see Patton (2002b:273).
Figure 2.12: Research quality criteria

In this study I hope to provide evidence of the systematic rigour of my thought processes and interpretation of data as well as contribute to the discourses in the study of religion and the field of policy analysis (traditional scientific research criteria). I also hope that the way I engage with this research has a certain aesthetic quality as well as interpretive vitality, that it would provide evidence of another way of looking at religion and the study of religion as well as provoke and stimulate critical interrogation (artistic and evocative criteria). This research as situated in critical theory and critical pedagogy also borrows from 'critical change criteria' trying to make visible the Policy as the result of power and ideological struggles over meaning-making. My historical and reflexive analysis of the evolving discourses resulting in the Policy will attempt to provide evidence of 'consequential validity'. This Policy analysis is also embedded in the 'pragmatic and utilitarian' framework and may result in 'program improvements'.

The criteria flowing from a constructivist approach to research is however central in my research. I have already acknowledged my subjectivity and have outlined my assumptions and biases. By sharing my biases and personal history, I hope to build rapport with the reader as well as increase the trustworthiness and authenticity of this account. I have gathered data from a range of sources, official documentation, scholarly articles, newspaper articles as well as engagement with my supervisors in an attempt to triangulate different opinions and multiple
perspectives. The format and the content of this thesis will speak of a personal approach to reflexivity and particularity and will hopefully result in increased understanding (*verstehen*). Finally I hope this thesis in whatever small way should contribute to the dialogues surrounding the Policy and its implementation.

Patton (2002b:277) points to and discusses a number of major developments in the field of qualitative inquiry and states that concerns about the ethical dimensions of qualitative inquiry was one of the major developments in the last two decades. Patton (2002b:278) warns that researchers can never fully foresee what impact their research will have on their own lives, and those whom they interviewed or observed. Revealing identities and personal communication between researcher and research participants can open up spaces of paradox and clashing interests. Guillemin and Gilliam (2004) reflect on the importance and impact of ‘ethically important moments’ in doing research. These moments, according to Guillemin and Gilliam (2004: 264) are the moments when researchers are confronted with making a choice regarding information or data, whether to reveal or rephrase, to protect or reveal, etc. Ellis (2007), Moore (2007) and Coghian (2001) explore the difficult spaces confronting researchers in these choices of revealing as well as the impact these choices have on researchers, their contexts, their research as well as the often- unintended consequences of research.

In doing this research I did not expect many of these ‘ethically important moments’. At the start of the research I foresaw the research as a ‘straight-forward’ analysis of the Policy – its contents and the processes that resulted in its formulation and acceptance. Although I had access to ‘insider’ correspondence and documentation, I could not foresee that referring to their content would be controversial or embarrassing. As my interrogation of the processes and the inclusion/exclusion of persons and concepts developed, the more I was confronted with ‘ethically important moments’. The Policy as ‘official discourse of the state’ (Codd 1988; Taylor 1997) brought to the fore political claims and
counter-claims, the impact of personal views and biases of public figures on the formulation of the Policy and its processes as well as the dynamic interplay between the often ‘invisible’ members of various committees and task-teams.

I was firstly confronted with deciding on the necessity of revealing detail of correspondence that provide an interesting picture of the nature of policy development in the South African context. Revealing the detail would possibly have embarrassed the involved parties. And, as I reflected on the possibilities, the revelation does not alter my findings regarding the Policy. The information in question was mainly informative in nature and not really critical in the focus of my research. I therefore decided not to refer to the information. Should the focus of my research have been different, then I may have decided differently or have pursued other avenues of addressing these ethical dilemmas.

The second ethical dilemma I faced was how much of my personal history to reveal. The inclusion of aspects of a ‘narrative methodology’ (Noy 2003) posed the question of deciding on what to share. My decision to include some aspects and exclude others was shaped by the specific focus of this research project. My choice of research focus specifically dealt with religion and education in the context of citizenship. I therefore excluded detail that does not inform my possible biases and assumptions.

2.7 NEXT STEPS

In this chapter I have attempted to provide a rationale for choosing a mix of methodologies, ranging from critical discourse analysis, theory-based evaluation as well as using the different elements of a policy argument as proposed by Dunn (1994). The following figure (Figure 2.13) attempts to illustrate the application of these different phases or aspects of my approach to a critical evaluation of the Policy:
Figure 2.13: An overview of the different aspects of the proposed methodology

The Policy was formulated as part of a broader strategy addressing specific problems in the post-1994 South Africa (as indicated by point 2 in Figure 2.13). From a deeply divided and stratified society (as explored in point 1 in Figure 2.13), education took up the call to prepare children for a specific democratically defined citizenship. The broader strategy included the general philosophy of Outcomes-based education, the five broad themes running across all the curricula, and specifically the inclusion of the study of religions in the Life-orientation theme (represented by point 3 and the three arrows A, B, and C in Figure 2.13). As such the Policy considered a number of alternatives and made a number of choices. It is important to note that the Policy was also part of a broader strategy in other sectors of government to create a new vision of a shared democracy (e.g. the new national anthem and flag; new holidays, etc). All these strategies and interventions had one shared purpose and that was and still is to embody and strengthen the values as embodied in the South African Constitution (Republic of South Africa 1996).

At the start of this chapter I have already motivated that the goal of this study is not to estimate the impact of the Policy on contributing to a more critical citizenry (point 5 in Figure 2.13). This study will be mainly concerned with points 1-5 in Figure 2.13. This critical evaluation of the Policy is focused on how the Policy
choices and alternatives (point 3 in Figure 2.13) are shaped by the ‘black box’ of the Policy (point 4 in Figure 2.13) in addressing the Policy problem (point 2 in Figure 2.13).

The only question to resolve before continuing is to establish the role of the literature review in this methodology. Weimer and Vining (1989:309) propose a very useful outline of how an analyst can combine a literature review in doing a policy analysis (Figure 2.14).

![Figure 2.14: A policy analysis process (Weimer & Vining 1989:309)](image)

According to the process proposed by Weimer and Vining (1989) the role of the literature review in a policy analysis process is a continuing part of the whole process. From the usual starting point of deciding to analyse a policy (point 1 in Figure 2.14), an initial literature review follows (point 2 in Figure 2.14). As Weimer and Vining (1999) suggest, ‘documents lead to documents’, ‘documents lead to people’ and ‘people lead to documents’. In Chapter 1 as well as in this chapter a literature review was very much part and parcel of this study. As the study progressed and the choice of a methodology became clearer, so the focus
of the literature review changed accordingly. I often experienced that one literary resource led to another. I also found in my interactions with my promoters and colleagues, that they often referred me to very valuable literary resources. In my frequent meetings with colleagues and supervisors, I also could bring what I’ve found to the discussions. The literature review as formal part of this study is therefore a reiterative process accompanying this research (point 4 in Figure 2.14).

Although the next chapter, Chapter 3 will fulfil the formal role of a literature review, an exploration of the discourses surrounding and resulting in the Policy will require a continuing process of interrogating a variety of sources and data as we progress.

Chapter 3 (to follow) will specifically explore three overlapping interests, namely critical theory and critical pedagogy, the discourses in and surrounding Religionswissenschaft or the study of religion and then finally interrogate the notion of a critical study of religion.

2.8 CONCLUSIONS

This chapter was called ‘In search of a methodology’ – sharing the insecurities of not exactly knowing how to approach the research question, but also sharing my journey in finding an appropriate and personally fulfilling methodology. While the ‘how’ of my research was unclear at the start of this study, the rationale for engaging in this research (the ‘why’) was clear from the beginning.

I acknowledged that the research question is on the one hand arising from personal experiences of the role of religion and politics in defining my personal identity and citizenship, and on the other hand interrogates religion and its role in the national and international discourses on redefining citizenship.
As this chapter closes, my search for an appropriate and fulfilling methodology has been rewarded with a clear picture of how I intend to engage with critically evaluating the Policy. In the next chapter, Chapter 3, I will share an overview of selected literature that will shape my analysis and evaluation of the Policy.
CHAPTER 3
TOWARDS A CRITICAL EVALUATION

….no statement, theological or otherwise, should be made that would not be credible in the presence of burning children.


3.1 INTRODUCTION

Starting out on this journey I included 'critical' in the title of this thesis. On the one hand, 'critical' seemed to be assumed in an academic and scholarly enterprise such as doctoral studies and secondly, the act of evaluating in itself presumed a certain measure of criticality. This chapter provides a literature review in two distinct areas, namely critical theory and critical pedagogy as a general framework for a critical evaluation of the Policy. This study is however located in the specific domain of Religious Studies. After exploring critical theory and critical pedagogy, the focus will move to different approaches to the study of religion. In a third change of register, this chapter will then attempt to explore the overlaps between critical theory, critical pedagogy and the study of religion.

The following figure (Figure 3.1) attempts to illustrate our journey in this chapter.

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My first introduction into critical curriculum studies was through the works of Peter McLaren and Da Silva (e.g. 1993), Henry Giroux (e.g., 1992, 1993), Paulo Freire (1973, 1989), bell hooks (1994) and Michael Apple (2004). Each of these authors uniquely contributed to my thinking critically about education. All of them trace their own notions of criticality back to one theoretical base, namely critical theory.
3.2 INTRODUCING CRITICAL THEORY

Critical theory is but one of many of the theories of the 20th century. Sim and Van Loon (2004) also mention structuralism, poststructuralism, deconstruction, postmodernism, cultural materialism, postcolonialism, feminism, black criticism and queer theory. Critical theory, its scope, authors and main aims are also contested, discredited and at times severely criticised (Poster 1989; Sim & Van Loon 2004)\textsuperscript{35}.

Sim and Van Loon (2004) provide a very basic overview of all the different voices and movements within the broad framework of critical theory, Higgs (1995) discusses critical theory as one of the ‘metatheories in philosophy of education’ and Phillips (2000) engages with critical theory and explores certain Grundebegriffe, or ‘grounding concepts’ in critical theory. Rasmussen (1996) as editor of The handbook of critical theory, has selected a number of authors exploring different tenets of critical theory while How (2003) approaches critical theory in exploring its development in a time-linear fashion from the early days at the Institute of Social Research to a discussion of critical theory and

\textsuperscript{35} For a discussion of the crises and challenges critical theory faces see Poster 1989 and Ray 1993.

A metaphor for a certain kind of theoretical orientation which owes its origin to Kant, Hegel and Marx, its systematisation to Horkheimer and his associates at the Institute for Social Research in Frankfurt, and its development to successors, particularly to the group led by Jürgen Habermas, who have sustained it under various redefinitions to the present day. As a term, critical theory is both general and specific. In general it refers to that critical element in German philosophy which began with Hegel's critique of Kant. More specifically it is associated with a certain orientation towards philosophy which found its twentieth-century expression in Frankfurt.

Apple (2004:182) states ‘…critical theory was an attempt to think through the relationship between culture, forms of domination, and society. It began as a cultural/political analysis of capitalist mass culture and then stretched beyond capitalism and its social forms…’ The different gestalts of critical theory are illustrated by an overview provided by Sim and Van Loon (2004:24-25) (Figure 3.2).

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36 As I engaged with these different approaches, two concerns became paramount. The first concern related to the immensity (and often complexity) of information available in the field of critical theory. The second concern related to how to relate this myriad of opinions and voices to forming a foundation for my own critical approach. From Marx to Adorno, from Hegel to Plato and back to Horkheimer and Habermas I struggled to grasp the essential elements of such a vast and complex discourse and how to relate these elements to formulating my own approach to evaluation.
This overview provided by Sim and Van Loon (2004:24-25) reveals critical theory as multi-facetted and containing many different emphases. To think of critical theory as a *homogenous* theory and its different theorists speaking in ‘one voice’ is a non-starter. The non-homogenous nature of critical theory also prevents engaging with the Policy from a *singular* ‘critical theory perspective’.

According to Sim and Van Loon (2004:26, 60) the two major influences in critical theory can be attributed to Marx and Freud. Nel (1995), on the other hand identifies the contribution by Horkheimer as seminal in the development of critical theory (1995:124) and points to the fact that none of the members of the Frankfurt School had any political affiliations. Nel (1995:125) also acknowledges the influence of Marx on critical theory, but emphasises that the members of the Frankfurt School also relied heavily on ‘traditional philosophers’ like Hegel and Nietzsche.
According to Rasmussen critical theory ‘bears the stamp of the nascent optimism of the nineteenth century; a critical theory can change society’ (1996:11). Rasmussen quotes Marx who said in his eleventh thesis on Feuerbach ‘Philosophers have always interpreted the world, the point is to change it’ (Rasmussen 1996:11). The starting point for this transformation of society was to be found in a ‘process of self-reflection’ in which the ‘very agents of that reflection to a further task, namely, the transformation of society through revolution’ (Rasmussen 1996:11-12). Reflection would allow theory to be allied to praxis with a ‘proper political end, namely, social transformation’ (Rasmussen 1996:12). Finlayson (2005:3) writes of this element of reflectivity in critical theory and states ‘A critical theory reflected on the social context that gave rise to it, on its own function within that society, and on the purposes and interest of its practitioners, and so forth, and such reflections were built into the theory’.

The transformative intentions of critical theory are ‘able to unearth the false presumptions that had held humanity in its sway’ (Rasmussen 1996:13). According to Rasmussen, Marx used terms like ‘ideology’, ‘fetishism’ and ‘secret’ … ‘as if there was some ominous conspiracy against humankind which a certain kind of critical and theoretical orientation could unmask’ (Rasmussen 1996:13). Although Rasmussen attests that ‘a valid constitutive ground for critical theory began with Marx himself’ (1996:14), it is the ‘systematization of critical theory as model of reflection’ that owes its life to the Frankfurt School (Rasmussen 1996:15). In the early days of the Frankfurt School Marxism was ‘the guiding principle’ (Rasmussen 1996:16). Finlayson (2005:1-2) states that Hegelian-Marxism, at that time, was an ‘intellectual minority, opposed to the reigning European tradition of neo-Kantianism, and the Anglo-Austrian tradition of logical empiricism’. Modern critical theory was sparked ‘by the demise of the working class as an organ of appropriate revolutionary knowledge and action coupled with the rise of fascism and the emergence of Stalinisation’ (Rasmussen 1996:17). Horkheimer’s 1937 attempt to define ‘theory’ steered critical theory in the direction of epistemology and would ‘change permanently the distinction and
approach of critical theory’ (Rasmussen 1996:19). According to Horkheimer, ‘…a theory is critical only if it meets three criteria: it must be explanatory, practical, and normative, all at the same time. That is, it must explain what is wrong with current social reality, identify actors to change it, and provide clear norms for criticism and practical goals for the future’ (Bohman 1996:190). Where the agency of social transformation since Marx was seen to reside with the proletariat, Horkheimer now questioned whether the proletariat has in fact the ‘correct knowledge’ that would allow them to rise above the imposed social structures (Rasmussen 1996:20).

The post-1937 period in critical theory heralded a pessimism ‘about the future of the course of rationality, but also a loss of hope in the potentialities of a philosophy of history for purposes of social transformation’ (Rasmussen 1996:22). Reason lost its ‘redemptive and reconciliatory possibilities’ and could only ‘be purposive, useful and calculating’ (Rasmussen 1996:22). Where the Enlightenment promised emancipation and freedom from domination, now Horkheimer and Adorno proposed that the dialectic of the Enlightenment, while harbouring the promise of emancipation, forms in certain hands, ‘the basis for the domination of other human beings’ (Rasmussen 1996:23). Into this fairly pessimistic outlook enters Habermas who found that ‘this unwarranted pessimism, blunted the critical aim of social theory’ (Finlayson 2005:7). In his appraisal whether Habermas indeed contributed to the critical aspect of critical theory, Finlayson states the following:

Habermas is offering a social theory, and theories do not prescribe remedies. … In The theory of communicative action Habermas is frank in his assessment that there is no agent, collective or individual that is up to the task [of transforming social life]. …Habermas denies that theories can, or ever could be, critical in the Marxian sense of precipitating a revolution. Habermas has a much more modest conception of what social theory can be expected to achieve. Social theories are at best useful diagnostic tools that help us differentiate between the harmful and progressive tendencies in modern society (Finlayson 2005:58-59).
Habermas explores critical theory’s emancipatory project in his work *Structural Transformation* (1989) from the background of the public reasoning forums of 18th century Europe. These public discussions and participation were characterised by voluntary engagement, united in a common aim namely to form a conception of the common good (Finlayson 2005:10). In the public sphere ideologies somehow induce people to believe in them and according to Habermas, they are ‘socially necessary’ (Finlayson 2005:11). Habermas continues to chart the gradual disintegration of the public sphere in becoming ‘an arena in which public opinion could be stage-managed and manipulated’ (Finlayson 2005:13).

Adorno proposed that critical theory’s role was to ‘equip individuals with the capacities that would enable them to resist integration into the fateful homogenizing institutions of capitalist society’ (Finlayson 2005:14-15). These capacities should allow individuals to grow into the Kantian concept of *Mündigkeit* (maturity). *Mündigkeit* for Adorno meant resistance to coercive forces and the commercialisation of education (French & Thomas 1999:2). In a radio discussion with Hellmut Becker in 1969, Adorno explored *Mündigkeit* against its Kantian opposite namely *Unmündigkeit* (French & Thomas 1999:4). *Unmündigkeit* referred to the inability of a person to make choices without direction from another. As such *Unmündigkeit* refers to another Kantian term heteronomy – as the opposite for autonomy. The difference between *Unmündigkeit* and *Mündigkeit* (as proposed by Adorno) is explained by French and Thomas (1999:4) as follows: ‘Mature and rational individuals are autonomous, setting their own path, the rules they will follow, guided only by responsible consideration and reflection. Tutelage, subordination, heteronomy, are the opposite: following the dictates of another’.

In the interview between Adorno and Becker, Adorno refers to *Unmündigkeit* as resembling children who cannot act without a guardian or the Kantian metaphor of people in tutelage being like domestic cattle ‘dumb, placid, unable to move
without direction, comfortable only when wearing a yoke’ (French & Thomas 1999:4)\(^{37}\).

Habermas, by contrast to Kant and Adorno, ‘wants to identify the social and institutional conditions that foster autonomy: emancipation means the creation of truly democratic institutions capable of withstanding the corrosive effects of capitalism and state administration’ (Finlayson 2005:15). If I understand Finlayson’s exposition (2005) of Habermas correctly, it would seem as if the creation of truly democratic institutions therefore, according to Habermas, depended on a populace who were mature, engaging with one another according to the rules of the discourse. Equipping people for this Mündigkeit required different kinds of knowledge – theoretical, practical and critical (Finlaysn 2005:18). Each of these three different kinds of knowledge shape different frameworks and serve different human interests.

Theoretical knowledge is based on the human interest in technical control over nature; practical and moral knowledge is based on the human interest in understanding one another; while critical social theory and psychoanalysis are based respectively on the collective and individual interest in emancipation, in freedom from illusion, in autonomy (Mündigkeit), and the realisation of the good life (Finlaysn 2005:18)\(^{38}\).

In Habermas’ works The Theory of communicative action (1984, 1987) and Moral consciousness and communicative action (1990) he explores the role (and limits) of communication and discourse which, if I understand him correctly, forms the foundation for institutional democracy. Habermas states that discourse is ‘a reflective form of speech that aims at reaching a rationally motivated consensus’ (1984:42). Even if no consensus is forthcoming, discourse is always aimed at reaching consensus. Habermas (1990:86) establishes certain rules for successful discourse. On the first level there are the basic and semantic rules ‘such as the

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\(^{37}\) For a further exploration of Adorno’s views on Unmündigkeit and Mündigkeit, see the discussion of the interview between Adorno and Becker as reported on by French and Thomas (1999).

\(^{38}\) Uljens (2006) plots the discourses surrounding Mündigkeit against the broader background of the concepts of Bildung and the relation between education and society.
principle of non-contradiction and the requirement of consistency’ (Finlayson 2005:43). On the second level, there are norms governing procedure, ‘such as the principle of sincerity, namely that every participant must undertake to assert only what she genuinely believes; and the principle of accountability, that participants undertake either to justify upon request what they assert or to provide reasons for not offering a justification’ (Finlayson 2005:43). On a third level ‘the norms immunize the process of discourse against coercion, repression, and inequality’ (Finlayson 2005:43). These rules, according to Habermas, will ensure that the ‘unforced force of the better argument wins out’ (1990:89).

I will now turn to critical pedagogy to explore how critical pedagogy shares the emancipatory project with critical theory and how these two movements differ.

Apple states that ‘educational institutions provide one of the major mechanisms through which power is maintained and challenged’ (Apple 2004: vii). The question remains mainly an epistemological one, having changed from “What knowledge is the most worth?” to ‘Whose knowledge is the most worth?’ (Apple 2004: xix). It would therefore seem that critical pedagogy at least continues the epistemological quest of critical theory and in its own way embodies critical theory in praxis.

According to Burbules and Berk (1999), critical thinking and critical pedagogy share common concerns:

- They both imagine a general population in society who are to some extent deficient in the abilities or dispositions that would allow them to discern certain kinds of inaccuracies, distortions, and falsehoods limit freedom, though this concern is more explicit in the critical pedagogy traditions, which sees society as fundamentally divided by relations of unequal power (1999:46).

While Apple (2004:27) asks ‘Should schools, guided by a vision of a more just society, teach a particular set of social meanings to their students?’ the question is actually a non-starter. Schools throughout the ages have taught and shaped
generations of young people. To teach is per se a political act as Apple, himself, states – ‘…the educator was involved, whether he or she was conscious of it or not, in a political act’ (Apple 2004:1). I therefore now turn to explore critical pedagogy in my search to define my own criticality.\(^3^9\)

### 3.3 INTRODUCING CRITICAL PEDAGOGY

In his introduction to critical pedagogy, Kanpol (1994) links critical pedagogy to critical theory by saying that critical pedagogy involves the ‘doing of critical theory’ (1994:27). He continues to describe critical pedagogy as follows:

Critical pedagogy refers to the means and methods that test and hope to change the structures of schools that allow inequalities. Critical pedagogy is a cultural-political tool that takes seriously the notion of human differences, particularly as these differences relate to race, class, and gender. In its most radical sense, critical pedagogy seeks to unoppress the oppressed and unite people in a shared language of critique, struggle, and hope to end various forms of human suffering (1994:27).

Miedema and Wardekker (1999:67) also locate the origins of critical pedagogy in critical theory, and specifically in the Frankfurt School. According to Miedema and Wardekker critical pedagogy was hailed in the 1970s as a ‘viable and vigorous alternative to both the entomological and the interpretive traditions in the social sciences’ but it has since met with fierce criticism. The greatest part of the criticism was its ‘(supposed) lack of results’ … and in a postmodern era, ‘its preoccupation with the emancipation and the wrongs of society seems outdated’ (Miedema & Wardekker 1999:68).

Critical pedagogy’s relation to critical theory is defined against the background of Horkheimer, for whom ‘only nostalgia and hope remain’, Adorno for whom the

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\(^3^9\) My journey from reading critical theory to critical pedagogy necessitated a change in reading registers. Where the work of most critical theorists was intensely complex and philosophical, the work by and on critical pedagogists required working through very ‘shallow’ introductions (e.g. Kanpol, 1994), the revolutionary rhetoric and dense and often pedantic writing of McLaren (e.g. 2001), and the cultural interrogations of Giroux (e.g. 1993, 1996). Most of the works of Giroux and McLaren are also specific reactions to the education context in the North Americas. For an insightful discussion on the Latin American and Third World context of the work of Freire, see Torres (1993).
possibility of anger can ‘become the power of resistance’ and critical praxis and Habermas who postulates the possibility of reaching consensus in the public sphere through communicative action (Miedema & Wardekker 1999:69-71). Habermas believed that every ‘human being and hence every child must be given the possibility by way of analysis, criticism, and self-reflection to develop into a freely self-determining and rationally acting person’ (Miedema & Wardekker 1999:74).

Critical pedagogy is specifically concerned with ‘the influences of educational knowledge and of cultural formations generally, that perpetuate or legitimate an unjust status quo; fostering a critical capacity in citizens is a way of enabling them to resist such power effects’ (Burbules & Berk 1999:46). Where critical thinking maintains a certain ‘diagnostic aloofness’ in its criticality, critical pedagogy takes side ‘on behalf of those groups who are disenfranchised from social, economic, and political possibilities’ (Burbules & Berk 1999:46). Burbules and Berk (1999:46-59) explore several differences between ‘critical thinking’ and critical pedagogy. From their discussions it would seem as if critical theory is traditionally firstly an epistemological enterprise analysing truth and knowledge claims and exposing falsehood. Critical pedagogy has a different starting point. Critical pedagogy’s first concern is not epistemological, but asking the question ‘who benefits?’ (Burbules & Berk 1999:47). If I understand Burbules and Berk’s exploration correctly, it would seem as if critical pedagogy’s emphasis is on *emancipation from inequalities and injustices* while critical theory aims at *emancipation from invalid truth claims and structures*40.

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40 This is a very important point that will be a leitmotiv throughout this study. For example, critical religious studies as subject (as proposed by Wood [M.D](2001)) does not interrogate the truth claims of religions but rather interrogate how religions contribute to inequalities or the fight against inequalities.
For the sake of this study, I have however decided to explore the tenets of critical pedagogy as found in the works of Paulo Freire and Henry Giroux\(^{41}\). There are however many other voices to have chosen from (e.g., Aronowitz (1997), McLaren and Hammer (1989) and Shor (e.g., 1987, 1992, 1993) but Freire (e.g., 1973, 1974, 1976, 1987, 1989, 2007) is considered by many to be the founder of critical pedagogy and Giroux (e.g., 1983, 1992, 1993a, 1993b, 2004) is the most prolific author in the field of critical pedagogy. An exploration of the works of these two authors should allow us to discover and discuss the central tenets of critical pedagogy.

- **Paulo Freire**

Burbules and Berk (1999:51) refer to the work of Paulo Freire as the author who articulates critical pedagogy in its early origins. Keesing-Styles (2003) states that ‘any analysis of critical pedagogy must begin with an examination of the work of Paulo Freire’ and McLaren (2001:1) calls Freire ‘the inaugural philosopher of critical pedagogy’\(^{42}\). Working within the context of promoting adult literacy among Latin American peasant communities, Freire was primarily concerned with *conscientizao*, translated as ‘critical consciousness’ (Burbules & Berk 1999:51).

Freire describes the two stages of his ‘pedagogy of the oppressed’ as follows:

In the first stage, the oppressed unveil the world of oppression and through the praxis commit themselves to its transformation. In the second stage, in which the reality of the oppression has already been transformed, this pedagogy ceases to belong to the oppressed and becomes a pedagogy of all men [sic] in the process of permanent liberation (Freire 1973: 31).

A second central theme in the work of Freire is his particular focus on ‘literacy’. To be illiterate, for Freire, was not only the lack of skills of reading and writing; it was to feel powerless and dependent in a much more general way as well. The

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\(^{41}\) Both these authors are white and male. Though there are contributions by females in critical pedagogy (see McLaren & Hammer, 1989 and Wink, 1997) one of the criticisms against the current state of theorising in critical pedagogy is the ‘absence’ of female voices (see Gore 1993).

\(^{42}\) Other authors who claim to work within the broad philosophies of Freire include bell hooks (1994) who claims her ‘engaged pedagogy’ resulted from her relationship with Freire (1994:6); as well as the work by Roger Simon (1987).
challenge for an adult literacy campaign was not only to provide skills, but to address directly the self-contempt and sense of powerlessness that he believed accompanied illiteracy’ (Burbules & Berk 1999:52).

The vehicle for emancipatory education according to Freire was to empower students to ‘read the word’ and ‘read the world’. ‘The act of learning to read and write has to start from a very comprehensive understanding of the act of reading the world, something which human beings do before reading the words’ (Freire 1989: xvii). In her Foreword to Freire’s work *Literacy: reading the word and the world* (1987: xix), Berthoff states that this ‘naming of the world becomes a model for changing the world. Education does not substitute for political action, but it is indispensable to it because of the role it plays in the development of critical consciousness’. Illiteracy (according to Giroux commenting on Freire) ‘is not merely the inability to read and write, it is also a cultural marker for naming forms of difference within the logic of cultural deprivation theory’ (Freire 1989:3).

Literacy, according to Freire, involves ‘the relationship of the learners to the world, mediated by the transforming practice of this world taking place in the very general social milieu in which learners travel, and also mediated by the oral discourse concerning this transforming practice’ (Freire 1989:106). Literacy should however not be understood as ‘the triggering of social emancipation of the subordinated classes. Literacy leads to and participates in a series of triggering mechanisms that need to be activated for the indispensable transformation of a society whose unjust reality destroys the majority of people’ (Freire 1989:106).

All language, according to Freire, works to reproduce dominant forms of power relations, but it also carries with it the resources for immanent critique, for dismantling the oppressive power structures of the social order, and also for articulating a more transformative and liberating vision for the future (McLaren & Da Silva 1993:53).

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43 Freire (1989:159) further emphasises the fact that literacy can only be emancipatory and critical ‘to the extent that it is conducted in the language of the people’. Literacy programmes in the dominant language imprison students in a ‘culture of silence’ unable to ‘re-create their culture and histories’.
Freire’s work on reading involved allowing students to become aware of *codifications*, words that outside their linguistic meanings, also ‘present problematic social conditions’ (Burbules & Berk 1999:53). Freire’s literacy strategy also involved encouraging students to decode words and linguistic practices. In learning to ‘read the word’ students were empowered to ‘read the world’. This means a dramatic turn from education as transmission, which Freire describes as ‘banking education’ – ‘Education thus becomes an act of depositing, in which the students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor’ (1973:45). The educator presumes the role of the one who knows, while also presuming that students do not have anything to contribute to the learning scenario. Learners’ task is confined to ‘receiving, filing, and storing the deposits’ (Freire 1973:46).

The emancipatory alternative to ‘banking education’ is dialogical ‘problem-posing’ education (Freire 1973:53) where

> Through dialogue, the teacher-of-students and the students-of-the-teacher cease to exist and a new term emerges: teacher-student with students-teacher. The teacher is no longer merely the-one-who-teaches, but one who is himself [sic] being taught in dialogue with the students, who in their turn while being taught also teach (Freire 1973:53).

Banking education ‘anesthetizes and inhibits creative power, problem-posing education involves a constant unveiling of reality. The former attempts to maintain the *submersion* of consciousness; the latter strives for the *emergence* of consciousness and *critical intervention* in reality’ (Freire 1973: 54; italics in the original). Problem-posing dialogical education allows humans to ‘develop their power to perceive critically the *way they exist* in the world *with which* and *in which* they find themselves; they come to see the world not as a static reality, but as a reality in process, in transformation’ (Freire 1973:56; italics in the original).

In the light of Freire’s situated, problem-based and dialogical pedagogy, ‘knowledge’ for Freire remains incomplete and provisional. ‘Emancipatory

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*See Freire (1973) for a discussion of his concept of ‘banking education’.*
knowledge is never fully realized, but is continually dreamed, continually revived, and continually transformed in the hearth of our memories, the flames of our longing and the passion of our struggle' (McLaren & Da Silva 1993:59). The incubator of such incomplete emancipatory knowledge is the stories and narratives of students and educators alike.

These include the magisterial tropes and master narratives of the empire, as well as narratives of refusal searching for co-ordinates outside of the binary oppositions that consolidate the Manichean universe of Eurocentric time and space and the phallomilitary dynamics of postmodern citizenry (McLaren & Da Silva 1993:73).

• **Henry Giroux**

It is in the work of Henry Giroux that critical pedagogy finds it’s most vocal and criticized expression. Kellner (2001) appropriates the unique mix of cultural studies and education in the work of Giroux as follows – ‘The result is an intersection of critical pedagogy and cultural studies that enhances both enterprises, providing a cultural and transformative political dimension to critical pedagogy and a pedagogical dimension to cultural studies’ (2001:220).

According to Burbules and Berk (1999:51), Giroux stresses both a ‘language of possibility’ and a ‘language of critique’ to be ‘essential to the pursuit of social justice’. Giroux sees schools primarily as in service of capitalist relations and for the perpetuation of dominant ideologies. He therefore proposes that schools are important locations for the formulation of ‘counter hegemonic’ practices in schools (Giroux 1983, 1992). Kellner (2001:220) identifies the unique mixture of influences in the work of Giroux as follows – ‘[Giroux] included incorporation of new theoretical discourses of poststructuralism and postmodernism, cultural studies, and the politics of identity and difference embodied in the new discourses of class, gender, race, and sexuality that proliferated in the post-1960s epoch’ (2001:220).

Giroux starts his exploration of the grounds for a critical pedagogy in 1983 by quoting Marcuse who wrote

> Since the established universe of discourse is that of an unfree world, dialectical thought is necessarily destructive, and whatever liberation it may bring is liberation in thought, in theory. However, the divorce of thought from action, of theory from practice, is itself part of an unfree world. No thought and no theory can undo it; but theory may help to prepare the ground for their possible reunion, and the ability of thought to develop a logic and language of contradiction is a prerequisite for this task (quoted in Giroux 1983:2).

In quoting Marcuse, Giroux seems to prepare the reader for his intention to develop a ‘logic and a language of contradiction’. He says ‘What critical theory provides for educational theorists is a mode of critique and a language of opposition that extends the concept of the political not only into mundane social relations but into the very sensibilities and needs that form the personality and psyche’ (1983:5). Giroux continues to explore not only the strengths and weaknesses of the Frankfurt School, but also the social and historical context in
which they developed their critique. In developing a ‘critical theory of education’
Giroux analyses the Frankfurt School’s notion of theory, its analysis of culture
and its analysis of depth psychology (1983:17-34). In his discussion of the
Frankfurt School’s analysis of culture, he refers to the fact that for the Frankfurt
School, ‘…changing socioeconomic conditions had made traditional Marxist
categories of the 1930s and 1940s untenable. They were no longer adequate for
understanding the integration of the working class in the West or the political
effects of technocratic rationality in the cultural realm’ (1983:23). Giroux also
refers to the works of Gramsci (1971), Adorno and Horkheimer (1972) who
argued that domination assumed new forms. Instead of subjecting people
through the use and show of force,

…the power of the ruling classes was now reproduced through a form of
ideological hegemony; it was established primarily through the rule of
consent, and mediated via cultural institutions such as schools, family,
mass media, churches, etc. Briefly put, the colonization of the workplace
was now supplemented by the colonization of all cultural spheres (Giroux

Schools should allow students, especially ‘working-class students, women and
Blacks’ to, in the words of Freire ‘name the world’ (1989:54) by affirming ‘their
own histories through the use of a language, a set of social relations and a body
of knowledge that critically reconstructs and dignifies the cultural experiences
that make up the tissue, texture, and history of their daily lives’ (Giroux 1983:37).
Schools should allow learners

…to critically examine the role society has played in their own self-
formation. More specifically, they will have the tools to examine how this
society has functioned to shape and thwart their aspirations and goals, or
prevented them from even imagining a life outside the one they presently

Central in the works of Giroux the binary of ‘rage’ and ‘hope’ runs like a leitmotiv
(also see http://www.perfectfit.org/CT/index2.html). This theme bears witness to
the dialectical tension between a pedagogy of opposition’ and a ‘pedagogy of
hope’. In examining and expanding the possible roles schools could and should
play in providing a ‘counter-narrative’ he builds on the work by Pierre Bourdieu
Where schools were earlier seen as ‘socially and politically neutral’, schools are now accepted to be ‘agencies of socialization’ in which the ‘dual curriculum’ shaped and socialized them into the dominant culture. The ‘dual curriculum’ refers to the overt curriculum of ‘school rationales and teacher-prepared objectives’ and the hidden curriculum of the ‘beliefs and values transmitted tacitly through the social relations and routines that characterise day-to-day school experience’ (Giroux 1983:45). Critiquing the different approaches to dealing with the hidden curriculum (1983:48:60), Giroux states that the current work on the hidden curriculum says ‘too little about the complex ways in which consciousness and culture interact, about how students operating out of the specificities of gender, race, and class offer resistance to the mechanisms of social control and domination in schools’ (1983:60).

Giroux develops a ‘theory of resistance’ which, according to him, ‘is a valuable theoretical and ideological construct that provides an important focus for analysing the relationship between school and the wider society’ (1983:107). Giroux discusses a number of ‘critical assumptions’ underlying a radical pedagogy. The first assumption is ‘the requirement of a mode of analysis that captures the dialectical relation between collective agents and the particular historical and local conditions in which they find themselves’ (1983:115). As such individuals and social classes are ‘both the agents and the products of the larger society’ (1983:115).

The second critical assumption of a theory of resistance is that schools should be viewed as ‘contradictory social sites, marked by struggle and accommodation’ (1983:115). As such schools are ‘neither an all-encompassing foothold of domination nor a locus of revolution; thus, it contains ideological and material spaces for the development of radical pedagogies’ (1983:115-116).
In 1992 Giroux publishes *Border crossings*, which, according to him, ‘represent a shift in both my politics and my theoretical work’ (1992:1). He describes the shift as follows:

> While I still believe these sites [sites of teacher education, public schools, higher education, and certain aspects of community education] are crucial for encouraging students to be educated for critical citizenship, that is, as political subjects capable of exercising leadership in a democracy, I no longer believe that the struggle over education can be reduced to these sites, nor do I believe that pedagogy as a form of political, moral, and social production can be addressed primarily as a matter of schooling (1992:1).

He confesses to have underestimated ‘both the structural and ideological constraints under which teachers labour as well as the prevailing conservatism has in shaping curriculum and vision in most schools of education in the United States’ (1992:1). In this context he attempts to broaden his theorising in movements like feminist theory, poststructuralism, postcolonialism, etc. Despite these widening horizons, he remains with his original description of critical pedagogy as combining ‘a language of critique and possibility’ (1992:77).

In summarising the contribution of Giroux, Kellner (2001:8) states

> Giroux thus offers a wide-ranging model of cultural studies and greatly expands the domain of pedagogy, demonstrating the importance of critically engaging the pedagogy of a broad spectrum of cultural artifacts often ignored by educators.

### 3.4 TOWARDS A CRITICAL EDUCATIONAL FRAMEWORK

There are strained relations between critical theory and its exponents and critical pedagogy; between different strands of critical theory (e.g. Feminist and postcolonialism) and critical pedagogy, and between exponents of critical pedagogy themselves. Lather (1998:487) comments that in the 1980s critical pedagogy was seen as ‘a sort of a “big tent” for those in education who were interested in doing academic work toward social justice’. Since these early days, the ‘tent’ seems to have become noisier. The relations between proponents of
critical theory and critical pedagogy are strained and confrontational. One of the critiques against critical pedagogy is that it ‘crosses a threshold between teaching criticality and indoctrinating. Teaching students to think critically must include allowing them to come to their own conclusions; yet critical pedagogy seems to come dangerously close to prejudging what those conclusions must be’ (Burbules & Berk 1999:54).

One of the main criticisms against critical pedagogy’s proponents is the fact that they are all male and white and their discourse being a ‘closed and paternal conversation’ (Burbules & Berk 1999:56-57; see also Ellsworth 1989; Gore 1993; Lather 1998). Lather (1998:487), for example, judges that critical pedagogy was a ‘boy thing’ while the ‘girl thing’ was to use poststructuralism to deconstruct pedagogy. Lather comments that the works of Giroux, McLaren and Gur-Ze’ev ‘exhibit the masculinist voice of abstraction and universalisation’ (1998:487). For a discussion on the criticisms against critical pedagogy see the thorough analysis of Keesing-Styles (2003) as well as Ellsworth’s feminist critique (1989).

Despite these criticisms and at times opposing voices and often finding itself in ‘stuck places’ (Lather 1998), Kellner (2003) convincingly motivates a need for a critical theory in education. In the face of ‘one of the most dramatic technological revolutions in history’ and demographic and socio-political changes in the world, with special reference to post 9/11, Kellner proposes developing ‘a critical theory of education for democratizing and reconstructing education to meet the challenges of a global and technological society’ (2003:51). He acknowledges his position as a theorist in the ‘overdeveloped world’ but strives to ‘project normative visions for education and social transformation that could be used to criticise and reconstruct education in a variety of context’ (2003:52).

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45 The tension between critical pedagogy as emancipatory project and postmodernism was discussed in Chapter 1. The criticism against critical pedagogy that it is a form of indoctrination should be taken seriously. Though an emancipatory curriculum will aim to contribute towards a more just and a more compassionate society, the act of developing a curriculum includes and excludes, validates certain systems of meaning and marginalises others.
Kellner (2003) continues to lay the foundations for a critical theory of education, carefully and eclectically selecting from a range of exponents of critical theory including reference to classical sources up to Kant and Hegel. His first reference in developing a critical theory of education is a ‘Kantian sense of critique’. ‘Kantian critique aims at autonomy from prejudice and ill-grounded ideas and requires rigorous reflection on one’s presuppositions and basic positions and argumentation to support one’s positions’ (2003:52). His second point of reference is the need for a ‘Hegelian concept of critique’ which ‘by criticizing one-sided positions (such as technophobia vs. technophilia) and developing more complex dialectical perspectives that reject and neglect oppressive or false features of a position, while appropriating positive and emancipatory aspects’ (2003:52-53).

Kellner’s third reference point is to draw on Marxian critique ‘stressing the importance of critique of ideology and situating analysis of a topic like education within the dominant social relations and system of political economy’ (2003:53). He continues to state that ‘Marxian critique involves radical examination of existing ideologies and practices of education and the need for pedagogical and social transformation to free individuals from the fetters of consumer capitalism and to help make possible a free, more democratic and human culture and society’ (2003:53).

Kellner refers to the work of Reitz (2000) as an example of ‘sustained criticisms of the existing system of education as a mode of reproducing the existing system of domination and oppression and called for counter-institutions and pedagogies’ (Kellner 2003:53). In a later work by Reitz (2004) he succinctly explores the brutal gap between rich and poor and states: ‘Inequality is not simply a matter of a gap between rich and poor, but of the structural relationships in economic area of propertied and non-propertied segments of populations’ (2004).
Kellner states ‘A critical theory of education has a normative and even utopian dimension, attempting to theorise how education and life construct alternatives to what is’ (2003:53). He petitions for a return to the Greek concept and praxis of Paideia, ‘the shaping, formation, and development of human beings and citizens’. He continues to engage critically with the history of the concept of Paideia, alluding to the fact that the ‘good life and good society’ envisaged as a result of Paideia ‘was built on slavery’ (2003:53) and used ‘to legitimate slave societies’ which ‘underlines for us the ways in which previous models of education have been produced within and as discourses of power and domination’ (2003:54-55).

After exploring the pragmatism of Dewey and the contributions of the poststructuralists who ‘emphasise the importance of difference, marginality, heterogeneity, and multiculturalism’ and the importance ‘for situated season knowledge’, he summarises that ‘a critical theory of education must be radically historicist, attempting to reconstruct education as social conditions evolve and to create pedagogical alternatives in terms of the needs, problems, and possibilities of specific groups of people in concrete situations’ (2003:76-57).

Before we turn to explore different approaches to the study of religion, let us just look at where we are in this chapter (Figure 3.3):

**Figure 3.3: Moving to Phase 2**

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46 Two sobering contributions regarding the possibilities and challenges facing critical pedagogy are the works of Lather (1998) and Jones (1999).
3.5 THE STUDY OF RELIGION: AN OVERVIEW

3.5.1 The discourses in and surrounding *Religionswissenschaft*

The link between critical theory and education is overt in the form of critical pedagogy. The link between critical theory and religion is less overt, while the link between critical theory and the teaching about religion is even less straightforward. Critical theory is furthermore a specific *interdisciplinary* analysis of society in which religion and education are but smaller parts.

It is important to note that this thesis is specifically located in the discipline of *Religionswissenschaft* or the study of religion\(^ {47}\) and the evaluation of the Policy is done from an intellectual understanding of the scope and content of the *study of religion*. The study of religion or *Religionswissenschaft* as a discipline has a history or rather, a number of histories. The discourses in and surrounding the study of religion are immersed in defining and defending the uniqueness of the study of religion as *sui generis*, differentiating it from theology and other disciplines as well as clarifying definitions, taxonomies, and its methodologies. Although these discourses in and surrounding the study of religion were there from its inception in the late 19\(^{th}\) century (see Pummer 1972), it is still very much part of the discourses today. These different discourses have been and are often embedded in the broader discourses between the natural sciences and the human sciences, with the human sciences claiming and defending the right to be considered a *science*. As Pummer (1972:94) states ‘As with every science, the best way to acquaint oneself with the *Problematik* of it, is to study its history and development’.

\(^{47}\) I will use *Religionswissenschaft* and the ‘study of religion’ interchangeably throughout this chapter, but in the chapters to follow, I will use the ‘study of religion’ as encompassing *Religionswissenschaft*, religion studies, religious studies (non-confessional) and the ‘study of religions’.
When encountering overviews and introductions like Connolly’s *Approaches to the study of religion* (1999), Pals’ *Seven theories of religion* (1996), or Braun and McCutcheon’s (2000) *Guide to the study of religion* – it is easy to lose sight of the historical development of the discipline and the questions it faced and still faces. Without taking cognisance of the dynamic and complex history of the study of religion, the distinction between theories, approaches, taxonomies and different methodologies confuse and obstruct. Connolly (1999), for example, identifies seven approaches to the study of religion, namely anthropological, feminist, phenomenological, philosophical, psychological, sociological and theological. Connolly (1999:1) claims ‘accurate, objective accounts of religious phenomena and religious traditions do not exist in their own right. All accounts of religion are accounts by people who approach their study from a particular starting point’. Connolly *however* does not state how he arrived at these specific seven approaches and how it fits into the broader discourse(s) surrounding the study of religion.

Pals (1996) distinguishes seven *theories* of religion which he ‘defends’ as ‘interpretive paths’ (1996:v) and which he calls ‘classic’ (1996:vi). Pals does not indicate why specifically these seven were selected and what criteria he used to select the specific seven except to state that those he did include are ‘classic interpretive paths’ and the authors of the seven theories he included are ‘pathfinders’ (1996:v). Pals also does not clarify how a theory of religion differs from for example an *approach*, and what the implications of these theories are for example, the methodologies followed. The seven theories Pals discusses are

- Animism and magic (E.B. Tyler and J.G. Fraser)
- Religion and personality (S. Freud)
- Society as sacred (E. Durkheim)
- Religion as alienation (K. Marx)
- The reality of the sacred (M. Eliade)

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48 Connolly (1999) does not include critical approaches (outside feminism) in his seven approaches to the study of religion.
• Society’s “construct of the heart” (E.E. Evans-Pritchard)
• Religion as cultural system (C. Geertz)

On judging between these seven theories, Pals states (1996:269) that ‘It is much more likely that parts of an interpretation will be rejected and pieces of its argument questioned, while in other aspects it may be accepted, amended, or even usefully combined with other views’. With regard to ‘judging’ between theories, Pals (1996:269) suggests that any theory should be evaluated on five aspects or questions, namely

1. **How does it define the subject?** What concept of ‘religion’ does it start from?
2. **What type of theory is it?** Since explanations can be of different kinds, what kind of account does the theorist offer, and why?
3. **What is the range of the theory?** That is, how much of human religious behaviour does it claim to explain? All of it? Or just some? And in that light, does it actually do what it claims?
4. **What evidence does the theory appeal to?** Does it try to probe deeply into a few facts, ideas, and customs or does it spread itself widely to embrace many? Is the range of evidence wide enough to support the range of the theory?
5. **What is the relationship between a theorist’s personal religious belief (or disbelief) and the explanation he chooses to advance?** (italics in the original)

Smart (1996: 1) suggests that in investigating religion as a phenomenon, we should look for ‘patterns in the way religion manifests itself’ with the purpose ‘to understand how it functions and vivifies the human spirit in history’. Smart therefore acknowledges his point of departure as being phenomenological and an attempt to describe a ‘morphology of religion, incorporating a theory’ (1996:1). He furthermore does not work with a strict definition of religion, but explores the dimensions of religion in the broader context of *worldviews* (1996:2). He acknowledges that the term ‘worldview’ could be ‘too cerebral’ and therefore uses the term in an ‘incarnated’ sense ‘where the values and beliefs are embedded in practice’ (1996:2-3). Smart (1996:10-11) suggests religion as worldview to have seven dimensions namely
The ritual or practical dimension involving activities such as 'worship, meditation, pilgrimage, sacrifice, sacramental rites and healing activities'.

The doctrinal or philosophical dimension. 'For different reasons religions evolve doctrines and philosophies'. Some religions also 'are keener on doctrinal rectitude than others... Religions are by no means equidimensional'.

The myth of narrative dimension. 'Every religion has its stories'.

The experiential or emotional dimension referring to key experiences in the historical development of a religion, for example the enlightenment of the Buddha, and so on.

The ethical or legal dimensions. 'A religious tradition or sub-tradition affirms not only a number of doctrines and myths but some ethical and often legal imperatives'.

The organisational or social component referring to the way the religion takes shape and is embedded in society.

The material or artistic dimension. 'A religion or worldview will express itself typically in material creations, from chapels to cathedrals to temples to mosques, from icons and divine statuary to books and pulpits'.

Smart (1996:15) acknowledges that these 'various dimensions are not set in concrete' and states 'The question is not whether my approach is the only one, it is whether it is fruitful. Clearly there can be more than one fruitful ways of analysing religions, and more generally, worldviews'. Where Connolly (1999) suggested that religion is 'always' studied from a particular point of view, e.g. anthropological, or psychological, Smart suggests that these dimensions of the sacred 'relate to various disciplines within the academic market-place' (1996:15).

The various dimensions Smart proposes relate to the following disciplines namely textual and philological studies, anthropology and sociology, psychology and psychoanalysis, history, philosophy, art history and the material dimension, theology, political science and economics and various exchanges (Smart 1996: 15-21).
To make sense of these different foci and introductions to the study of religion, it is necessary to ‘plot’ briefly the historical development of the study of religion as a science *sui generis*. Although the science of religion dates back to the late nineteenth century, in 1972 Penner and Yonan asked ‘Is a science of religion possible?’ And in 1987 Pals addressed the question ‘Is religion a *sui generis* phenomenon?’ Neither do these questions differ much in intensity and in focus from *current* questions in the field of the study of religion (see for example Smith 1996; and Braun & McCutcheon 2000), nor do these questions differ from the succinct exploration of *Religionswissenschaft* by Goodenough already in 1959!

In his 1959 article, Goodenough acknowledges the futility of any attempt to reach agreement on a definition of religion and continues to compare the description and analysis of religions as often painful (for the adherents of the specific belief as well as for the one doing the analyses). In this regard Goodenough (1959:79) quotes the Canon Sanday of Oxford who exclaimed, ‘We kill in order to dissect’. Goodenough traces the history of the study of religion back from the times when History of Religions was a part of Religionswissenschaft (1959:6) to the interest *other* disciplines took in the phenomenon of religion. In contrast to the study of religion from other disciplines (e.g., sociology, psychology, etc), Goodenough petitions for the study of religion *sui generis* – the ‘function and goal of *Religionswissenschaft* is to come better to understand the *homo religiosus*’ (1959:86). The core focus of *Religionswissenschaft* according to Goodenough is humankind facing and negotiating with the tremendum. ‘Here seems the essence of religion, the problem of how man [*sic*] can live over against the great unknown, the tremendum’ (Goodenough 1959:87).

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49 In discussing the contribution of Goodenough (1959) I will not make a note every time Goodenough uses the male pronoun to signify the whole of humankind. When I quote an author using the male pronoun to denote the whole of humankind, I will use [*sic*] when quoting the author for the first time only.
Goodenough (1959:87) continues to explore ways humankind has treated being confronted with the ‘chaos of the tremendum’ and writes:

Most commonly man has screened himself off from the tremendum by mythical accounts of the origin and nature of things, by rites which would placate its unpredictable lightnings and whirlwinds, by holy places and seasons, by divinely given codes of laws. In all these ways man has tried to protect himself from what is, to him the chaos of the tremendum. Man has draped curtains about him, with fine paintings in perspective on them. This perspective could give him the illusion that he lives in the tremendum itself while the curtains actually only protect him from its impact. The patterns on other people’s curtains are, of course, myths; those on our own are theology.

Continuing the metaphor of the curtained tremendum, Goodenough (1959:90) writes regarding the task of a new science of religion:

It no longer hides its head, ostrich fashion, in myths asserting that the tremendum is less perilous than it is; it no longer surrenders to the tremendum, and asks to be reabsorbed into it. Instead, refusing to run away or to surrender, it accepts the tremendum, and the individual’s helplessness and insignificance before it. It drops no curtain, but faces the overwhelming within and without, while it seeks to find relationships and meaning as far as it can by its own new method.

Goodenough petitions therefore for scientists of religion to face the tremendum ‘with quiet eyes, astonished, reverent, but unafraid’ (1959:91). He continues:

For we can hardly call ourselves scientists of religion if we systematically define religion so as to leave out this great approach to the tremendum going on all about us, and refuse ourselves to share it. In the mid-twentieth century we will seem ridiculous to our generation if we call ourselves scientists, but do not examine our data in the same factual and calm spirit.

Although the variables scientists of religion face are tremendous, confronting the tremendum is what science is all about (Goodenough 1959:93). All scientists, including scientists of religion, are faced with the tremendum, and should ‘try methods never used, join the hitherto unconnected, break all the rules as they seem inadequate, even though earlier men had found those rules useful’ (Goodenough 1959:93). Goodenough (1959:93) refers to the experiences of a young geologist who realised that he was confronted with ‘the vastness of
unknown nature. But he does not drop his tools to generalise about it. He works on his own specific problem’. Where scientists of religion are often overwhelmed by the tremendum, Goodenough suggests

But we must face the tremendum qua tremendum, not reject old curtains only to put up new curtains of hasty generalisations. Most of us will be technicians, turning up carefully verified hypotheses about small and isolated problems. We also will have our reward. Always, however, we shall hope that the new Curies and Einsteins will come in our field to use what we have been doing, and go far beyond it into a new dimension.

As such scientists of religion should hold the scalpel as ‘a sacramental instrument’ (Goodenough 1959:95) dissecting religion (even though painful) in order to understand more fully humankind’s relation to the tremendum. Goodenough (1959:95) closes his exploration by quoting the admonition of the ancient Rabbi: ‘If you grasp much, you grasp nothing; if you grasp a little, then you really grasp’. If I understand Goodenough (1959) and Krüger (1982, 1995) correctly they both acknowledge the input from other disciplines into the Religionswissenschaft, but both of them petition for the study of religion as sui generis. Before turning specifically to Krüger (1982, 1995), let us first discuss the question Penner and Yonan (1972) ask ‘Is a science of religion possible?’ Where Goodenough (1959) seemed to ask ‘Is a science of religion necessary?’ the question Penner and Yonan ask highlights another dimension of the development of science of religion as a unique and separate field of inquiry.

In exploring their question, Penner and Yonan (1972) warn that the continuing uncertainty regarding the scope and focus of Religionswissenschaft is partly due to ‘a lack of clarification concerning the exact meaning of the key terms [like definition, reduction, explanation] being employed’ (1972:107). Interestingly, in a footnote Penner and Yonan (1972:107) distinguish Religionswissenschaft from other disciplines such as anthropology, psychology, or sociology ‘since their primary concern is not the analysis of religious data’.

Penner and Yonan
(1972:108) also plot the debate in *Religionswissenschaft* against the broader debates between the so-called ‘Natur- and Geisteswissenschaften’.

Already in 1912, Leuba published forty-eight definitions of religion (Penner & Yonan 1972:110). Penner and Yonan (1972:111) very interestingly state that there is an assumption that ‘a definition must win universal acceptance and also remain unchanged in the future’. They continue

> This axiom rests on the questionable assumption that it is both necessary and sufficient that a definition be acceptable to everyone and that such a definition be constituted by a multiplicity of methods. We wish to argue, on the contrary, that a definition of religion acceptable to everyone entails one valid method, and that a multiplicity of definitions implies a multiplicity of methods (Penner & Yonan 1972:111).

Penner and Yonan (1972:115) follow Copi who stated that definitions normally have the following purposes namely to (1) to increase vocabulary, (2) to eliminate ambiguity, (3) to clarify meaning, (4) to explain theoretically, and (5) to influence attitudes.° The reason why Penner and Yonan (1972:133) feel so determined to clarify concepts like definition, reduction and explanation, is because they ‘are convinced that without valid definitions and theories, a science of religion is not possible’.

Pummer (1972) provides a very useful overview of the development of *Religionswissenschaft* and also explores the choice between *Religionswissenschaft* and Religiology. According to Pummer, already in 1887 P.D. Chantepie de la Saussaye stated that *Religionswissenschaft* is a new discipline and in the process of establishing itself and that ‘it has to fight for recognition of its rights’ (Pummer 1972: 91). As Pummer (1972:91) indicates eighty-four years after Chantepie de la Saussaye mentioned this new discipline, the ‘Method, status, and academic study of *Religionswissenschaft* are still subjects of discussions by representatives of that discipline…’ Pummer (1972:94) traces the origins of *Religionswissenschaft* as separate discipline to the Age of

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50 For a full discussion on clarifying the role and function of definitions see Penner and Yonan 1972.
the Enlightenment with ‘the scholarly interest in non-Christian cultures, beginning with the discoveries, on the one hand, and the idea of religious tolerance on the other. *Religionswissenschaft* from its origins to the present day ‘vacillate between a religious-theological or philosophical and a philosophical-historical pole’ (Pummer 1972:94). The early representatives of *Religionswissenschaft* like F.M. Müller, P.C. Tiele, N. Söderblom, G. van der Leeuw and others were, according to Pummer (1972:95) ‘non-professional historians of religions [who] were hardly or not at all influenced by theological doctrines, but they were dependent on contemporary anthropological theories’.

Very early in the history of *Religionswissenschaft* up to the present day it was and still is very important to have an ‘initial definition of religion’ as part of justifying the autonomy of the discipline (Pummer 1972:95). By the time of writing his article in 1972, Pummer (1972:96) indicates that defining religion is a ‘problem for which no satisfactory solution has been found yet’. Oscillating between definitions and descriptions, various attempts have been made to describe the essential elements or dimensions of religion (see for example Krüger 1982, 1995; Penner & Yonan 1972; Pals 1987; Pummer 1972; Smart 1996). Every attempt to define or describe the essential elements, has been confronted by the ‘boo-words’, reduction and reductionistic (Penner & Yonan 1972:109). Pummer (1972:99) refers to Bourgault who explained the crisis of definition of the new science of religion as follows:

... *Religionswissenschaft* became first the successor of theology and then of philosophy of religion, and in this process it became less and less religious and more and more historical, then it was less and less interested in the history of the mind and more and more in philology, and finally it was divided into a multitude of philologies, archaeologies, and disparate and incoordinable human sciences.

In discussing the various terminologies surrounding *Religionswissenschaft* or science of religion, Pummer (1972:103) makes an interesting remark that the English translation of Religionswissenschaft as science of religion is ‘not
generally accepted’ since the German *Wissenschaft* ‘designates every kind of
disciplined research and not only natural science’. Pummer (1972:103) then
continues to make the important remark that ‘Humanistic studies are therefore
regarded as sciences *without* their being modelled on the natural sciences’
(italics added). The terms Pummer (1972:103-106) discusses are
*Religionswissenschaft*, science(s) of religion(s), comparative (study of)
religion(s), history of religions, religion, religious studies and religiology. It is the
last term, namely *religiology* that some authors propose to be the ‘correct’
translation of *Religionswissenschaft*. Pummer (1972:106) however judges that
the two terms namely religiology and *Religionswissenschaft* do not refer to the
same approach to the study of religion. Pummer (1972: 106-109) continues by
suggesting two main divisions in *Religionswissenschaft*, namely a ‘history of
religions in the narrow sense’, and a ‘systematic *Religionswissenschaft*’. The first
division ‘history of religions in the narrow sense’ can further be divided into a ‘so-
called general history of religion and the histories of specific religions’. The
systematic *Religionswissenschaft* refers to a ‘thematic’ study of religion and has
a very strong comparative element in it (Pummer 1972:107).

Pummer (1972:122) concludes that *Religionswissenschaft* is much wider than
just a history of religions should the aim of the science be to arrive at ‘a fuller
understanding of religious man [sic]’. With regard to making a choice between
*Religionswissenschaft* and religiology, Pummer (1972:121) is of the following
opinion:

> If religiology is taken to mean that kind of religious studies that wants to be
> at the same time historical and theological, theoretical and applied, a clear
> borderline has to be drawn between it and *Religionswissenschaft*. The two
> are not at all to be identified. They are distinct from each other because
> the historical-philological study of religion on an empirical basis is not the
> same as theology, or philosophy of religion, or pastoral and ecumenical
> concerns.

Pals (1987) states in his article *Is religion a sui generis phenomenon?* that the
question had been central to the discourse on the viability of
*Religionswissenschaft* as a distinct discipline. He petitions that ‘reduction’ arises
‘from the essential (and laudable) desire of all science for simplicity in the face of complexity, its search for singularity in the presence of multiplicity’ (1987:261). After exploring contributions by Kraemer, Otto, Eliade and Schleiermacher, Pals (1987:278) stakes his claim that religion is a *sui generis* phenomenon by stating ‘In religion, as in other fields of inquiry, the interpreter has the right to insist that phenomena are best explained by appealing to factors which lie within its zone as opposed to those which lie outside it’. Pals (1987:278) affirms the status of religion as being *sui generis* ‘if it is conceived in the same heuristic terms that apply to other disciplines and if it is employed as an axiomatic guide for research’.

Let us turn now to take as conversation partner in exploring the discourses in and surrounding *Religionswissenschaft* the work by Krüger (1982, 1995 and 2003). Krüger (1982) starts his proposal for a methodology of science of religion with quoting Waardenburg who warned that science of religion is much more than only an exploration of the history of religion in dealing with ‘dead facts and things of the past’. Waardenburg (as quoted by Krüger 1982:1) suggests also engaging with the new gestalts of religion – ‘stand at their cradles and to notice even their incomplete development; to be able to do that, we have to observe all the details of their environments with a tireless and sympathetic curiosity, and to sharpen our direct vision’. This quote by Waardenburg is used by Krüger not only to open an exploration on the specific focus of the study of religion but also something of the methodology itself – namely to adapt a ‘tireless and sympathetic curiosity’.

Krüger (1982:9) then provides a short overview of the history of science of religion and indicates that ‘It has been called science(s) of religion(s), comparative (study of) religion(s), history of religions, religion, religious studies and religiology’ – all ‘equivalents’ to the German term *Religionswissenschaft*. Krüger furthermore petitions for science of religion as ‘one coherent body, culminating in a systematic theory of religion’ despite science of religions’ two subdivisions namely history of religions and phenomenology of religion. While
proposing one ‘systematic theory of religion’ Krüger acknowledges possible overlaps with other subjects like sociology and states that it is ‘inevitable and in any event a good thing’ (1982:9). He explains the implication of the overlap as follows – ‘Thus science of religion and sociology have an area of overlap, where sociology concentrates on religion as social phenomenon (thus becoming the sub-discipline sociology of religion) and where science of religion looks at the social dimension of religion’ (Krüger 1982:9).

Krüger (1982:10) therefore proposes that

the name ‘science of religion’ be reserved for the tightly-knot concentration on religion as human phenomenon (as distinct from theology), and on religion as religion (as distinct from for instance sociology, which examines it as a social phenomenon, and psychology, which examines it as a psychological phenomenon). There is an overlap between, say, sociology of religion and science of religion, but there is a difference in perspective: sociology of religion studies society, and sees religion under the aspect of society; science of religion studies religion, and deals with the social dimension of human life under the aspect of religion, not society. The primary category and basic referent of sociology is society; the primary category and basic referent of science of religion is religion itself (italics in the original).

Having said that, Krüger states that there are ‘no tightly-closed gates’ between science of religion and its ‘neighbours’ and that ‘Cross-fertilization between the various disciplines is vital’ (1982:10). Continuing towards formulating a scientific and ‘systematic theory of religion’, Krüger finds inspiration in five ‘metascientific positions’ (1982:11-23). He motivates this by stating that ‘Scientific methods ultimately rest on philosophical grounds’ (1982:11). Krüger discusses logical empiricism, critical rationalism, critical theory, phenomenology and the hermeneutical school. After discussing these five metascience positions, Krüger explores the implications of studying religion specifically from one of these positions or from moving between these positions (1982:23). The danger of working eclectically is that selections are done in an arbitrary way. Krüger concludes (1982:23) ‘The important thing is to appreciate the wealth of more traditions than one, to respect the unique contributions of each and to be on the
lookout for possible points of convergence which might help to do one’s own particular job better’.

Of particular worth for this critical evaluation of the Policy, is Krüger’s exploration of self-awareness and subjectivity in the study of religion (1982: 36-46). Krüger suggests (1982:37) a move away from logical empiricism’s approach and claim to objectivity and suggests ‘Objectivity is to be established in the heart of subjectivity’. Krüger quotes Spiegelberg when he continues ‘There is no escape from subjectivity. The only cure for subjectivistic subjectivity is more and better subjectivity, more discriminating subjectivity, and more selfcritical subjectivity, which will show the very limits of subjectivity’ (1982:37). 51 In a later work, Krüger (1995) shares his understanding of religion as ‘the dream and effort found in all cultures to look at our ordinary world *sub specie aeternitatis*, in the widest horizon possible’. In the light of the insecurities and ambivalences of the modern age, Krüger (1995:6) suggests

> On a tightrope there is no standing, only walking or falling. All we can do on the knife edge between totalising order and scattered fragmentation is listen to the voices of the prophets and visionaries coming down to us in the history of religions, trust the depth within ourselves, and sound the contexts in which we find ourselves as we feel our way forward.

In 1995 Krüger proposes ‘conditionalism’ as a theoretical framework for the study of religion. ‘The advantage of the term “conditionalism” is that it is relatively neutral, allowing for some free interplay among existing schools of thought’ (1995:21). Krüger (1995:22) describes conditionalism as follows:

> The principle of ‘conditionality’ implies a religious philosophy that would replace the psycho-socio-religious syndrome of separateness, substituting the notions of togetherness and relatedness for the notion of division at the very core of reality: togetherness of humans, of humans with nature, and of both humans and nature with God; more than that, humans, nature and God understood as *being constituted* by relatedness and the dynamic interplay of relations. ‘Conditionalism’ speaks of plurality and coherence in

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51 For a further discussion on dimensions of objectivity, subjectivity and reflexivity in the study of religion, see Krüger 1982: 36-46.
the same breath, the one qualifying the other. Plurality without coherence would leave us with a world chaotically shattered into fragments; coherence without pluralism would leave us with yet another closed monolithic world, only bigger than the many little worlds of apartheid. ‘Conditionalism’ seeks an alternative to both centrisism and the mere scatter of fragmentation (italics in the original).

Krüger (1995) petitions for an understanding of religion and an understanding of the understanding of religion as being embedded in a plurality of relations with an inherent (if not foundational) coherence signifying a togetherness in the midst of distinctions and different characteristics. Religious meaning in this sense therefore should be sought and understood ‘in terms of the plurality of specific events, cohering in expanding circles and merging with wider fields of events’ (Krüger 1995:22). He continues by stating ‘Religious studies explore the spaces between and around the various religions, without arguing from the belief-presuppositions of any particular religion as axiomatic points of departure in its theorising’ (Krüger 1995:27). He petitions for an explicit empiricist and naturalistic stance in engaging religion following Whitehead’s epistemological argument that ‘empiricism would argue that there is no fulcrum outside this world on which any human claim to absolute truth may rely for leverage’ (Krüger 1995:30). The implications of such a stance are that science of religion confines itself to experiential knowledge, accessible to every normal person via natural cognitive processes. A further implication of the empiricist approach for academic inquiries into religion is that none of the religions examined will be afforded any special, supernaturally sanctioned status (Krüger 1995:31).

Concrete experience is the only ‘foundation’ for a study of religion. Krüger (1995:34) furthermore proposes that there are three ways of ‘discovering the religious meaning of things’ as revealed in the world:

- ‘descent into the depths of one’s individual existence’ through meditation;
- ‘the investigation of nature, human and non-human’ through science;
- ‘attentive listening to the voices of humankind’ through hermeneutics.
The notion of the *individual*, according to Krüger (1995:35), is an abstract and what we see and construct as the individual is actually a web of relations emanating from and surrounding the individual as he or she acts upon the world and find him or herself being acted upon (Krüger 1982: 26-35; 1995:35).

Throughout the ages these actions and being acted upon became sedimented as cultural patterns of which religion is a part. As such, ‘The historical religions are answers which have been evolved in an attempt to tame the confusing, threatening aspects of life by incorporating them into coherent patterns. Chaos becomes cosmos’ (Krüger 1995:56). ‘In the ongoing process of finding meaning, times of search are followed by times of maintaining what has been found, and invariably these are followed by times of destruction of what has been maintained’ (Krüger 1995:57-58).

Studying religion should therefore take cognisance of religion as interweaved patterns of making-meaning – as sedimented and changed through the ages but also as a living and dynamic patterning. Krüger (1995:58) therefore proposes that religion should not be seen (and studied) as a separate sphere with a separate object of experience, but as interconnected with various provinces of experience...Religion is not a separate province of experience. ...It is just exceptionally deep experience. Religion is not to be found only in holy places such as churches and temples, in sacred ceremonies such as initiation rites, or in holy books. It is the experience of the boundary where the ordinary and the banal are contrasted with the deeply mysterious.

The historical religions, according to Krüger (1995:59), ‘are concretised forms of these frontier experiences; the landmarks, through many millennia, of human beings’ intuitions of ultimate reality, truth, beauty and goodness. There is therefore every reason to treat such forms with great respect’. Krüger then deems it necessary to delineate religion from what he considers to be phenomena that fall outside his proposal for understanding religion. He describes two groups of phenomena that would fall outside religion, namely ‘phenomena that are open to religious understanding [experiences of the grandeur of nature,
love, humour, death, or hope; on another level, science and art; some manifestations of modern atheism], and phenomena that obstruct the process of radical transcending and totalising [nihilism'] (1995: 61).

Up to now Krüger emphasised that religion is not a separate ‘province’, but a human process of making meaning and referring to ages of previous meaning-making, embedded in dynamic relations between individuals, nature and society. Religion, as described so far by Krüger, involves recognising and describing patterns of meaning, even those patterns of meaning found in the liminal spaces between religions. From this evidently ‘open’ approach to religion as a dynamic human construct embedded in webs of relations, Krüger then ‘closes’ his description of religion by stating what falls outside the parameters that he suggested. He specifically mentions nihilism as falling outside as well stating that ‘obstruction is antireligion’ (1995:61). These distinctions would suggest that we are actually dealing with three phenomena namely religion, the not-religious or a-religious and the anti-religious.

If it is true that ‘religious forms are landmarks left from other people’s journeys’ (Krüger 1995:118), then the distinction Krüger makes between ‘good and bad religion’ (1995:119) needs further exploration. The first that comes to mind in judging religious expressions and journeys would be having clarity on the criteria for stating that a specific expression is ‘good’ or ‘bad’. Criteria in a postmodern sense are neither universal nor neutral – but are always embedded in genderised, socioeconomic, class and political webs of meaning. According to Krüger the criterion to establish ‘good’ and ‘bad’ is ‘the degree to which it relies on either authority (auctoritas) or force (potestas)’. Although Krüger acknowledges that ‘good’ or ‘bad’ is ‘a constant possibility in religion’ (1995:119), the classification of ‘good’ or ‘bad’ is often applied from the vantage point of historical separation to the actual events, or if judged in real time – face the
possibility of being judged differently as time elapses or if the gender, socioeconomic and/or political affiliation of the judges change.\footnote{The rules for discourse as proposed by Habermas (1984) are vital in the discourses regarding the ‘good’ and ‘bad’ possibilities of religion.}

In a later work (2003) Krüger explores religious change in a very specific context and specific time-frame, therefore raising interesting methodological questions regarding the broader notion of Religionswissenschaft. He specifically ‘declares’ his hermeneutical instrument as ‘involving, on a historical sociological level, the dimensions of normal scholarly work, such as factual correctness, emphatic understanding, and theoretical explanation – that is the discovery of connections and correlations in patterns of relationships’ (Krüger 2003:9).

He plots his study using the metaphor of music and his specific exploration being flanked by other instruments and sounds (2003:9). He then asks ‘Does the scholar restrict himself to “facts, facts, facts” when people are buried under the rubble of the collapsed heavens?’ In Krüger’s earlier work (1995), he petitions for an understanding of religion never isolated from its contexts, but also never isolated from the sui generis focus of the study of religion, namely homo religiosus. Religion, according to Krüger (2003:13) is the ‘primordial need for a radical and comprehensive orientation’. Krüger (2003:14) even goes so far as to propose ‘to avoid the word “G-o-d”. Most of the time, at least in Western religious history, and particularly in popular forms of theology, it affirms Being in a thick sense, denying its opposite, which makes it problematic’. Krüger (2003:14) therefore proposes ‘pursuing a meta-theistic path’.

Krüger (2003:38) further proposes as methodological ground in approaching religion and religious expressions to ‘proceed from a radically experientially perspective. It cannot be clothed in the authoritative, protective uniform of any imperial religious tradition, but must stand exposed to the critical view of all, unprotected by dogma and sacred institution’. 
Krüger (2003:48-49) opts for a wide understanding of the term ‘religion’ and uses ‘world-orientation’ as alternative. He proposes four substantive uses of the term ‘religion’:

- Firstly, in line with common usage: Krüger uses the terms ‘religion’ in reference to ‘Hinduism’, ‘Judaism’ and so on.
- As reference to organised religion e.g. churches as well as including ‘groups such as Theosophy and Scientology’.
- As synonymous with ‘worldview’ (Weltanschauung) – ‘as the most inclusive framework of culture, and its practical implications’.
- The ‘classical’ forms of religion like Judaism and Christianity as *civil religion* – ‘that is the religious urge as expressed in the beliefs, rituals, myths, pantheon of saints, shrines and so on of a nation or other political entity. A civil religion provides the political aspirations of such a group with “ultimate’ meaning’” (Krüger 2003:49).

Dealing with the richness of such a wide description of ‘religion’, Krüger (2003:55) suggests approaching the plurality of religions not... as merely a scatter like a handful of stones randomly strewn on the ground, but as a complex gestalt – a sort of a milky way, a large social vortex with a collective gravitation towards a centre, or a swing away from it. ... I find the mental picture of a vortex (a galaxy, or a cyclone) helpful as a heuristic instrument to map the various changing constellations over time, and as an alternative to the two dominant master symbols in the interpretation of social life, namely ‘conflict’ and stable ‘system’.

This constellation as proposed by Krüger is shaped by power relations resulting in ‘structures of dominance’ (2003:55); and groups’ quest for self-identity, resulting in the immolating of others (2003:56). ‘In a conditionalistic perspective, real, historical, concrete religions are composites, putting-together from various sources. Technically speaking, they are all syncretistic’ (Krüger 2003:60).

In closing these brief explorations of the discourses in and surrounding *Religionswissenschaft* or the science of religion, I find the remarks made by

We need to overcome the inadequate choice of using either problematic universal categories in understanding religions or a relativistic reversion to purely area-specific study which relegates the study of ‘religions’ to departments of Anthropology, Sociology, or whatever and excludes theologies of traditions from the secular academy. We need to promote Religious Studies as a field of inquiry that gives hospitality to traditions and their self-representations, allows for discussion across subdisciplines such as the Anthropology of Religion, Sociology of Religion, Philology, and so on, and interfaces with a public discourse.

Flood (2006:51) expresses his sympathy for the view by Fitzgerald that religious studies ‘is not unified by a method and if not unified by an [sic] shared object, “religion” then is indeed an administrative fiction’. On the other hand Flood (2006:52) states

The issue is more complex than a choice between religion as a \textit{sui generis} category, outside of culture and closed to history, and religion as a manufactured academic discourse that constructs its field from diverse social and political elements in the unconscious service of a hegemonic, liberal ideology.

Therefore, between these two options as defined by Flood (2006), I would like to side with Goodenough (1959) and the contributions from Krüger (1982, 1995, 2003) in expressing my comfort with taking (for now) a \textit{wide} description of religion and the study of religion as science (as described by Krüger 1995, 2003 and Pummer 1972). Two descriptions that made an impression on me as I attempted to orientate myself in the discourses in and surrounding the study of religion was Goodenough’s (1959) description of the tremendum and Krüger’s (1995) description of religious forms that are landmarks left from \textit{other} people’s journeys, interweaved and patterned in complex and dynamic interrelations between power, socioeconomic and political discourses.

To my mind, the study of religion as proposed by the Policy should empower students with a \textit{Mündigkeit} to be comfortable with being uncomfortable with the numinous, the tremendum. Religion education should allow students to critically
interrogate the paintings on the curtains – to describe, to analyse and compare; but also to venture behind the curtain and confront the ultimate, the tremendum. The Policy should allow learners to become aware of religious forms and traditions (especially their own) as part of a dynamic and lively constellation, recognising patterns, evaluating answers and phrasing new questions.

The study of religion is much more than just an administrative category (Flood 2006), much more than studying religion as social problem (Robbins 1985), much more than defining and interrogating the definitions (Platvoet 1990), more than describing taxonomies (Smith 1996) or plotting the history of religions (Eliade 1961). Studying religion is taking homo religiosus seriously – facing the tremendum qua tremendum’ (Goodenough 1959) with ‘tireless and sympathetic curiosity’ (Waardenburg as quoted by Krüger 1982:1). In this scientific study of the tremendum, we should ‘not reject old curtains only to put up new curtains of hasty generalisations’ (Goodenough 1959:94) and use the ‘curtainless procedures of science’ and respect our scientific inquiry as a ‘sacramental instrument’ (Goodenough 1959:95).

### 3.5.2 Approaches to the study of religion

Connolly states ‘Accurate, objective accounts of religious phenomena and religious traditions simply do not exist in their own right. All accounts of religion are accounts by people who approach their study form a particular starting-point’ (1999:1). Connolly continues to discuss seven approaches to the study of religions of which ‘each has a different emphasis and each brings a distinctive set of assumptions to its inquiries’ though each of these approaches ‘embraces a variety of perspectives within it’ (1999:2). Each of these approaches interprets a ‘methodological agnosticism’ ‘which means that students should bring to their inquiries neither a commitment to the truth or accuracy of one or more religious views of the world nor a conviction of their falsity or inaccuracy’ (Connolly 1999:2). In approaching different religions, students are either being ‘insiders’ or
’outsiders’ to the religion in question. Each of those positions brings with it a set of challenges and dangers.

I will now continue to briefly explore the seven approaches proposed by Connolly (1999) and add an approach not covered by Connolly namely critical approaches to the study of religions as presented in the work by Wright (2004) and Wood (2001). The following figure illustrates the eight different approaches to the study of religion (Figure 3.4).

From Figure 3.4 it is apparent that none of the eight different approaches are ‘closed’ from other approaches and that there may be overlaps between these different approaches.

Figure 3.4: Approaches to the study of religion

3.5.2.1 Anthropological approaches

Examples of recent anthropological approaches to the study of religion include Bowie (2000), Firth (1996) and Glazier (1999). Glazier describes an anthropological approach as follows:
The anthropological approach to the study of religion, which focuses on the nature of the symbolic or cultural self, uses the insights and contributions of psychological, phenomenological, and hermeneutic/semiotic perspectives and analyzes how cultural/social integrity is maintained through the sacred or supernatural integration of the symbolic self (Glazier 1999:514).

In discussing early anthropological approaches to the study of religions, Gellner (1999) refers to the works of Frazer, *The golden bough* (1890) and Durkheim’s *The elementary forms of religious life* (1912). In contrast to the work by Frazer who narrated examples from across the world with little regard for the original context, Durkheim proposed a binary of sacred and profane as underlying experiences of the religious (Gellner 1999: 12-15). These early works resemble evolutionary approaches, while Marx and Malinowsky took a functionalist approach to explaining the role of religion in society (Gellner 1999:16). While Malinowsky’s functionalist approach was based on ‘the biological needs of individuals, Radcliffe-Brown’s focused on the needs of society’ (Gellner 1999:18).

‘In the structural functionalist view, religion was seen as the cement of society: it was analysed so as to show how it contributed to maintaining the social structure of the group’ (Gellner 1999:19). The works of Claude Lévi-Strauss and Clifford Geertz continued an interpretivist functionalist approach to the study of religion’s role in society. According to an interpretivist approach, the key idea is to ‘be able to interpret events in the way that people themselves do’ (Gellner 1999:29 quoting Geertz).

Although Geertz (1973:90) questions whether definitions establish anything, he states that ‘in themselves they do, if they are carefully enough constructed, provide a useful orientation, or reorientation, of thought, such that an extended unpacking of them can be an effective way of developing and controlling a novel line of inquiry’. He proceeds by providing his definition of religion:

1. a system of symbols which acts to 2. establish powerful, pervasive, and long-lasting moods and motivations in men [sic] by 3. formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and 4. clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that 5. the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic (Geertz 1973:90).
Gellner (1999:35-38) closes his essay on anthropological approaches by pointing towards some issues in an anthropological approach to the study of religion. Among these issues are a ‘transcultural religious or spiritual sphere… which is apprehended by people all over the world in different ways’; should all religions be interpreted in the ‘same way’; is ‘religion an inherently or predominantly conservative force’ or can religion be ‘revolutionary’? (Gellner 1999:36-37).

3.5.1.2 Feminist approaches

In feminist approaches gender is introduced as ‘a primary category of analysis’ (Morgan 1999:42). Morgan describes the ‘critical transformation’ aim of feminist approaches as follows:

The critical dimension confronts religion with its historical perpetuation of unjust, exclusionary practices that have legitimated male superiority in every social domain. The transformative aspect subsequently reappropriates the central symbols, texts and rituals of religious traditions so as to incorporate and affirm the neglected experiences of women (1999:42).

Morgan continues to describe Anglo-American religious feminism in the nineteenth century as having been dominated by two major issues: ‘the debate over equal access to the ministry and biblical criticism’ (1999:43). She states that

Religion formed a powerful factor in the shaping and direction of American feminism. This was largely due to the strong ideological connections between the women’s movement and the anti-slavery campaign, or abolitionism, a cause fuelled by evangelical zeal for reform (1999:45).

Other feminist authors whose work Morgan discusses include Rosemary Radford Reuther (1974, 1975). Reuther coined the phrase ‘misbegotten male’ for a female (Morgan 1999:47). Reuther configured patriarchy as a series of historically constructed, sinful social structures open to revision through feminist political struggle (Morgan 1999:48-49). Feminist approaches to the study of religions therefore addressed the issue of using masculine pronouns for deities, and
challenging the gender specific implications of symbols and rituals (Morgan 1999:52-53).

Rereading the sacred literature of Christianity, Judaism, Islam and other world religions involves an awareness not only of narrative content, but the entire hermeneutical or interpretative process only through which that content is understood as normative. Recognition of male authorship, transmission and canonisation of the scriptures renders the Jewish and Christian feminist hermeneutical approach one of profound suspicion (Morgan 1999:53).

Morgan alludes to the fact that feminist approaches to the study of religion warn that ‘gender’ and more specifically womanhood not to be ‘the same’ for all women of all cultures across the world and across religious experiences (1999:61). From the early stages of feminism, feminist scholars have now moved to the stage where they are ‘devoted to the constructions of … a more inclusive gender system which recognises the interrelatedness of female and male identities as central to theoretical analysis’ (Morgan 1999:64-65).

For other examples of feminist approaches, see the works of Benland (1987) and Simpson (1993).

3.5.1.3 Phenomenological approaches

In an essay on phenomenological approaches to the study of religion, Erricker (1999) states that ‘The meaning of the term phenomenology has never been unequivocally established in relation to the study of religion’ (1999:73) – and he does not attempt to do it and pleads for caution to those that do attempt it. In attempting to provide a historical overview of the development of phenomenological approaches, Erricker discusses the works by Waardenberg, Lévy-Bruhl and Mircea Eliade (1999:74-76) and states ‘The phenomenological approach thus originated as an attempt to construct a coherent methodology for the study of religion’ (1999:76). Erricker (1999:76) traces phenomenological approaches back to Hegel’s belief that ‘essence (Wesen) is understood through
investigating appearances and manifestations (Erscheinungen)’ and the work of
Husserl on epoche and eidetic vision.

These two terms … reveal both the scope of the method and the tensions
within it. Epoche involves the restraint or suspension of judgement. It has
also been referred to as ‘bracketing out’. …Eidetic vision relates to the
ability to see what is actually there. It presupposes epoche, introduces the
capacity to see ‘objectively’ the essence of the phenomenon, but also
addresses the issue of the subjectivity of perception and reflection
(1999:77).

Erricker acknowledges that the presumption of eidetic vision is that there is
‘something’ actually there that can be ‘objectively’ reported on (1999:77).
Kristensen, according to Erricker (1999:80) believed that a ‘systematic grouping
of characteristic data’ of religious phenomena would reveal ‘the essential and
typical elements of religion. This task was descriptive, not interpretative’ (Erricker
1999:80). Kristensen also insisted ‘on the importance of understanding a religion
from the viewpoint of the believer, a principle that became axiomatic in many
later phenomenological studies’ (Erricker 1999:80).

According to Erricker (1999:82) phenomenological approaches to the study of
religion can be divided into two categories, namely descriptive and interpretive
phenomenology as the two positions on either end of a continuum (1999:83). As
examples of phenomenological approaches, Erricker refer to the work by William
James (1902), Mircea Eliade (1959) and Ninian Smart (1971). According to
Erricker, Smart is ‘concerned with the organic development of religion in human
history, characterised by the traditions and their institutions on the one hand and
the dimensions of religion on the other’ (1999:85). What is interesting about the
work of Smart with specific regard to my evaluation of the Policy is Smart’s
extension of the parameters of the study of religion to ‘include ideologies that
exhibit similar characteristics to religions, such as Marxism and humanism’
(Erricker 1999:86). Of this expansion of the parameters of the study of religions,
Erricker says – ‘As a result, what was conceived as a phenomenological study
restricted to institutionalised religion, with global significance, becomes the study
of worldviews that spans religious and non-religious understandings in relation to existential issues and experiential perceptions’ (1999:88).

3.5.2.4 Philosophical approaches

In his exploration of philosophical approaches to the study of religion Fisher (1999:105) admits to a ‘crisis of identity’ as philosophical approaches to the study of religion do not have a ‘single home’ and secondly, that there is no agreement on what a philosophical approach to the study of religion entails. He identifies five possible positions with regard to the relationship between philosophy and religion namely (1) philosophy as religion; (2) philosophy as the handmaid of religion; (3) philosophy as making room for faith; (4) philosophy as an analytic tool of religion; and (5) philosophy as the study of the reasoning used in religious thought (1999:116).

As a way out of, or into the dilemma, Fisher proposes following John Hick (1983) in identifying four branches in a philosophical approach to the study of religion (1999:118-122). These four branches are:

(1) An exploration of the logic inherent in religious thought. This implies the interrogation of ‘all aspects of the arguments a religious believer advances’ (1999:119).

(2) An exploration of the philosophical activity of metaphysics in dealing with ontological, epistemological and cosmological questions (1999:120).

(3) Combined with logic and metaphysics, philosophy as epistemological inquiry.

(4) The ethical dimension of philosophical enquiry.

Current issues and debates in philosophical approaches to the study of religion according to Fisher (1999:122) can be clustered into three areas namely (1) a cultural-linguistic understanding of religion; (2) the problem of evil; and (3) the problem of God’s action in the world.
Psychological approaches to the study of religion find itself ‘very much on the periphery of mainstream psychology’ (Connolly 1999:135). As a way into defining the variety of approaches on this periphery, Connolly proposes to distinguish between the psychology of religion and religious psychology. The former would then refer to the application of psychological methods and data to the study of religious beliefs, experiences and behaviours; the latter to the use of psychological methods and data by religious people for the purpose of enriching and/or defending religious beliefs, experiences and behaviours (1999:137)

Although such a distinction may be valid and useful, it does not offer a ‘complete solution, for there is inevitably a hazy border zone between the two activities’ (Connolly 1999:137). Tracing the historical development of psychological approaches to the study of religion, Connolly explores inter alia the contributions of Freud (1927) and Jung (1875-1961). According to Connolly, Freud ‘describes religion as an individual response to the pressures of life’ and assists humans in making ‘helplessness tolerable’ (1999:150). For Freud, religion ‘inhibits psychological and emotional maturation’ (Connolly 1999:151). Jung, according to Connolly (1999:151) was not as negative about the role religion plays in the lives of groups and individuals. Jung viewed religion ‘as a vehicle for channelling the symbolic communication between the unconscious and the conscious minds’. As such a religious outlook ‘is essential for psychological well-being in the second half of life’ (Connolly 1999:151).

Religion, according to Jung, ‘was fundamentally psychological in nature’ (Connolly 1999:155). Connolly continues to discuss the various contributions of Abraham H. Maslow, Carl Rogers, B.F. Skinner and John Schumaker who saw all religion as ‘cumulative traditions of reality distortion whose purpose is to keep the specters of mortality and chaos at bay’ (Connolly 1999:172). Connolly closes his discussion of psychological approaches to the study of religion by referring to the different valuations of the role and function of religion in the lives of
individuals and communities. Connolly states that, so far, there is not clear evidence regarding the relation between mental health and religion; that researchers employ different definitions of ‘being religious’ and that most research in this field are ‘methodologically and conceptually deficient’ (1999:183).

3.5.1.6 Sociological approaches

The uniqueness of sociological approaches to the study of religion is their specific attention and focus to the different aspects of the relation between society and religion.

The basic presupposition of the sociological perspective concerns the social structuring and construction of human experience and culture, including religion. Objects, knowledge, practices and institutions in the social world are viewed by sociologists as the products of human interaction and social construction. Religion is one form of social construction (Northcott 1999:193).

Sociological approaches to the study of religion emphasises the aspect of immanence instead of transcendence in their exploration of the social forces and processes of religion as well as ‘the generative power of religious organisations and doctrine in the social world, and to the distinctive shape and characteristics of the life worlds which religious communities represent in both primitive and modern societies’ (Northcott 1999:194).

Northcott traces the historical development of sociological approaches to the study of religion back to the work of Auguste Comte and Emile Durkheim. Durkheim, according to Northcott, postulated ‘Religion is therefore a source of social and moral order, binding members of society to a common social project, a set of shared values and beliefs’ (1999:196). Durkheim further proposes that as modern societies evolve, that the social solidarity and commitment to the common good of society would be eroded as society increasingly depended less on gods and religions and more on empirical reason (Northcott 1999:196-197).
In exploring sociological approaches to the study of religion, Northcott also refers to the contributions of Marx, Gramsci and Max Weber (1999:198-201). Like Durkheim, Marx regarded ‘religion as a social product and as an agent of social order in premodern societies’ (Northcott 1999:198). Northcott (1999:198) states ‘According to Marx religion acts as a collective smoke screen which obscures the true nature of things from the mass of people, mystifying the origins and reality of their oppression, and representing the rights of the rulers over the ruled as elements of a divinely ordained social order’ (Northcott 1999:198).

Antonio Gramsci alluded to the ‘potential of religion as a generator of social change as well as of social cohesion’ (Northcott 1999:199). With regard to the contributions of Max Weber to sociological approaches to the study of religion, Northcott refers to the fact that

Religion in a Weberian perspective is in different contexts both a source of social change and challenge and a source of social order and legitimation of the status quo. However Weber also believed that religion would gradually fade in social significance as a consequence of the rationalization of modern social and economic organisation (1999:199).

Identifying current issues and debates within sociological approaches to the study of religion, Northcott identifies several (1999:214-220). On the one hand there is the influence of securalism by which ‘religion loses its dominance or social significance in society’ (Northcott 1999:214) involving

- Declining participation in religious activities and ceremonies
- Declining membership of religious organisations
- Declining influence of religious institutions in social life and institutions
- Diminishing authority of and belief in religious teachings
- Reduced private devotion, prayer, belief
- Declining authority of traditional religiously sanctioned moral values
- Reduced social significance of religious professionals, reductions in vocations, and in some countries anti-clericalism
- Privatisation or internal secularization of religious rituals and belief systems (Northcott 1999:214)

On the other hand there are indications of a ‘return of religion’ with increasing fundamentalisms worldwide to such an extent that many sociologists who
have for many years 'discounted the social significance of religion are increasingly recognising the growing role of religion in movements of cultural and ethical resistance in late or postmodern societies in both the developed and developing worlds' (Northcott 1999:219-220).

3.5.1.7 Theological approaches

Whaling (1999:226) states that the relationship between theology and the study of religion to be ‘a highly complex one’. This situation is further exacerbated by the fact that there is no ‘simple, monolithic meaning that can be given to either theology or religious studies’ (Whaling 1999:227). After exploring the historical development of theology, Whaling concludes that theology has to do with God or transcendence, whether seen mythologically, philosophically, or dogmatically. Second, although it has many nuances, doctrine has always been a significant element in its meaning. And third it is essentially a second-order activity arising from ‘faith’ and interpreting faith (Whaling 1999:228-229).

Religious studies, on the other hand, ‘is wide in its remit’ referring to the major traditions like Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jewish and Muslim; the minor traditions such as Jain, Sikh, Taoist and Zoroastrian; dead traditions such as the Gnostics, the Manichaeans; new religious movements like the Baha’is and a variety of indigenous traditions; and even ‘secular religions’ as proposed by Ninian Smart to include nationalism, humanism and Marxism (Whaling 1999:229). Theology also seems to be centrally concerned with doctrine, while religious studies emphasise conceptual elements, social practices, rituals, aesthetics, spirituality, myth, symbol, and ethics (Whaling 1999:230).

After his attempt of differentiating between theology and religious studies, Whaling states 'It is a part of the task of religious studies to be aware of, and to understand, the separate theologies of the separate religions' (1999:236). Different religious traditions ‘tend to differ on the basis of a core of doctrines that
are more-or-less “given” (Whaling 1999:237). Religious traditions are however, also not homogenous in doctrine, processes and rituals. There are significant theological differences within religious traditions (Whaling 1999:238). Whaling continues to state that there are furthermore four different types of theology within each tradition (1999:239). He defines the four types as follows (1999:239-240):

(1) The ‘descriptive, historical, positivistic type of theology … who attempts to describe what is the case doctrinally in a functional way without passing over into value judgements’;

(2) A ‘systematic type of theology attempts to summarise the doctrines of the faith community in a confessional sense’;

(3) ‘The philosophical type of theology attempts to engage with other positions at a philosophical level by taking them seriously and reacting to them’ and

(4) A ‘theology of dialogue’ which ‘involves the deliberate desire to understand others for their own sake, not just for apologetic reasons’.

Whaling concludes that the scholar of religion ‘is interested in exploring the theologies of different religions in order to understand their core concepts, the different types of theology within each tradition, and the different theological viewpoints within each tradition’ (1999:243).

2.5.1.8 Critical approaches

Both Andrew Wright (2004)\textsuperscript{53} and Mark Wood (2001) are examples of a critical approach to the study of religion. They do however differ in defining their criticality. The work of Wright (2004) is explicitly based on critical realism\textsuperscript{54}, while Wood’s exposition of a critical approach to the study of religions is based on a Marxist and Gramscian analysis of the role the study of religion can and should

\textsuperscript{53} Wright (2004), like Jackson (1997, 2004) is an example of educationists working on the study of religion.

\textsuperscript{54} For further information on critical realism, see for example Hiebert (1999) and essays of Roy Bhaskar in Archer, Bhaskar, Collier, Lawson and Norrie (1998).
play. I will first very briefly refer to the work of Wright (2004) and then continue to interrogate the work of Wood (M.D) (2001)\textsuperscript{55}.

Wright establishes his approach within the domain of critical realism (2004:53). He suggests that critical realism, ‘together with alteristic forms of post-modernity, suggests a way of progressing towards deeper and more truthful knowledge of ourselves, and of our place in the ultimate order-of-things, however provisional, limited and contingent such knowledge might be’ (2004:64). If I understand Wright correctly, then it would seem as if he, on the one hand accepts the possibility that all knowing is provisional and contingent, but then on the other hand, Wright seems to suggest that our knowing is progressively getting closer to knowing the ‘ultimate order-of-things’. He seems to suggest that such an ultimate order-of-things exists as ultimate truth, and secondly, that academia and education should strive to attain the ‘ultimate truth’. He goes further to state that the ‘integrity of religious education, that is to say, is rooted in its pursuit of ultimate truth’ (2004:221).

Within the context of an ‘alteristic freedom’ Wright states the following about the truth-claims of religions:

The truth claims of religion are vital, ambiguous and unavoidable: vital because it matters how we live out our lives, ambiguous because we are faced with a host of conflicting and competing meta-narratives, unavoidable because we live our lives in a framework of meaning, whether modern or post modern, religious or secular (2004:224).

Wright closes his exposition of his proposal for critical religious studies by stating:

Our exploration of the interface between religion, education and post-modernity has produced a high view of education as a process of honest, open, wise and truthful struggling with the ultimate mystery of reality and striving after the ultimate truth of the order-of-things. The universal challenges facing humanity urgently require the establishment of a public religious literacy that is open, honest, truthful and wise. Despite the dangers of a narrowly conceived post-modern meta-narrative, a post-modernity resistant to the premature closure of our ongoing wrestling with

\textsuperscript{55} For the sake of the formulation of my own criticality, the work by Wood (M.D)(2001) was stimulating and opened vistas of what criticality in the study of religion can mean.
the ultimate order-of-things, and open to the horizon of alterity, difference
and the Other, has much to teach the religious educator (2004:231).

In stark contrast to the approach by Wright (2004) we find the work of Wood
(M.D)(2001). Wood (M.D)⁵⁶ explores the content and role of the study of religions
against the backdrop of a Marxist and more specifically a Gramscian analysis of
labour, capitalism and society. Academia, according to Wood, is not an ivory
tower as many would (like to?) believe, but ‘microcosmically represents’ the
conflicts found in wider society and also contributes to the ‘macrocosmic
development’ of these conflicts (2001:131). Academia is also
an institution integral to the expanded reproduction of capitalist relations of
production and consumption – relations that are producing grotesque
socioeconomic inequalities between and within nations; leaving a growing
proportion of humanity jobless, homeless, and desolate; and threatening
the biological viability of the earth itself (2001:132).

Wood refers to the work by Loy (1997) who named capitalism as ‘the first truly
world religion’ (as quoted by Wood 2001:133) and therefore, academia and the
study of religion cannot afford ‘the luxury of neutrality’. Neutrality is neither
possible nor desirable (Wood 2001:133). As such the study of religion should
‘take side in the struggle to create a life-enhancing global society’ (2001:133).

Against this background, Wood continues to define a critical organic approach to
religious studies to encompass ‘…analysing the existing global social order,
imagining life-enhancing alternatives, and fostering the construction of these
alternatives’ (2001:134). This will require religious scholars and teachers to
‘…break with corporate versions of multiculturalism that reduce the overarching
ethical project of religious studies to aiding students in their ability to appreciate
cultural and religious diversity rather than to engage with religious life as integral
to this analytic, imaginative, and constructive project’ (2001:134).

⁵⁶ For the rest of the discussion, Wood (2001) refers to Mark D. Wood and not Wood, E.J.)
Wood locates his proposal for critical organic religious studies against the requirement in transnational and global companies ‘to be able to work in contexts that are culturally, ethnically, nationally and religiously diverse’ (2001:135). There is also an increasing ‘commodification of diversity, that is, the transformation of diversity, including religious diversity, into exchange values sold on the global capitalist market (e.g., religious greeting cards, calendars, and spiritual quotation and self-help books)’. The effect of these developments on the one hand ‘supports our efforts to pique student interest in the study of religion’ and also, simultaneously ‘compels us to work harder to present that the world’s religions represent something more than merely more commodities for consumption in the global spiritual shopping mall’ (2001:136).

The well-known quote of Marx that religion is ‘the opiate of the masses’ continues to state that religion is ‘an expression of real suffering and a protest against real suffering’ (quoted by Wood 2001:139). Hegemony, as proposed by Gramsci, maintains its power ‘by encouraging the powerless to think, feel, and act in ways that support the existing social order as if it were natural and, if possible, desirable’ (Wood 2001:139). Using the concepts proposed by Gramsci does not ‘radically alter the project of religious studies’ (Wood 2001:140).

By exploring how religions contribute to the formation of hegemonic as well as counterhegemonic habits, sensibilities, and world-views, religious studies as critical organic practice makes it possible for students to appreciate the entirely this-worldly relevance of religion to matters of personal, social, and planetary well-being (2001:140).

As exponent of a genealogical materialism, Wood is of the opinion that Foucault’s theory of power ‘proves inadequate to enable religious studies scholars and teachers to contribute to the improvement of the human condition’ (2001:142). In paragraph 3.2 I alluded to the fact that Wood is uncomfortable with Foucault’s description of power. For the sake of my exploration, Wood quotes Foucault as having said:

[Power] is not which makes the difference between those who exclusively possess and retain it, and those who do not have it and submit to it. Power must be analysed as something which circulates, or rather as something
which only functions in the form of a chain. It is never localised here or there, never in anybody’s hands, never appropriated as a commodity or piece of wealth. [Rather,] power is employed and exercised through a net-like organisation. And not only do individuals circulate between its threads; they are always in the position of simultaneously undergoing and exercising this power. They are not only its inert or consenting targets; they are always also the elements of its articulation. In other words, individuals are the vehicles of power, not its point of application (as quoted by Wood 2001:143).

Wood compares a Foucauldian and Marxist analysis of power by stating

Whereas Marxist analysis illuminates what must be done by working people in order to gain and use power as a means of building a democratic society, a Foucauldian analysis suggests that what must be done is to displace the dominant discursive regime by resisting localized sites of its specific operations in a never-ending process of discursive displacements (2001:143).

On the one hand I suspect that Wood underestimates power to corrupt and use whatever vehicle for articulation and application, and on the other hand sympathise with Wood that the moment you locate localized sites of power, in a ‘never-ending process of discursive displacements’ – the focus of any struggle for a more just and compassionate society becomes almost unattainable. Wood attests to this by saying

… if no one owns power-producing machines (e.g., manufacturing plants, communication networks, agricultural equipment), if everyone is done by and does power, then it becomes difficult, if not impossible, to say that an individual or class of individuals, say, for example, the ruling economic class, is exploiting another individual or class of individuals, say, for example, workers whose labour produces the machinery of power (Wood 2001:144).

He adds later that that a Foucaultian approach to power does not allow citizens to confront the inequalities in society which ‘provides every person access to the resources required to develop fully their talents and abilities’ (2001:145). I suspect that Foucault would have empathised with Wood’s notion of the broader project of ‘an ecologically sustainable and socially responsible global society’. Foucault’s concern would have been with Wood’s suggestion that citizens of the world should ‘acquire and utilize various forms of power’. I further suspect that
Foucault’s ‘distrust’ of using power to counter unequal power distribution is if not more cynical than Wood’s beliefs, then more sober?

Where Wright (2004) uses the ‘pursuit of truth’ and the ‘ultimate order-of-things’ as design principles for a critical religious studies, so Wood (2001) uses ‘labour’ in the context of global capitalism as design principles for a critical theory of religion. He expresses concern that ‘students lack even a rudimentary knowledge regarding how capitalism works, whom it works for and whom it works against, and how it is related to nature and their own lives’ and that the education they received was ‘appropriate for empire’ (2001:148). Students lack theoretical tools to analyse and explain the social causes of capitalism abusing humans and the environment. Against this background, there is a need for insurgent productive pedagogical relations which involves ‘connecting course material to the local and global problems that constitute the social, political, and economic world in which we live’ (2001:150). Although Wood does not refer specifically to the pedagogical practices proposed by Freire (as discussed in section 3.3), he does refer to the practice of ‘banking’ education, which, according to Wood ‘remains bankrupt as a means for generating individuals who are capable of investigating and transforming the world’ (2001:150). Again in reaction to the proposal of Freire (although Wood does not mention Freire), Wood criticizes the emancipatory approach’s intention to allow students to discover and develop their ‘own voices’. Wood comments that ‘…while many students lack the ability to speak, even more lack the basic knowledge of history, politics, science, literature, morals, ethics, and religion, including quite often knowledge of their own faith traditions’ (2001:150). He further laments that should students voice their opinions, these opinions often sound ‘like the voice of syndicated right-wing radio talk show hosts’ (2001:150). Wood then proposes that

Critical pedagogy ought to be less oriented by a concern with helping students find their ‘own’ voices (particularly if the concept of ‘voice’ is depoliticized, that is abstracted from its socially embedded context as a socially produced, politically interested voice) than concerned with helping students appreciate the ways in which voices are linked to and quite often supportive of the status quo and with helping students develop their
capacity to challenge the conditions that obstruct our efforts to build a just, democratic, and humane global society (2001:151).

Wood’s critical religious study should not only challenge existing social relations, but also be rewarded for challenging the status quo (2001:152). For the development of critical organic religious studies, Wood foresees ‘…providing theoretical resources required for students to analyse the societal forces that currently determine the development of sensuous labour, to imagine alternative possibilities, and to develop strategies by which to realize these possibilities’ (2001:153).

The critical religious studies as proposed by Wood, therefore has three elements, namely to analyse, to imagine and to develop strategies. These three elements should be developed ‘within the context of global capitalist realities’ (2001:153). In this critical organic praxis, Wood proposes that students become engaged in community projects – not only to address immediate problems confronting society, but also to build ‘organizations that can challenge the forces that create these problems in the first place’ (2001:156). In closing his proposal for critical religious studies, Wood admits that ‘Developing religious studies as critical organic intellectual practice is very much a work in progress’ and he expresses his hope that a critical religious studies makes a useful contribution to the larger task of forging a mode of praxis that enables faculty, students, and community members not merely to interpret the world in so many different religious ways but also become critically, creatively, and compassionately engaged in the task of building a just, democratic, and humane global society (2001:159).

We now move to the third stage in this chapter’s journey by turning to the overlap between critical theory and the study of religion. The following figure (Figure 3.5) allows us to locate ourselves in our journey towards defining the parameters for a critical evaluation.
We are now moving towards an integration of three distinct aspects namely critical theory, education and the study of religion. My intention is not to attempt a complete exposition of critical theory’s relation to and critique of education, religion and the study of religion. It is furthermore impossible for a number of reasons. As stated earlier, critical theory is neither a homogeneous theory nor do many authors in the field of critical theory address education, religion and the study of religion explicitly. For the purpose of this study, I will start by exploring as backdrop for this journey the eschatology of the Frankfurt School and specifically Ernst Bloch. I will then continue to harvest some indicators regarding the role of education from the work of Adorno, Habermas and Giroux. Once we have clarified some pointers regarding the role and content of education according to some authors in critical theory, I will explore the implications for the study of religion.

3.6.1 The eschatology of the Frankfurt School as reference point

Ewert (1991) starts his exploration of Habermas’ view on education by stating

Critical theory starts with the assumption that each historical situation is a distortion of the utopian vision that was the initial normative basis for the existing social structures and beliefs. Whereas empirical and interpretive
social sciences describe the world as it is, critical theory tries to understand why the social world is the way it is, and more importantly, through a process of critique, strives to know how it should be. Critical theory starts from a critique of ideology, defined as *distorted knowledge*, to enable individuals to become self-consciously aware of knowledge distortions. This self-consciousness awareness of knowledge distortion is enlightenment, a necessary precondition for individual freedom and self-determination. The individual becomes emancipated when, on the basis of his or her enlightenment, he or she takes freeing action that changes the social system to permit the realisation of his or her unique human potential (Ewert 1991: 345-346; italics in the original).

To understand critical theory’s ‘discontent’ with history, Mendes-Flohr (1983) suggests that one should understand as response against feelings of ‘homelessness’ that modern humans experiences since the First World War (1983:632). Mendes-Flohr critiques ‘the radial individualization of humankind, leaving it bereft of genuine community and fellowship’ resulting in feelings of social and cosmic homelessness (1983:632).

The disillusionment that followed after the First World War caused a ‘mood of existential concern and redemptive longings [that also] deeply affected Jewish intellectuals’ (Mendes-Flohr 1983:632). As a way of dealing with this pessimism, the intellectuals like Benjamin, Adorno, Horkheimer and Bloch adopted Marxism, not necessarily, according to Mendes-Flohr as ‘a dogmatic ideology, but rather as a method which regards social and cultural reality not as static, but as being flush with dynamic, dialectic possibilities, which, alas, have been generally ignored or missed’ (1983:633). This ‘Marxist imagination and passion is the vision of Redemption’, which is celebrating the ‘time of now’ — ‘a junction at which history at last comes to a halt and redemption will embrace time’ (Mendes-Flohr 1983:634). Within this *Jetztzeit*, the present as the ‘time of now’, Adorno and Horkheimer defined the ultimate truth as *ein ganz Anderes*, ‘an entire other’. This *ganz Anderes* ‘is not in heaven but in the future’ (Mendes-Flohr 1983:635)\(^57\). Mendes-Flohr quotes Horkheimer who endowed this truth with ‘the hope that the

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\(^{57}\) Ernst Bloch (1986), in ‘The principle of hope’ explored the eschatological content and function of hope extensively.
earthly horror does not possess the last word’ (Mendes-Flohr 1983:635). This hope for redemption and for emancipation ‘permits one to utter a confident No to the existent order’ and looks at social reality ‘from the standpoint of redemption (Erlösung)’ (Mendes-Flohr 1983:635). This longing for a totally new, unknown dispensation, ‘Sehnsucht nach dem ganz Anderen’ impacts on the experience of the ‘present’ as being both ‘having become and becoming’. Critical theory seeks to ‘…illuminate the future through an understanding of the dialectical possibilities of the present. The rendering of the future as an object of dialectical thinking permits them [critical theorists] to employ the future (qua higher stage of truth and justice) as a criterion for judging the past and present’ (Mendes-Flohr 1983:636). The future therefore in being anticipated, impels humans to act as active collaborator in the dialectical advance of history. These images of the future, however, are not generated by the dialectic itself, but by man’s primordial capacity to hope, or rather to prefigure the future. The prescient apprehension of the future, which is meant to guide the dialectics of history, ultimately is best articulated in religion (Mendes-Flohr 1983:636-637).

According to Mendes-Flohr (1983:637), Bloch calls for ‘metaphysics of the future’. This longing for the ‘still unnamed’ Bloch calls ‘hope’ which is ‘thus an ontological principle and, peculiarly linked to the flux of being, anticipates the fulfilment of this process, the absolute future’ (Mendes-Flohr 1983:640). Bloch, according to Mendes-Flohr places hope at the centre of our epistemology which prevents ‘the limits of reality to reign supreme’ and the forfeiture of the ‘very essence of our being: to be hopeful’ (1983:641). Bloch continues to distinguish between ‘hope’ and ‘idle desire and wishful expectation’ –

Hope probes the future and thereby illuminates the possibilities of the present, hope tells us that our present existence is not ultimate and that there is an alternative. Hope permits us to transcend the painful present by anticipating a utopian future – a kind of reality that has never been (1954:312), nonetheless, it is a vision of a possibility that might be realized. Historically, according to Bloch, such visions were most forcefully articulated by religion (Mendes-Flohr 1983:641).

According to Mendes-Flohr, Bloch explored the notion that religion does not only open humankind for a totally different dispensation, but ‘also inhibits the
realisation of man’s [sic] hope’ (1983:642). So, on the one hand Yahweh ‘quickens man’s utopian vision, heightening his awareness of the imperfections of the present. Yet God leaves man suspended – sinisterly, Bloch would suggest – waiting for an ever-receding redemption’ (Mendes-Flohr 1983:642). Mendes-Flohr states, ‘Marxism provides man with docta spes, begriffene Hoffnung – hope that seizes, comprehends, and transforms reality, realizing its dialectical possibilities’ (1983:643). This hope does not rely on a Messiah or metaphysical redemption but allows humankind to deal with ‘the darkness of the lived moment… buoyed by a hope…’ (Mendes-Flohr 1983: 644).

3.6.2 Critical theory and the role and content of education

The eschatological tension and passion as found in the work of Bloch provides the background for my exploration of the role and content of education according to some proponents in critical theory. Adorno petitions that education should empower citizens ‘to come to know the mechanisms that render people capable of such deeds, must reveal these mechanisms to them, and strive, by awakening a general awareness of those mechanisms, to prevent people from becoming so again’ (1998:192). Central to the educational project is to increase humans’ ability to critically self-reflect (Adorno 1998:192). Adorno calls human autonomy in the sense of self-determination as the ‘single genuine power standing against the principle of Auschwitz’ (1998:194). Adorno continues to petition against an ‘educational goal of hardness’ which often results in authoritarian personalities developing, which are able to manipulate and not take care for inhumane acts towards others. ‘The inability to identify with others was unquestionably the most important psychological condition for the fact that something like Auschwitz could have occurred in the midst of more or less civilized and innocent people’ (1998:198). In the light of the call that Auschwitz should never happen again, education ‘should transform itself into sociology, that is, it must teach about the
societal play of forces that operates beneath the surface of political forms’, (Adorno 1998:200)\textsuperscript{58}.

3.6.3 Critical theory and the study of religion\textsuperscript{59}

The relation between critical theory and the study of religion is contested – depending on the author. In an earlier work, Mendieta (2002) states that a critique of religion as developed by the ‘first generation of the Frankfurt School has remained unexecuted, because of the transdisciplinary, or adisciplinary, character of such a critique’ (2002:5). He continues to state ‘Their work did not fall within the category of the study of religions, sociology of religion, or even philosophy of religion. Nor could it have been assimilated to theology, notwithstanding repeated accusations that critical theory was really masked theology’ (2002:5). According to Mendieta, there were two central motives in the Frankfurt School’s approach to religion namely

That religion retains an ineradicable philosophical and conceptual importance, without which criticism of actuality and society is unthinkable. And second, that insofar as religion means belief in an absolutely transcendent God who hovers above history as ultimate judge, then the promise of justice and hope that is not exhausted by any social institution is kept alive (Mendieta 2002:7).

Horkheimer referred to the Frankfurt School’s relationship to religion as ‘an index of resistance’ (Mendieta 2002:7). Mendieta (2002:10) summarises Adorno’s and Horkheimer’s reflections on religion as follows:

First, enlightenment is catalyzed by religion. We cannot understand the critique of myth without understanding how religion itself, and in particular the Christian and Jewish traditions, are forms of demythologization. Second, religion, despite having accelerated the process of its own assimilation and secularization, is never divested of both its social and philosophical role: as the call to universality and the promise of an inextinguishable negativity that renders all claims to completeness and fulfilment questionable and partial. Third … religion remains both a

\textsuperscript{58} Giroux (2004) in an essay titled ‘Education after Abu Ghraib, takes Adorno as conversation partner in exploring the American negation of the scope and horror of American abuse and torture of Iraqi detainees.

\textsuperscript{59} This section should also be read in the light of the discussion on postsecuralism in Chapter 1.
reservoir and a compendium of humanity’s most deeply felt injustices and yearned for dreams of reconciliation. Fourth, insofar as Critical Theory is a bringing together of different research tools, which ought to allow for the use of reason against reason, its approach to religion is guided by a ‘methodological scepticism’ that ought to render one ever vigilant to facile and glib dismissals of certain social phenomena. Religion is not to be dismissed simply because a certain school of sociology has discovered, given its methodological orientation, that religion has become functionally superfluous. Fifth, and finally, the Frankfurt School’s critique of religion, which is less a rejection and more a reappropriation, refuses to answer in favor of one or the other side of the dyad: Athens or Jerusalem? One is unthinkable without the other. Reason is impossible without anamnesis, and memory remains ineffective if it were not married to universality: remembrance of what and for whom? Memory of suffering by whom and for whom?

According to Mendieta (2005) religion and the study of religion was ‘central’ to the research agenda of critical theory. In contrast, Beckford (2000) states that critical theory had greater impact on theology than on the study of religion. And Meyer (1995) questions Habermas’ so-called turn-around on the role of religion in modern society. For the purpose of this study, it would have been helpful if the link between critical theory and the study of religion was as clear as Mendieta (2005) proposes. Even though the link between critical theory and the study of religion is disputed, critical theory as philosophy already provides some critical pointers towards educational policy and for evaluating and shaping the study of religion. I will shortly provide an overview of the points made by Mendieta (2005), Beckford (2000) and Meyer (1995) before attempting to develop some critical pointers for the evaluation of the Policy.

Mendieta (2005:2) further states that ‘it is almost impossible to think of Western culture today without the tradition of inter-disciplinary, critical, and philosophically informed social research developed by the eponymous called Frankfurt School’. Pointing to the centrality of ‘cultural studies’ in the theoretical and research agendas of the Frankfurt School, Mendieta also states ‘as the Frankfurt School sought to understand how culture contributed to the domestication and pacification of the masses, it also sought to understand those products that both
mediated and gave expression to yearning and hopes not exhausted and totally commodified by the culture industry’ (2005:3).

Central to the ‘agenda” of the Frankfurt School ‘we find not just an incidental or ancillary attention to religion, but a central, deliberate, and explicit confrontation with both religion and theology’ (Mendieta 2005:8). Religion, like art and the culture industry, ‘becomes a site for the negotiation of critique, remembrance, and emancipatory projections’ (Mendieta 2005:8). The Frankfurt School treated religion ‘as a heterogeneous phenomenon that intersects at many different levels with social existence’ (Mendieta 2005:8). Religion was ‘viewed as a fundamental part of the lifeworld’, and as providing societies with ‘lingua francas, common languages through which to address their hopes and discontents’ (Mendieta 2005:8). The Frankfurt School also expressed a concern ‘with the way in which religion provided the fertile soil for ideas of autonomy, authority, power, and development of critical thinking…’ and how religion became ‘indoctrinated into the service of new and more acute forms of domestication and pacification’ (Mendieta 2005:9). ‘In the Frankfurt School’s critique of religion, religion offers not just consolation, but also the conceptual and epistemological elements with which to criticize a world that has made humanity disconsolate and superstitious’ (Mendieta 2005:10). Mendieta (2005:11) summarises the Frankfurt School’s critical theory of religion as being a dual confrontation with the religious sources of modern, European, and Western Culture, sources that unleashed a fateful dialectic of introjected and sacrificial violence, and an attempt to rescue what makes the religious not just a source of alienation and negation of the world, but also of remembrance, hope, redemption, and utopia (Mendieta 2005:11).

Beckford, in evaluating critical theory’s relation to the study of religion, provides a different standpoint to Mendieta and he judges the contribution of critical theory to the scientific study of religion less optimistically (2000:485). He states ‘…neither Horkheimer nor Macuse nor Benjamin conducted or inspired research on religion…’ Meyer continues to state ‘Thus, although religion could easily have
lent itself to analysis in terms of late capitalism's capacity to seduce and deceive people into conformity, surprisingly few attempts were made to deploy Critical Theory for this purpose’ (Beckford 2000:485). Beckford concludes that the impact of critical theory ‘was probably greater on theology than on the scientific study of religion’ (2000:486). It falls outside the scope of this study to evaluate critical theory’s contribution to the study of religion, but the contrast between the views of Mendieta (2005) and Beckford (2000) begs further thought. Looking at the ‘evidence’ Mendieta (2005) assembles to ‘prove’ that religion and the study of religion was, in fact, central to the research agenda of the Frankfurt School, one finds among the essays he collected specific reflections on the Third Reich (Bloch), the dogma of Christ (Fromm), the way Luther, Calvin and Kant perceived ‘authority’ (Marcuse), reason and revelation (Adorno), Horkheimer on ‘Theism and Atheism’, Benjamin on ‘Capitalism as religion’, Habermas on ‘Faith and knowledge’ and Arens on ‘religion as ritual, communicative and critical praxis’. It is not my intention to ‘judge’ between the views of Mendieta (2005) and Beckford (2000), but to find ‘pointers’ in the domain of critical theory as framework for a critical study of religions.

In his essay Faith and knowledge (in Mendieta 2005:327-337), Habermas states that with the attacks on the World Trade centre on 11 September 2001, ‘the tension between secular society and religion exploded…’ (2005:327). He then postulates that ‘Only if we realize what secularization means in our own postsecular societies can we be far-sighted in our response to the risks involved in a secularization miscarrying in other parts of the world’. Religion continues to provide meaning for millions of people in contrast to and in the midst of ‘ongoing secularization’ (2005:329). In her discussion on Habermas’ changing views on religion Chambers (2007) states

Religion’s failure to conveniently disappear (or to remain fully private and personal) has forced many to come to terms with the idea of a world in which philosophy (particularly in the guise of liberal rationalism) and religion must live side by side in public culture. The fact that many people continue to find religion persuasive is part of the fact of pluralism and has
prompted some to start talking about postsecularism: a rethinking of secualism that makes room for religion (Chambers 2007:211).

Habermas proposes ‘a triple reflection of the position of believers on their position in a pluralist society’ which has the following implications for ‘religious consciousness’, namely

Religious consciousness must, first, come to terms with the cognitive dissonance of encountering other denominations and religions. It must, second, adapt to the authority of the sciences which hold the societal monopoly of secular knowledge. It must, last, agree to the premises of a constitutional state grounded in a profane morality (2005:329).

Habermas, according to Enns (2007:890) states that religious arguments ‘must undergo abstraction, or some form of generalization, in order to have legitimacy within the public sphere’. Citizens therefore have a duty to engage in epistemic self-reflection and translating their beliefs and religious arguments ‘into arguments acceptable within the public sphere’ (Enns 2007:891).

Harrington voices his concern (2007:548) that conflict and the breakdown of communication and Habermasian ‘epistemic duties’ might ‘be conceptually more primordial than this’. Differences among religions, according to Harrington, are far more foundational than ‘equally valid ultimate views of the world’ (2007:548). Habermas draws a firm distinction between faith and knowledge maintaining that post-metaphysical thinking proceeds from agnostic premises, which ‘abstains from judgment over religious truths’ (Harrington 2007:549). Habermas therefore proposes a “methodological atheism” which denotes ‘not a personal avowal of non-belief in the existence of God but only a methodological maxim that, in the practice of their research, social scientists should make no assumption that God exists’ (Harrington 2007:549).

Meyer (1995) evaluates the so-called change in Habermas’ view on the public role of religion and states that although Habermas ‘has gone from a complete dismissal of religion to an acceptance or even affirmation of religion as a source
of consolation in the face of life’s existential crises’, this change is ‘not of great significance because Habermas still denies the public character of religion’ which, according to Meyer, is due to his ‘continued denial of the cognitive claims of religion and metaphysics’ (1995: 372). Shaw (1999:638) describes Habermas’ early view on religion as one of ‘impatience’ and not of ‘hostility’. According to Shaw,

Religious belief, Habermas argues, survives as a relic of an essentially premodern form of consciousness; with the advent of modernity, its valuable moral core has been purged of its mythic and metaphysical trappings and sublated into the reflexive and differentiated procedures of communicative action (Shaw 1999:638).

Habermas is, according to Shaw (1999:638) not anywhere close to embracing religion but his exploration is more a case of ‘grudging acceptance’ (Shaw 1999:638). Habermas admitted, according to Meyer (1995:375) that his ‘earlier dismissal of religion was too hasty’ and now suggests that ‘religion is indispensable and irreplaceable, as long as it continues to offer an inspiring and consoling message that helps people cope with the existential crisis of life’ (Meyer 1995:375-376). Meyer quotes Habermas saying that religion ‘is still indispensable in ordinary life for normalizing intercourse with the extraordinary’ (quoted in Meyer 1995:376). Even though Habermas acknowledges religion to play a role, he ‘still denies its cognitive claims and, hence, still denies its public role’ – and this, according to Meyer, indicates actually no significant change in Habermas’ views on religion. It would seem that acknowledging religions’ role ‘to speak validly of the “whole” of reality’, a fourth validity claim is raised which is metaphysical (Meyer 1995:390)\(^\text{60}\).

For the sake of this study it would seem as if the following starts to form as pointers for use in the critical evaluation of the Policy. Firstly, that religion did and still does play a big role in the shaping of knowledge canons and social

\(^{60}\) For a further discussion on Habermas’ view of the role of religion in the public sphere, see Chambers (2007).
stratagems worldwide, whether in the ‘West’, Africa or the East. Prothero (2007) states that religious symbols and narratives have become very much part and parcel of a general if not universal vocabulary without which engagement in public discourses seem almost impossible. Though there may be a presumed superiority about the impact of the Christian narratives on a ‘universal’ vocabulary (depending on where you are located), it is possible to state that in whichever format religions have shaped and still shape communication in the public sphere. Even from an a-religious point of view one has to acknowledge that ‘religion remains both a reservoir and a compendium of humanity’s most deeply felt injustices and yearned for dreams of reconciliation’ (Mendieta 2002:11).

A further aspect that I suspect will serve me well in my evaluation of the Policy is the ‘methodological scepticism’ proposed by the Frankfurt School. Interestingly, it is not only religion which should be treated with a healthy dose of scepticism, but all truth claims. ‘As a consequence of the recognition of the plurality of religious forces, there ensues a reflective relationship to the particularity of one’s own faith within the horizon of the universality of the religious as such’ (Habermas in Mendieta 2002:70). In an increasingly pluralist world, encountering other traditions according to Habermas should be seen as

a chance to become more fully aware of one’s own roots…. As long as participants inhabit the same discursive universe, there is no hermeneutic impulse to reflect on otherwise self-evident, unarticulated background motivations. This spur to reflection doesn’t prevent intercultural understanding: indeed it is what makes it possible in the first place (Habermas in Mendieta 2002:155-156).

And lastly, religion is a possible ‘index of resistance’ in a world continuously longing for a more just and compassionate dispensation. Though it is undisputed that some of the worst atrocities in the history of humankind have been committed in the name of one or another religion, religion also has been an index and compendium of and for resistance for humankind. In agreement with Habermas, religion in its essence is a ‘protestational form of thinking’ (in Mendieta 2002:60).
3.8 CONCLUSION

In proposing the title for this thesis, I did not foresee that the inclusion of ‘critical’ in the title, would invite me on a journey through the discourses in and surrounding critical theory, critical pedagogy and critical religious studies. After exploring these discourses, I am more than ever sure that the inclusion of ‘critical’ in the title is valid and essential.

This critical evaluation of the Policy is not interested in ascertaining the truth claims of either the Policy or the Policy’s understanding of the role of religion in the public sphere. In the chapters to follow (and specifically in Chapter 8) I will evaluate to what extent the study of religion as proposed by the Policy empowers students with a Mündigkeit to be comfortable with being uncomfortable with the numinous, the tremendum. Shaped by the discourses explored in this chapter, this evaluation will question to what extent the study of religion (as envisaged by the Policy) allows students to critically interrogate the paintings on the curtains (to use the analogy proposed by Goodenough 1959) to describe, analyse and compare experiences of the numinous. I will also explore how the Policy encourages learners to venture behind the curtains of the known and confront - in their own personalised ways – the ultimate, the tremendum. According to a critical understanding of the study of religion, the Policy should allow learners to become aware of religious forms and traditions (especially their own) as part of a dynamic and lively constellation, recognising patterns, evaluating answers and phrasing new questions.

In her exploration of the need for a critical pedagogy Wink (1997) shares the following poem illustrating the need for an education that will allow learners to question the way society is. She writes
Often, those who have more, silence those who have less; those who are from the dominant European American culture silence those from non-European American cultures; boys silence girls; men silence women.

Often, men don’t know it; boys don’t know it; European Americans don’t know it, and those with more don’t know it. (Wink 1997: 68)

In the next chapters, I will explore the questions underlying the main research focus namely

1. What were the context-specific socioeconomic, educational and political histories and processes shaping our new democracy and its educational policy framework?
2. What are the theoretical and philosophical underpinnings and assumptions of the Policy argument?
3. How does the Policy understand religion and the study of religion?
4. How does the Policy understand the study of religion as a compulsory part of the curriculum in preparing learners for citizenship? In other words, how will the study of religion prepare learners not only for citizenship in the national sense but also for an increasingly cosmopolitan citizenry?

Central to my understanding of a critical study of religion will be exploring the spaces the Policy creates for shaping learners’ Mündigkeit. Mündigkeit, as a key criterion in this evaluation involves critical reflection, epistemic duties towards the Other, conscienticizao in the Freirian sense, critical literacies, and the study of religion as a language of rage and hope.

Maybe the final criterion in this specific critical evaluation of the Policy is whether the Policy allows and encourages an eschatological passion and hope as envisaged by the Frankfurt School. According to Mendes-Flohr, ‘Marxism
provides man with *docta spes, begriffene Hoffnung* – hope that seizes, comprehends, and transforms reality, realizing its dialectical possibilities’ (1983:643). Or in the words of Adorno, ‘Every debate about the ideals of education is trivial and inconsequential compared to this single ideal: never again Auschwitz’ (1998:191)⁶¹.

⁶¹ In interactions with my promoters, I realised how my own taxonomies of making meaning were shaped by distinctive Jewish-Christian sentiments and concepts. In developing a personal version of criticality towards a critical evaluation of the Policy, I discovered that I was somehow lost to think *outside* the parameters of my own roots in Jewish-Christian taxonomies. The possibilities to engage with ‘hope’ outside these taxonomies should be investigated and may enrich the debate.
CHAPTER 4
AN OVERVIEW OF THE SOCIO-HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA (PRE-1994 TILL CURRICULUM 2005)

Forgetting and memory both seem vital to our common life, and it is equally possible that we may have too much of either. An excess of forgetting would turn us into leaves to be scattered by the winds, mere neighbours passing one another by in little more than a community of interests. Too much memory would be lead in our wings, denying us a future and closing off the possibility of openness to others who are not part of our community of memory (Booth 1999:259).

The tectonic layers of our lives rest so tightly against earlier events in later ones, not as matter that has been fully formed and pushed aside, but absolutely present and alive. I understand this. Nevertheless, I sometimes find it hard to bear. Maybe I did write our story to be free of it, even if I never can be (Booth 1999:260).

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 2 I suggested that the Policy is a specific response to the specific context of the shaping and legitimising of the new democracy in South Africa. As such the Policy has been shaped by historical systems of meaning-making and power. In sharing this socio-historical overview with you, I was looking for insight into understanding the rationale and context of the Policy. Why was there a need for it? What were the specific processes that resulted in the Policy? Who were the stakeholders? Why was there such a public furore about the introduction of the study of religion in schools?

Chapters 4 and 5 provide a descriptive socio-historical overview of the context of curriculum development in South Africa. Jansen (2004) refers to four ‘curriculum moments’ that signify watershed moments in educational policy and curriculum. These ‘moments’ were responses to the preceding socio-economic, historical and political environments as well as interpreting the dynamic interplay of various
factors at that specific moment. For the next two chapters I propose analysing these ‘curriculum moments’ through the lenses of national and cultural acts of remembering and forgetting as explored by Booth (1999). Analysing these watershed moments through the lenses of remembering and forgetting provide an interesting perspective on the understanding of citizenship in a constitutional democracy as found in the curriculum.

Booth (1999) explores the impact of memory and forgetting on citizenship in an article titled *Communities of memory: on identity, memory and debt*. On reading Booth (1999) and Muller (1996) I realised that any attempt to understand each of the ‘curriculum moments’ (Jansen 2004) without taking seriously our new democracy as a community or memory of forgetting, will impoverish this evaluation of the Policy. Each of those ‘curriculum moments’ constituted and responded to specific notions of identity, memory, debt, wholeness, forgetting and loss.

Booth (1999:249) states that the democratic regimes that emerged in Eastern and Central Europe as well as in Latin America all share the characteristic of confronting the past in order to define the future. Booth finds in these confrontations with the past an invitation to ‘consider what we understand by identity, by the idea of a community of memory, with debts to and inheritances from the past’ (1999:249). In engaging with re-imagining citizenship, Booth explores the ideas of Habermas (1990, 1994) on identity, memory and forgetting and its implications for citizenship. Booth (1999:254) indicates ‘… the constitutional project and its related citizenship practices are deeply embedded in a community of memory and in the sort of identity that such intergenerational communities have at their core’. One option to engage with societies in transition

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62 Exploring possible socio-historical watershed moments that have shaped and still shape an understanding of the role of education in a new democracy is complementary to the description and analysis of constitutional patriotism in Chapter 1. Remembering and forgetting provides a heuristic framework in exploring a selection of socio-historical moments.

63 Also see Muller’s (1996) article *Dreams of wholeness and loss: critical sociology of education in South Africa*.
is to explore the *genealogical* character of this process as Foucault did (1971, 1972). Although exploring the genealogical character of the past may give ‘the present a certain particularity, both in individual and collective identities’ – the past in this sense, does not ‘weigh on us… it is not a burden’ (Booth 1999:254).

Reflecting on the implications for defining German identity, Booth (1999:255) refers to Stürmer (1987) who said that a history obsessed with the National Socialist years, ‘with the Holocaust at their core, would make a life in common next to impossible’. Booth (1999:255-260), referring to Habermas (1997) and Améry (1977), states that the past is something ‘given to us, into which we are “thrown”’ (Booth 1999:255). Booth (1999:255) states ‘We are given the totality of our past, whether as individuals or as members of a community, and although our comportment to its varied parts may differ, sometimes applauding, other times repudiating, *it is intertwined with our identity in its entirety*’ (italics added).

This past is present among us, ‘woven’ into the fabric of our daily lives, and present in ‘those chosen moments when, by deliberate decision, we put the past into words, monuments, days of remembrance’ (Booth 1999:255). In this ‘archaeology of political identity’, the past is however more than the above, it is also ‘the well-spring of accountability: burdening us, giving us pride or shame, making us accountable’ (Booth 1999:255)

The presence of the past is here moral and not genealogical or traditional. Because it is ours, it is with us always, even through the changes we undergo in the passing of the years. The past and the dead (like those yet to be born) make claims on the living, long after they and the events around them have entered the historical past (Booth 1999:255).

Memories of South Africa’s past permeate South African discourses on identity and citizenship, allegiance, patriotism and various claims of entitlement. There is a growing number of younger people in South Africa who claim *not* to have been part of the atrocities and the divisions of the past; or who claim a certain entitlement to be the beneficiaries of attempts to rectify the imbalances of the past. The younger generation or those who claim that they never ‘knew’ wants to
disown the past and they refuse to take responsibility for it. The past ‘is not theirs’. The past, for them, is an albatross around their necks and the stench permeates their dreams of wholeness, belonging and loss. On the other hand, a large percentage of the population in South Africa ‘was there’, and were contemporaries of apartheid and the struggle – whether as part of the struggle for or against democracy.\(^6\)

Whatever the emotions and memories attached to our collective past, whether ‘we [would like to] push the past away from us, divest ourselves of it, and seek to expunge its remnants from our midst’ (Booth 1999:256) or whether we either actively or passively accept our collective past, Booth explores a number of ways of engaging with the act of remembering. For example, he suggests ‘the importance of memory lies not in atonement but in its ability to help us avoid repeating the injustices of the past’ (Booth 1999:256). This results in a relationship with the past that is ‘instrumental and pedagogical, that is, it is something from which we can learn and not a moral burden woven into our identity’ (Booth 1999:256; italics my own). This then allows us a ‘language of responsibility’ that ‘allows for a way of addressing the presence of the past that invokes tradition not as a stained character, not as an irreversible source of shame and an object of remembrance, but as a cultural artefact’ (Booth 1999:256; italics mine).

Booth points out ‘We do not make or construct the past. It is there, remembered or submerged, here and present or awaiting a triggering event to bring it back…’ (1999:258). Booth proposes an ‘ethics of remembrance’ which ‘invites us to consider how difficult, or impossible, it is to escape our embeddedness in the community extended through time, the community of remembrance (and anticipation) that is the basic temporal/narrative fabric of a common life and shared identity’ (Booth 1999:258). Booth, however, adds to his ‘ethics of

\(^6\) The work by Goldhagen (1996), *Hitler’s willing executioners. Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust*, is a chilling account of the ‘burden of the past’. For a discussion of the debates around Goldhagen see Hayward (2007).
remembrance’, an ‘ethics of forgetting’ (1999:258) which he explains as follows – ‘Perhaps there is an ethics of forgetting as well, one that on occasion may trump the duty to remember. We have been told that forgetting is as necessary to existence as is memory, perhaps more so, and that a surfeit of memory, or an obsessive absorption with the past, can be destructive of life’ (Booth 1999:258-259).

A ‘voluntary amnesia, cruelly systematic’ may be required by individuals and communities realising that the duty to ‘remember must be weighted against the imperatives to let the dead bury the dead. And just perhaps, although we cannot choose our cradle, we can will to forget it and its legacy to us’ (Booth 1999:259; italics added)\(^{65}\). In closing his essay, Booth refers to two novels illustrating the paradoxes of forgetting and remembering. The first novel he refers to is Der Vorleser, ‘The Reader’ by Schlink (1995) and the second one Heiratmuseum, ‘The Heritage’ by Lenz (1981). In the novel by Schlink the character is confronted by the ‘weight of the past, and the stains left by it, [which] are never entirely removed’ (Booth 1999:260). Booth quotes the character Michael who says ‘The tectonic layers of our lives rest so tightly against earlier events in later ones, not as matter that has been fully formed and pushed aside, but absolutely present and alive. I understand this. Nevertheless, I sometimes find it hard to bear. Maybe I did write our story to be free of it, even if I never can be’ (Booth 1999:260)

This Kafkaesque description of the past as ‘tectonic layers’ which are never fully formed and set aside, but which are ‘absolutely present and alive’ is for all South Africans a daily reality. In providing an overview of the socio-historic context of the Policy, I suggest it is important to take note of these ‘tectonic layers’ – without understanding these layers as they still move and groan, the Policy – its

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\(^{65}\) In the South African context, the practicalities surrounding addressing the vast legacy of apartheid negates in toto any attempt to suggest ‘an ethics of forgetting’.
rationale, its processes and the debates surrounding the Policy – will be weakened.

In the other novel by Lenz as referred to by Booth (1999:260) the narrator burns down the local museum because it resulted in prejudice and a ‘denseness’ of memory from which a ‘radical and menacing particularism emerges’. Booth (1999:261) closes his exploration of ‘communities of memory’ by referring to ‘the explosion of local memories in countries where the regions were absorbed in the process of nation-building’, and ‘Gone are the days when there was a seamless web of memory uniting the entirety of the national community in a common narrative of the past…’

4.2 TOWARDS AN ARCHEAEOLOGY OF IDEOLOGIES

There are a number of accounts detailing the history of education in South Africa and specifically the period post-1994 (e.g. Chisholm 2005a; Greenstein 1997; Jansen 2004; Kumar 2006; Sayed 2002; Swartz 2006). The purpose of this chapter is therefore not to repeat what is already recorded, but an attempt to give an archaeological overview of the broader educational developments in South Africa and specifically the ‘tectonic plates’ (Booth 1999) that resulted in the Policy. Foucault, although often treated as a philosopher, social theorist, or cultural critic, was also a keen ‘historian’. According to Gutting (2005:32), Foucault’s choice of a title for his chair at the Collège de France was ‘Professor of the History of Systems of Thought’. In his works Foucault explores the hidden or tacit structures of meaning and meaning-making in society. Foucault refers to his work as an ‘archaeology’ and later as a ‘genealogy’ as he attempted to describe, rather than to explain (Gutting 2005:45).

In Foucault’s work Madness and Civilization (1967) he analyses the history of madness, not from a psychiatrist’s view but as the development of ‘knowledge invested in the complex system of institutions’ (Horrocks & Jevtic 2004:37). In
this specific work, Foucault explores the development of the notion of ‘madness’ through the different historical eras and indicates that in each of these periods, ‘madness’ was defined in service of power(s) and also perpetuated descriptions and gestalts of power. Although he was accused of trying to describe a ‘general epistemological theory’, he was, according to Gutting (2005:40) ‘trying to construct the general mode of thinking (episteme) that lay behind what was no doubt a very diverse range of beliefs and practices’. Foucault continues this methodological socio-historical analysis or archaeology in his next major work, *The order of things: an archaeology of the human sciences* (1970). He calls this systematic uncovering of three different periods in history namely the Renaissance, the classical era and the modern era - an ‘archaeology’.

Archaeology’, as the investigation of that which renders necessary a certain form of thought, implies an excavation of unconsciously organised sediments of thought. Unlike the *history of ideas*, it doesn’t assume that knowledge accumulates towards any historical conclusion. Archaeology ignores individuals and their histories. It prefers to excavate *impersonal* structures of knowledge (Horrocks & Jevtic 2004:64; bold in the original)

It is important to note that Foucault’s archaeology is not an attempt to *interpret* certain gestalts of knowledge and power with the purpose to arrive at a ‘deeper meaning’. He treats the texts of different, specific time-periods ‘not as documents but, in the manner of an archaeologist, as *monuments*’ (Gutting 2005:34; italics added). Texts are therefore treated as sedimentary deposits or monuments of whatever was possible within the ‘conditions of possibility’ for thought in a specific period. In *The order of things* Foucault (1970) analyses each period’s episteme and resultant taxonomies (Horrocks & Jevtic 2004: 65-77). His specific form of analysis developed into a change in focus from ‘epistememes as the dominant principle in history and asserts discourse’ (Horrocks 2004:86; bold in the original). Foucault explores discourse in his next work, *The archaeology of knowledge* (1972). He analyses discourse not as ‘linguistic systems or just texts – they are practices… and statements …’ (Horrocks & Jevtic 2004:86; bold in the original). Foucault states that there are three rules forming discourse, namely
For my own approach in providing this overview, I accept Foucault’s suggestion that history is a ‘document’ of the past and that we should treat these documents ‘like monuments – not for their historical validity, but for themselves’ (Horrocks & Jevtic 2004:87). In *Archaeology of knowledge* (1972), Foucault introduces the term ‘genealogy’ to attempt to ‘reveal discourse at the moment it appears in history as a system of constraint’ (Horrocks & Jevtic 2004:87). Such a genealogy would reveal discourses as ‘systems which dominate one another and not some single idea struggling for its self-realisation’ (Horrocks & Jevtic 2004:98).

The following figure (Figure 4.1) attempts to provide a bird’s eye view of my first attempt to draw a time-line from pre-1994 to 2003 when the Policy was finally signed. In providing an overview of these developments it made sense to treat the information in a *chronological* sequence starting with the period pre-1994. The dispensation pre-1994 shaped and continues to shape the events post-1994. As a heuristic framework I took the three ‘curriculum moments’ as described by Jansen (2004). Chisholm (2005b) agrees with these three definitive moments, but calls them ‘three main waves’ (2005b:193).

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66 The linear format of Diagram 1 does not allow the showing of specific artefacts as Foucaultian ‘monuments’ of ‘intersecting systems’.
Figure 4.1: The three ‘curriculum moments’

The diagram (Figure 4.1) was my first attempt to visualise a ‘map’ not only of significant moments which impacted on the Policy. As I continued my exploration I continued to add to the diagram. I added significant developments pre-1994 that I suspect impacted on later developments. The period between 1994 and 1997 also became ‘crowded’ with 1995 heralding the White Paper on Education and Training and the Hunter Report. 1996 saw the birth of the South African Qualifications Authority’s (SAQA), and in the political domain the Reconstruction and Development Plan (RDP) of 1994 was replaced by the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) strategy. In 1998 Outcomes-based Education (OBE) was introduced and there were immediate calls for a review.

Archaeology as process (as used by Foucault, 1971) describes finding different layers of development in structures of meaning making. Some of these layers are distinctly separate and at other times the archaeologist is frustrated by the fusion of layers. I therefore changed the historical time-line as depicted in Diagram 1 into mapping different broad socio-historical layers as ‘tectonic plates’ (Booth 1999). Some of these “layers” were rich in artefacts – giving a very complete
picture of what the issues during that period were. Other time periods are compressed and there are only but traces left of artefacts – but so incomplete that one cannot make definitive statements about that period. In archaeology the ‘not yet’ is a constant reminder that what we find at an excavation site are but glimpses of a civilisation. And when a specific layer ‘feels’ incomplete, one often has the feeling that the incompleteness is temporary.

Figure 4.2 is an attempt to give an overview of the ‘tectonic layers’ (Booth 1999) and different ‘monuments’ (Foucault 1971).

**Figure 4.2: Archaeology of the Policy – early years till 1998**

Chisholm (2005b) suggests that there are two main hermeneutic methodologies for interpreting curriculum policy and development in South Africa. The first approach focuses on curriculum as policy and the second approach focuses on curriculum as knowledge (2005b:194). She (2005b:194) describes the ‘curriculum
as policy’ approach as follows – ‘In the curriculum as policy lineage, scholars have focused on the “symbolic” aspect of policy and its essentially political character, on descriptions of the origins and unfolding of policy, conflicts between theory and practice, and the relationship between curriculum and identity’.

The second approach, ‘curriculum as knowledge’ is concerned with ‘how knowledge is constructed and what the role of the school is in teaching and learning’ (Chisholm 2005b:194). While Chisholm (2005b:194) identifies Jansen with the ‘curriculum as policy’ approach, she seems to locate herself in the second approach with what she calls a ‘Foucaultian perspective on power relations as they play out in the making of the curriculum’ (2005b:195). Such an approach ‘helps to make sense of the multiplicity of dynamics, lobbies, and interests impacting on and shaping the curriculum’ (Chisholm 2005b:195).

4.3 A SHORT OVERVIEW OF THE SOCIO-HISTORICAL CONTEXT PRIOR TO 1994

In his discussion of the transformation process towards post-apartheid South Africa, Henrard (2002:18) states that ‘…events, policies and mechanisms related to the apartheid era …explain not only the heightened sensitivity in post-apartheid South Africa to certain concepts and techniques but also certain reactions and attitudes of the Afrikaner, coloured and Indian population groups’.

Several authors (e.g. Bosch 1986, Ehlers 2003, Henrard 2002, Krog 1999; Krüger 2003) explore the different roots of the 1948 election victory of the National Party in the early segregationist policies of colonialism, the Afrikaner nationalism in and after the Anglo Boer War (1899-1902), as well as the sometimes precarious relationship between white Afrikaners and the white English speaking population. Henrard (2002:19) describes apartheid as ‘a pervasive system of affirmative action for the white population and especially for the Afrikaners’. In exploring periods as long ago as the 1920s and before that, I
look for *patterns*; patterns and/or trends that will help me to understand curriculum as a specific educational response by a dominant discourse or hegemony to a specific socio-historic context. Prinsloo (2007) describes ‘curriculum’ as

…an occasioned, transitional, temporal space in which learners have integrated, authentic, multidimensional learning-experiences. A curriculum results in the transformation of the individual and society. A curriculum flows from, perpetuates and results in socioeconomic and political belief-systems and structures.

A curriculum testifies to the ‘tectonic layers’ beneath it, never fully formed and pushed aside but continuously evolving and being interpreted (Booth 1999). My assumption in looking back at curriculum history in South Africa is that we may see some patterns and/or trends emerging that would assist us in understanding not only the need for a Policy on Religion and Education, but also help us to understand the specific content of the final Policy. In the next section we will look briefly at

- The early development of human life and religion in South Africa (4.3.1)
- The content and impact of Native and Bantu Education (4.3.2)
- The role Christian National Education played (4.3.3)
- Strategies to dismantle apartheid education starting prior to 1994 (4.3.4)
- A brief discussion of transition through transformation (4.3.5)

This will bring us to a major defining moment in post-1994 South African history namely the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) (4.4). Not only was the TRC a specific negotiated response to the transition to democracy, but it was also mapping for South Africa an ‘ethics of memory and forgetting’ (Booth 1999). The TRC, its mandate, its processes, its theology and its vocabulary not only defined South Africa’s transition, but still influences the academic discourses and public debates on nation building and citizenship. From an exploration of the possible impact of the TRC on educational policy and the discourse on citizenship, we will look at the ‘cleansing’ of the curriculum (4.5) in preparation for the first ‘curriculum moment’ (Jansen 1997). I will conclude this chapter with a
discussion of the first ‘curriculum moment’, namely Curriculum 2005 (4.6). The following diagram (Figure 4.3) presents an overview of the journey that lies ahead.

**Figure 4.3: Overview of Chapter 4**

A possible problem in this diagrammatic representation is that the different ‘boxes’ may easily be seen to illustrate distinctive, clearly separated periods. For example, it is almost impossible to discuss Native and Bantu education (4.3.2) without taking into account the role that Calvinism and Christian National Education (4.3.3) played in contributing to its philosophical and ontological foundation. These different ‘boxes’ should therefore be seen as temporary foci of ‘intersecting systems’ in a discourse (Foucault 1967). We start our exploration by going back, or trying to, to the ‘beginning’.

### 4.3.1 In the beginning

The Policy somehow has its roots at the dawn of a creation and the creature modern science later called *homo sapiens*. This creature is also distinctly *homo religiosus* who is the object (and subject) of *Religionswissenschaft* or the study of religion (Goodenough 1959:86). Lewis-Williams and Pearce (2004) and Krüger
(1995) suggest (to name but three authors) that religion as we ‘know’ it today, is linked to the early ‘roots of spirituality’ (Lewis-Williams & Pearce 2004:25). As Krüger (1995:174) states

To most South Africans of non-African extraction (and to many indigenous South Africans too) the centre of religious and cultural gravity lies elsewhere – in Rome, Canterbury or Heidelberg, in Jerusalem, Benares or Mecca. Africa happens to be the locality where prostrations are made in those other directions from which the various religions and cultures have been imported. Yet Africa claims her own.

In their study of San spirituality Lewis-Williams and Pearce (2004: xxiv) refer to religion ‘not as an empirical given’, but as a ‘malleable construct that changes through time’. Lewis-Williams and Pearce (2004:36) describe San spirituality and their religious experiences ‘closely linked [to their] understanding of the cosmos, [and] are situated in the functioning of the human nervous system’. Whether we locate homo religiosus in the ‘human nervous system’ (Lewis-Williams 2004) or in Krüger’s (1995:202) view that religion was an attempt ‘to cope with coming into being and perishing of things’, is not important. From the earliest communities of homo sapiens on the African continent, spirituality or ‘religion’ was a way of dealing with life and death, dealing with one another and the ‘Other’ and dealing with food and scarcity67.

Religion was from the start an integral part of being human, in contrast to the views that Africa had no spirituality before being introduced to Christianity and Islam (Lubbe 1998:4). Krüger (1995:119-220) states ‘religion was inseparable from their sociocultural existence as a whole, without any trace of the modern Western distinction between “sacred” and “profane”68. Krüger (1995:258) petitions for an ‘inclusive history of religions [that] would show no trace of religious or cultural triumphalism’, but ‘a theoretical framework, comprehensive and encompassing, capable of interpreting the entire religious heritage of South

67 For an interesting discussion on the burial practices of the San and what it tells us about their structures of making (ultimate) meaning, see Lewis-Williams and Pearce (2004).

68 For a historic overview of the development of homo religiosus, see Krüger (1995).
Africa, from the earliest forms up to the present – an integrating view of that religious complex’ (Krüger 1995:257)⁶⁹.

It would therefore seem that the Policy is but the ‘latest’ chapter in a very long and complex history of religious pluralism which, in the words of Lubbe (1998:4), ‘has always been a feature of society in South Africa’ (emphasis mine). This study therefore has as focus the Policy as a government-initiated and sponsored educational exploration of systematised gestalts of an age-old human way of making meaning.

4.3.2 Native and Bantu Education

Jansen (1990b) describes the curriculum as political phenomenon and although Black education went through distinct phases, Jansen (1990b) describes how context shaped the curriculum and how the curriculum shaped its context. Jansen’s study (1990b) indicates that Black educational history went through five major periods, namely traditional African education, slave education, mission education (during the 1800s), native education (from the 1920s) and Bantu education, introduced in 1953. Jansen’s (1990b:196-201) description of these different phases illustrates the function curriculum played on the one hand legitimising the political dispensation as well as sustaining inequalities. For example, in 1854 the curriculum changed towards ‘industrial training’ which aimed at ‘providing blacks with skills for manual labour’ which applied to all four provinces (Jansen 1990b:198). Jansen (1990b:198) quotes Welsh (1971:222) who asserted ‘[T]he general effect of industrialisation was to place whites and nonwhites in a more acutely competitive situation, and education, depending on

⁶⁹ Such a theoretical framework as Krüger proposes above will include a reassessment not only of the myths Europe and specifically Victorian Europe created and sustained about Africa and Africans as explored for example in Brantlinger (1985) and Charles (1995); but also redress the study and status of African Religion from ‘underground praxis to recognised religion’ (Mndende 1998:115).
its content and the extent to which it was made available to the different groups, might promote or prevent this competition’ (italics added by Jansen).

Three factors led to a differentiated curriculum by 1889, namely

- Afrikaners increasingly feared being forced into subservience to the British.
- White Afrikaners increasingly competed with Blacks for employment.
- The drought of the 1880s ‘intensified the need among Afrikaners for an educational system that could afford them improved economic and political status over the Blacks’ (Jansen 1990b:198).

It is important to understand the role of curriculum as a response to a specific context but also as a vehicle to sustain the hegemony of white and specifically Afrikaner superiority. Bosch (1986) sounds a sobering note when he describes the Afrikaners during those years as ‘unsophisticated and, in fact, barely literate. The Bible was often the only book they had, and they tended to interpret it literally, not only as the revealed word of God but also as the final source of all knowledge’ (1986:205).

It is during the period of the late 19th and early 20th centuries that the Afrikaner found ‘their identity and security, in a literal and figurative sense, in the laager, where their ox-wagons, drawn into a circle, would protect them against the outside world’ (Bosch 1986:207). With the advent of the Union of South Africa in 1910, the four self-governing provinces therefore excluded Blacks from socio-political participation. The ‘apartheid curriculum’ formalised and further systemised the growing racism. Jansen (1990b:200) states that ‘For many years White politicians and educationists in South Africa have recognised the vital connection between curriculum content and the ideological and material interests of a racially stratified political economy’.
This curriculum is a prime example of a Foucaultian 'monument' showing the interest and power-plays of 'intersecting systems' (Foucault 1971). The apartheid curriculum of the four republics in the Union of South Africa was a unique blend of Afrikaner nationalism and religion. Bosch (1986:209) explores the influence of the Dutch theologian Kuyper on the Afrikaner’s ‘laager’-mentality.

For the first time in South African history, one now encountered sustained theological (or ideological) arguments according to which Afrikaners should neither fraternise with foreigners nor break down the walls of racial separation instituted by God. Like Israel, the Afrikaner’s salvation lay in racial purity and separate schools and churches.

Bosch (1986:212) points out that the exclusionary notion of citizenship was influenced by Afrikaner men who studied in Germany in the 1930’s. Bosch (1986:212) points to the fact that ‘In the 1930s and 1940s, the conviction grew that the ethnic purity of a nation had a metaphysical base. It was, therefore, divinely ordained and commanded’ (italics added). Educational policy was a monument, a sedimentation of the hegemony of white supremacy.

Jansen (1990b:201) points out that since the 1950s, ‘...the use of the curriculum as political tool has been less critical to sustaining White supremacy in South Africa since the 1950s’ because apartheid had become normal and institutionalised. White supremacy and distinct roles and socioeconomic futures have by that time already been institutionalised into the curriculum. Textbooks and learning materials embodied the ‘normalised’ ideology of apartheid and segregation. Jansen (1990b:202) also refers to the ‘institutionalisation of educational inequality’. Although the curriculum between white schools and black schools at this stage was the same, it did not change the impact of a ‘skills-

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70 It is important to notice that the study of religion (during these years only the Christian religion) was in service of a certain concept of exclusionary citizenship. This curriculum was sanctioned and shaped by the direct influence of the white Afrikaans churches.

71 In Chapter 8 I will address the question how the Policy is the sedimentation of current assumptions and norms regarding citizenship. While the Policy and the resulting curriculum includes, it also excludes.
oriented curriculum’ and it did not ‘change or challenge the broader social and political White power structure of apartheid society’ (Jansen 1990b:202). Education policy and curriculum were monuments of ‘the institutionalisation of societal racism’ which through various pieces of legislation e.g. the Apprenticeship Act of 1922, ‘effectively excluded qualified Blacks from meaningful economic participation’. Jansen (1990b:203) concludes that his historical overview proves the ‘…power of the curriculum as a political phenomenon in which a dominant group regards the curriculum as embodying the values and interests that sustain and reproduce its hegemonic control’.

Jansen (1990b:203) also states that a curriculum can only function within its contextual limitations – ‘A curriculum is only as good as its context. The limiting extracurricular factors that determine the meaning and potential of the curriculum must, therefore, be confronted simultaneously with curriculum revision’.

Christie and Collins (1982) propose a Marxist analysis of the context in which Bantu education developed. They state ‘Marxists argue that the system can only be fully comprehended if analysis is situated within the broad set of economic interests underlying the present structure, i.e., class analysis’ (Christie & Collins 1982:60). Christie and Collins’ analysis (1982) explores that though racism and apartheid definitely contributed to the vast disparities and injustices, an analysis of the reproduction of socioeconomic classes within a capitalist system needs to also be taken into account. They seem to propose that it was not just racism and White superiority but that the reproduction of labour played an important role in shaping educational policy and practice72.

So far the following seems to be emerging as trends with regard to the role of curriculum in shaping notions of citizenship:

- Education is always in service of a dominant view of society,
- Education perpetuates the dominant group’s view of society.

72 For a full discussion of the intersection between education and labour policies see Christie and Collins (1982).
• Although education has a major impact in shaping discourse, education is shaped by its context.
• Education in South Africa sustained taxonomies informed by race and socioeconomic inequalities.
• Religion played a seminal role in shaping education policy and the study of Christian religion sanctioned exclusionary views of citizenship.

4.3.3 Christian National Education

Christian National Education (CNE) as a specific ideological response is not a unique event in world history. The history of religions pays testimony to the fact that religion used (and uses) a variety of educational and political means to promote itself. For example, Cook (2005:6) illustrates how a murky mixture of religious and territorial expansion and conquests shaped early Islam. Mamdani (2005:5) retells the history of the modern nation state and its relationship with religion, culture and notions of superiority73.

In referring to the role of religion and a ‘laager’ mentality of the Afrikaner, Bosch says

For many decades, the National Party and the Dutch Reformed Churches were seen as jointly responsible for keeping the laager intact, buttressing the weak spots and keeping up the morale of the people. After the National Party came to power in 1948, the entire legislative machinery was harnessed with this one purpose in mind, namely, to safeguard Afrikaner identity once and for all so that it would never again be exposed defencelessly to the onslaughts of the outside world (1986:208).

CNE has its historical, philosophical and ontological roots in what Krüger (2003:104) calls, ‘Afrikaner Christian Nationalism’. Krüger (2003:104-105) is in agreement with Bosch (1986) in describing the influence on the theology of Abraham Kuyper as well as German romantic nationalism. Krüger (2003:104) quotes General J.C. Smuts who referred to the faith of the Afrikaner, which was:

73 For an interesting discussion on the intersection between politics, education and religion in the realm of and definition of citizenship through the ages see Mamdani (2005) and Harris (2005).
‘at the same time and necessarily a faith in their own great destiny’. These words are echoed by the words of Dr D.F. Malan who said ‘The history of the Afrikaner reveals a determination and a definiteness of purpose which make one feel that Afrikanerdom is not the work of man [sic] but a creation of God. We have a Divine right to be Afrikaners. Our history is the highest work of art of the Architect of the centuries’ (Bunting 1969).

Krüger (2003:104) continues to describe Christian Nationalism as follows:

Christian Nationalism developed from an ethnic religion to a civil religion in the full sense of the word; from a mere insistence on the right to govern themselves to an insistence on the right to govern the whole of South African society; from a mere insistence on the divine right of the Afrikaners to separate racial and political existence to an integral system which aimed at the regulation of the entire nation; from a rather unsystematic emphasis on mere segregation to an emphasis on a strong central integration of power in the apartheid state.

This ‘insistence’ grew into the educational vision of CNE. Nell Marquard (1959) comments on a 1948 pamphlet issued by the Institute for Christian National Education in which the following are stated (as translated by The Black Sash 1959) as some broad principles of CNE:

Our Afrikaans schools must not merely be mother-tongue schools; they must be places where our children will be saturated with the Christian and National spiritual cultural stuff of our nation. The dual medium struggle has opened our eyes, and there is going to be a struggle about the realisation of these ideals. We want no mixing of languages, no mixing of cultures, no mixing of religions and no mixing of races… (1959:4).

This 1948 pamphlet refers to 15 articles describing the principles of CNE. The Black Sash has translated some of the articles as follows:

| Article I – |
| All white children should be educated according to the view of life of their parents. This means that Afrikaans-speaking children should have a Christian-Nationalist education, for the Christian and the National spirit of the Afrikaner must be preserved and developed. By Christian, in this context, we mean |
according to the creeds of the three Afrikaner churches; by Nationalist we mean embued [sic] with the love of one’s own, especially one’s own language, history and culture. Nationalism must be rooted in Christianity.

Article II –
The key subject in school should be religious study of the Bible and the three Afrikaner churches and the religious spirit should permeate all staff and the entire school.

Article VI – Content of education:
(i) All God’s creation and Man’s [sic] work must be studied. But the spirit of all teaching must be Christian-Nationalist; in no subject may anti-Christian or non-Christian or anti-nationalist or non-nationalist propaganda be made…

(ii) Bilingualism cannot be the aim of education.

(v) Geography: Every nation is rooted in a country allotted to it by God. Geography should aim at giving the pupil a thorough knowledge of his country… in such a way that he will love his country, also when compared and contrasted with others, and be ready to defend it, preserve it from poverty, and improve it for posterity.

(vi) History: History should be seen as the fulfilment of God’s plan for humanity… God has enjoined each nation its individual task in the fulfilment of His purpose. Young people can only undertake the national task fruitfully if they acquire a true vision of the origin of the nation and of the direction of the national heritage. Next to the mother tongue the history of the Fatherland is the best channel for cultivating the love of one’s own which is nationalism.

Article VII – Discipline:
(iii) Discipline: All authority in school is borrowed from God. The Christian-Nationalist end should be kept in view.

Article VIII –
(i) Lays down that there must be separate, single-medium schools for Afrikaans and English-speaking children. In each there should be the right relationship between home, school, church and state.

(iii) The Home: Education is the right and duty of the parents, who must decide, in collaboration with Church and State, what spirit shall animate the school. The parents in community (not as individuals) must establish, maintain and control schools which will foster their own view of life, they must appoint teachers and keep a watch on the teaching.

(iv) The Church: The church must exercise the necessary discipline over the doctrine and lives of the teachers. The vigilance must be exercised through the parents … In normal circumstances, the church should not erect schools, but may be compelled to do so (a) if the existing schools are unchristian and unnationalist and (b) in the heathen world.
(v) **The State**: The state must ensure a proper scientific and moral stand in education, and enforce law and right in school life. It may not, however, determine the directing spirit of education provided that, as judged by God’s law, it is not harmful to the state. ... 

**Article XII – The teacher:**

(i) Being a substitute for the parent, the teacher does the parent’s work as the parent himself would do it were he able. Unless, therefore, he is a Christian, he is a deadly danger to us.

(ii) Our substitutes should be properly trained in Christianity, and in the secular subjects, especially pedagogy. Training College personnel should be Christian and Nationalist.

Articles XIV and XV deal summarily with Coloured and native education, neither of which should be financed at the expense of the White. The task of the Afrikaner is to Christianise the non-White, to teach him to be happy and separate, and inculcate the Boer nation’s view of life.

In commenting on the text of the pamphlet, Nell Marquard (1959:4) states that ‘God has allotted South Africa to the Afrikaners, to carry out His allotted Nationalist purpose. What that is, apart from Christianising the heathen, is nowhere specified’.

In the light of the above, it is almost an understatement when Chidester (2003b:264) writes that the current Policy ‘represents a dramatic departure from the religious education, instruction, or indoctrination of the past’. He refers (2003b:264 quoting the Department of Didactics, Unisa 1990:30) to the manual for Biblical instruction, which had as objective that ‘Children must personally accept, and trust for their personal salvation, the triune God introduced to them in the Bible’. Chidester (2003b:264) also states that the old dispensation was driven ‘by a particular kind of Christian confessionalism and triumphalism, a confessionalism that required pupils to embrace prescribed religious convictions and a triumphalism that explicitly denigrated adherents of other religions’. Although public schools were encouraged to show ‘tolerance and respect for differing doctrinal convictions’ this was only allowed ‘as long as there is no denial
of Jesus Christ as the Messiah’ (Chidester 2003b:265 quoting the Department of Didactics, Unisa 1990:19).

Bantu education and CNE did not die ‘natural deaths’, but came to an end due to the 1994 transition to a democratic dispensation. The history of education in South Africa illustrates on the one hand education’s role in maintaining notions of white supremacy and on the other hand education as powerful tool to struggle against white supremacy (Baloyi 2004:151). As we will explore in the sections to follow, education policy was central to the re-imagining of South Africa even before the political processes towards transformation started. I will firstly explore various aspects of the drive to dismantle apartheid in its educational gestalts, and then continue to explore the political dimensions of dismantling apartheid.

4.3.4 Dismantling apartheid education

In exploring the role of popular mobilisation in the regime transitions in South Africa and El Salvador, Wood (E.J) (2001) refers to the transition as ‘an insurgent path to democracy’. In her exploration of the transition process in South Africa, she explores the ‘intersecting systems’ (Foucault 1972) of ‘popular mobilization, economic interests and regime transition’. Education and specifically CNE was central to the apartheid regime’s segregation and exclusion (Dube 1985). It comes therefore as no surprise that education, and specifically teachers and students would play a critical part in the mobilisation against apartheid and it’s dismantling (Baloyi 2004; Dube 1985). Schools became ungovernable and the radical rhetoric during the struggle years often sabotaged educational reforms in the run up to the 1994 elections (Ramphele 2001:7)

The period of 1989-1993 is described by Unterhalter (1998:355) as ‘a process of moving two steps forward and one step back, [in which] the apartheid regime began to move into consultation with social forces demanding the complete overhaul of the apartheid state’. What is significant for our exploration of the
processes and forces at play in the educational reforms resulting in the Policy are the changes in agendas and the emergence of stakeholders defining the process and its contents. In this period (1989 -1993) educational change was viewed by the ‘bureaucrats in the administration, representatives of corporate interests in civil society, white trade unions and senior managers in large firms…in terms of economic rationality’ (Unterhalter 1998:356; italics my own). Social justice, the disparities between certain segments in the markets, the gendering of skills are not addressed at all and the state (at that stage) is seen as a ‘neutral facilitator of co-ordination’ (Unterhalter 1998:356). In 1991 the government introduced the Education Renewal Strategy (ERS) ‘which was an attempt to move away from apartheid education’ (Sedibe 1998:270). The report was however criticised ‘…for its vague recommendations about the governance and administration of the education system and its silence about issues of class, race, religion, gender and inequalities in education’ (Sedibe 1998:271). The ANC and Congress for South African Trade Unions (Cosatu) on the other hand saw education and training not only in terms of ‘improved productivity and economic rationality, but [also] to the broader goals of democratisation and redress of past injustices, which were seen as intimately connected with ideas about economic regeneration’ (Unterhalter 1998:358). Another role player in this period is the Centre for Education Policy Development (CEPD), which advanced ‘universalist notions of human rights’ (Unterhalter 1998:359).

Unterhalter (1998:360) describes the period 1994-1996 as ‘a honeymoon for South Africa’. Unterhalter identifies two currents that infused those years. The first current was ‘enormous optimism’ and putting structures in place for the implementation of the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) and the second current was that of ‘reconciliation and compromise’. What is significant is the fact that Unterhalter (1998:361) identifies the role of the big corporations during this period as being ‘the major vehicle for these negotiations’ (italics my own). While the White Paper on Education and Training (WPET) in 1995 still mentions education and training as basis for human rights, documents
published thereafter ‘have even fewer references to social justice’ (Unterhalter 1998:363). By the end of 1996, Unterhalter points to the fact that as RDP was replaced by GEAR (Growth, Employment and Redistribution), the emphasis was placed ‘on securing capitalist growth as a precondition for redistribution, rather than the reversal of that linearity expressed in the RDP’ (1998:365).

Unterhalter’s exploration (1995) confirms the role economic interests played in mobilisation towards the regime transition as suggested by Wood (E.J) (2001)\textsuperscript{74}. Wood (E.J) (2001:883) concludes that the regime change in South Africa was possible because ‘…insurgency was sustained long enough to create the structural conditions for the resolution of conflict: It constituted an insurgent counterelite with whom negotiations proved necessary and it directly threatened the interests and opportunities of economic elites…’

Any analysis of the development of educational policy in South Africa should therefore take into consideration the multiplicity of layers, and the content and often changes of agendas and stakeholder lobbies. After analysing the constitutional negotiation processes that resulted in the Congress for a Democratic South Africa (Codesa) as well as agreement on a two-stage process that resulted in the final Constitution, Henrard (2002:22) states that these developments and processes ‘confirmed that compromise politics was one of the forces of the process securing its eventual success’ (italics mine).

As we continue our exploration of the tectonic layers underlying the Policy, evidence of ‘compromise politics’ (Henrard 2002) and ‘political bargains’ (Wood 2001) will continue to make an appearance in the drama of processes resulting in and surrounding the Policy.

\textsuperscript{74} For a discussion of the insurgent processes towards democracy see Wood (E.J) (2001).
4.3.5 Transition through transformation

The transition from apartheid to democracy has often been described as miraculous (e.g. Tutu 1994) and prescribed as a ‘model’ to other deeply ravaged societies. CNE (as described in the preceding section) was just the educational strategy to entrench apartheid. The number of laws and vast legislation that were necessary to uphold the social and political order and segregation as envisaged by the Afrikaner white minority was immense. Krüger (2003:207-265) narrates the immense social engineering process since 1948 in the city of Pretoria. No part of the city or the lives of its inhabitants were left untouched by apartheid. The murder of Dr H.F. Verwoerd in 1966 signified the ‘beginning of the end of high apartheid. The stiff logic began to unravel’ (Krüger 2003:210). The trauma caused by this ‘unravelling’ of apartheid and the increased opposition, nationally and internationally to the white minority government, resulted in ‘an insurgent path to democracy’ (Wood, [E.J] 2001)75.

Giliomee (1995) analyses the different pressures for liberalisation from Boereplaas to ‘an inclusive, multiracial state’ (Giliomee 1995:85) and then suggests that the only way the De Klerk government could get the white electorate’s support was to present the negotiations as a process of ‘controlled transformation’ (Giliomee 1995:940). What is important for the rest of our exploration towards understanding the processes resulting in the Policy, is the fact that the De Klerk government presented the option to the white electorate as a ‘fail-safe affair: even if a future ANC government would entertain radical measures, whites would retain sufficient power to block such moves’ (Giliomee 1995:95; italics mine).

75 Giliomee (1995) describes three options that were considered as the need for transformation became impossible to ignore. The one was a ‘transition through transformation’, but equally possible (maybe not as viable) was ‘transition after regime breakdown’ and ‘transition as transplacement’.
Formal negotiations started in December 1991 in an all-party Convention for a Democratic South Africa (Codesa). Giliomee states that in the debates ‘the requisites of broad-based economic development and national homogeneity have been stressed’ (Giliomee 1995:98). For a successful transition to democracy, both of these were seen to be crucial. It would seem to be important for our further exploration to take note of the economic power the Afrikaner had at the time of the negotiations.

In 1946 more than half of the Afrikaners were struggling farmers or workers in blue collar and other manual occupations; they were dependent on government protection. By 1992 by contrast, more than 80 percent of Afrikaners were in high or middle-income categories, and the group as a whole was more open to the liberalisation of the political order (Giliomee 1995:99).

The first concern to the democratisation process was to immediately address the racial configuration of economic well-being of the majority of black citizens. The second concern of the multi-party negotiations was to move to ‘national unity’ from a deeply divided and ethnicised past (Giliomee 1995:100). Giliomee (1995:104) concludes by saying in 1995 that

No country that became democratic since the mid-1970s laboured under the same ethnic and racial divisions and the lack of broad-based economic development as South Africa. The ruling group has not been defeated and presently considers power-sharing as an instrument for protecting group interests and values (italics mine).

In 1994 very few South Africans, however, could have realised how painful, insecure and long this transformation process will take. After the euphoria was over, South Africans and especially the Afrikaner were confronted with, in the words of Karl Jasper’s Die Schuldfrage (1946), ‘the question of guilt’ (as referred to by Booth 1999:255). South Africans had (and still have) in the words of Muller (1996) ‘dreams of wholeness and loss’76.

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76 See Goldhagen 1997.
Little did we know, in 1994, that our journey into ‘the heart of darkness’ (Conrad, 1973) have just started. While many remembered the atrocities and trauma, many wanted to forget, or claim amnesia. This reminds of two witnesses testifying in Rwanda in 2001 in the gacaca hearings dealing with the atrocities of the 1994 genocide. The witness is quoted to have stated ‘Nothing, I remember nothing’, the middle-aged witness insisted to the court. ‘I was sick during the genocide…’ The next witness claimed to have been watching her cows from her window when two girls were murdered outside her home (Stansell 2007:1)

4.4 THE TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION (TRC)

‘My wife was sitting next to me in the front pew. She was wearing a long blue coat’. As he said this his voice started to break. He let go of his tears and, speaking through uncontrollable sobs, he continued, ‘I want you to tell me if you saw her. Do you remember firing at my wife? If you don’t remember I’ll accept it, but I want to know if you saw her, if you remember firing at her’.

[John Ackerman addresses the men from the Azanian People’s Liberation Army (APLA). The men applied to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) for amnesty for a 1993 grenade attack at St James Church, Cape Town. John Ackerman’s wife was killed in the attack.] (as quoted in Gobodo-Madikizela 2002:24).

There are many accounts of South Africa’s transition from apartheid into democracy. These accounts include from laudatory narratives celebrating the birth of the ‘rainbow nation’ (Tutu 1994, 1999) to critical accounts of the lack of distributive justice (e.g. Maluleke 1997, 2001). Central to the public and political discourses following the successful elections in 1994 was the question posed by Kymlicka and Norman (1994, as quoted by Enslin 2003:73) ‘what is it to belong to a particular society, and what kind of life is possible to live in this form of society?’

The new democratic state indeed faced many challenges and claims. In discussing the demands that faced the new democratic state after 1994, Sayed (2002:38) states that
First, it was expected to deliver a more just and humane society in a climate of rising expectations and hopeful promise. Simultaneously, the state was expected to provide conditions for economic growth and development… Second, it was presumed that the state would unify a divided society without threatening the white population. Therefore restitution was to take a limited form. Third, the state was expected to be responsive to the will of the people and to guarantee increased participation and extend democracy in society. … The new South African state was therefore expected to fulfil at least three different functions, namely, ensure distributive justice, provide the conditions for capital accumulation, and ensure greater responsiveness and participation in forging unity/nationhood (the rainbow nation/state).

The TRC was our new democracy’s first institutionalised reckoning with the past. As such it constitutes an important tectonic layer in understanding the Policy in the context memory and forgetting.

### 4.4.1 A short overview

Although the final report of the TRC was handed over in 1998 to Pres Nelson Mandela, the TRC and its processes, the successes and failures, remains a vibrant and often uncomfortable presence in contemporary South Africa. In 2007 the Public Prosecutor decided to prosecute some of the previous regime’s Defence Force and Police Forces for alleged crimes committed prior 1994. Du Toit (2007) asks whether this process will open up old wounds, or have those wounds in fact remained open?

The TRC was for South Africa’s newly fledged democracy a defining moment. Not only did South Africans come face to face with ‘three centuries of fractured morality’ (Krog 1999:68), but we were confronted with the abyss of what we all have become – whether we were victims, oppressors or classified ourselves in the contested category as ‘bystanders’. We all have become inhumane – whether as a result of being treated as such or losing our humanity by treating other humans as less-than-human. Maluleke (1997:326) points to two factors that impacted on the TRC’s successes and failures, namely that it ‘was part of the
political settlement which catapulted the ANC into power without having been militarily victorious; and secondly that the Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act No. 34 of 1995 defines and puts significant limits to what the TRC can/should do and achieve'.

I would like to propose that the TRC hearings and the different population group’s reactions to the narratives formed on the one hand the foundation of the realisation of the scope and complexity that the social re-engineering of South African society will require; and on the other hand explain many of the public discourses on shared values and ‘the will of the people’ as is claimed in public debates on the death penalty, gay marriages and the rise in xenophobia.

As Swartz (2006:552) explores, the ‘rebuilding of the fractured society’ started by being confronted with the wounds, first. I do not intend to comprehensively discuss the TRC, its processes, the narratives and the different outcomes or lack thereof. This has been done by many authors, including Maluleke (1997); Sarkin (1996) and Verwoerd (1999). In looking at the TRC’s processes, narratives and some of the different critiques on the TRC, I will endeavour to look for patterns that may provide insight on how certain groupings within the broader South African society see amongst other things justice, diversity, equality and cultures.

The statement by Henrard (2002: 18; italics my own) explores the relationship between education and reconciliation in historic perspective:

Reconciliation involves not only telling the truth about the past and forgiveness, but also requires reparation for material and other forms of deprivation and the restoration of a human community in a spirit of respect for human rights and democracy. Indeed, it also necessitates the creation of a society within which the chances of reoccurrence of the kinds of gross violations of human rights that occurred in the past are reduced to a minimum.

The TRC was established in terms of the Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act, No. 34 of 1995. The title of the act already hints at a dual purpose, namely ‘national unity’ and ‘reconciliation’. The mandate of the
commission was to provide a platform for witnesses, victims and perpetrators to come forward and share their narratives with the explicit assumption that the sharing of these testimonies would result in reconciliation, possible redress for the victims and/or the families of the victims and amnesty for the perpetrators. In establishing the Commission, the Minister of Justice stated the purpose of the Commission to 'ensure that we put our country on a sound moral basis ... and [in order] to humanise our society we had to put across the idea of moral responsibility' (Dullah Omar as quoted by Krog 1999:8). A number of commentators (e.g. Krog 1999, Maluleke 1997, and Swartz 2006) emphasised the fact that apartheid dehumanised us and that the TRC was the first step in a humanising project77.

The TRC made ‘findings on 36 000 alleged gross violations of human rights in around 20 300 statements from victims or survivors of these violations… On 30 June 1998, of a total of 7 127 amnesty applications, 2 684 still had to be finalised’ (Verwoerd 1999:303-304). When the Commission presented its final report on October 28, 1998, the Commission condemned both sides for committing atrocities.

4.4.2 Reactions to the TRC: glimpses of developing patterns

I would like to now share some ‘glimpses’ of what I sense have developed out of the TRC that (I suspect) have impacted on either the rationale for, the processes of or the final content of the Policy78. The following figure (Figure 4.4) provides an overview of these nine glimpses.

77 For an overview of the different committees of the TRC and their different scopes, see Henrard (2002).
78 I chose the word ‘glimpse’ consciously and deliberately. These glimpses represent stolen glances, prolonged and anguishing personal reflections. These glimpses do not claim any legitimacy or even empirical validity. These glimpses are further offered by someone who fought against the ANC. Therefore these glimpses are part of my own making sense not only of my own ‘perpetrator’ behaviour, but also as my identity as Afrikaner.
Figure 4.4: An overview of the nine glimpses of developing patterns

Glimpse 1: The TRC as religious ritual

After the elections of 1994 and the official inauguration of Pres Nelson Mandela as first president of the first democratically elected government in South Africa, the TRC was the first public event where the new democracy faced its demons and its possible futures. And in shaping the TRC the chairperson and many of its commissioners and staff, turned to religion to facilitate a process of national remembering and forgetting\(^79\).

The TRC was clothed in religious, and specifically Christian taxonomies and rituals (Mamdani 1996:3)\(^80\). Although Smit (1995:3) states that the church ‘has naturally been in the business of truth and reconciliation, and guilt and forgiveness form [sic] its beginnings’, the same can not be said of the government or its institutions. Smit (1995:13) later comments on the ‘Christian’ character of the TRC and states that the Commission ‘is after all a juridical and public instrument, not a spiritual and Christian instrument’. Mamdani (1996:3) points to the specific religious roots of the vocabulary used by the TRC, words like ‘confession’, ‘repentance’, ‘conversion’, and so forth. In referring to the work of the TRC Petersen (1996) uses terminology like ‘a politics of grace’. In

\(^{79}\) As religion was a crucial element in sustaining notions of white supremacy in South Africa pre-1994, religion again was called upon to play a role in not only dealing with the past, but also in envisioning a future that will contribute to the shaping of a more just and compassionate society.

\(^{80}\) Interestingly, though different religions played a role in the ceremony of the inauguration of Pres Nelson Mandela, the TRC took on a distinctively Christian character.
reflecting on the work of the TRC, a number of authors have also used references to the Bible to either condemn or praise the work of the TRC. Maluleke (1997:324), for example, quotes from the Old Testament in a title to an article asking whether the TRC dealt ‘lightly with the wound of my people’?81.

The distinct use of religious vocabulary and ritual during the hearings may also refer to a particular and state-sanctioned view on the function of religion in the process of nation-building. This functional view of religion may have contributed to the need for and the formulation of the Policy.

**Glimpse 2: Not enough**

Jenkins (2000) explores the dilemmas of the TRC to contribute to the reconstruction in South Africa from a Human Rights perspective. Jenkins (2000:415) quotes Judge Mohamed who said

> Generations of children born and yet to be born will suffer the consequences of poverty, malnutrition, of homelessness, of illiteracy and disempowerment generated and sustained by the institutions of apartheid and its manifest effects on life and living for so many. The country has neither the resources nor the skills to reverse fully the massive wrongs. It will take many years of strong commitment, sensitivity and labour to ‘reconstruct our society’ so as to fulfil the legitimate dreams of new generations exposed to real opportunities for advancement denied to preceding generations…

The TRC process in itself was seen by the drafters of the Act to be ‘…a form of reparation in the widest sense of the term’ (Jenkins 2000:462). For 90 percent of the 21 000 people who made statements to the TRC about gross human rights violations, only 10 percent got the opportunity to relate their experiences at public hearings (Jenkins 2000:462-463)82.

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81 I could not find any comments from other of the major religions in South Africa on the distinctly ‘Christian’ character of the TRC, its vocabulary and its processes. On the one hand, with the majority of South Africa’s population professing to be Christian, with most of the perpetrators and victims professing to be Christian, the distinctive Christian character of the TRC may be deemed functional.

82 Jenkins (2000: 465) quotes Meiring who reflects on the needs of those who testified. Meiring writes
In a footnote, Jenkins (2000:465-466) quotes Wendy Orr who suggested that the request for ‘symbolic reparation may have simply reflected victims’ embarrassment at asking for money at a public hearing’. Later Jenkins (2000:467) refers to her again commenting on the fact that victims had to wait years for some relief, while perpetrators ‘felt the benefit of a positive amnesty decision at once’. Though this may be true for those who did receive amnesty, it is not a generally known fact that the ‘vast majority of the nearly 7 000 amnesty applications received by the TRC have been rejected’ (Jenkins 2000:467, footnote 239).

Commenting on the fact that ‘the Act does not require amnesty applicants to apologise’ or to make personal amends, Jenkins (2000:479) questions the TRC’s validity of the ‘shame and re-integrate’ model of restorative justice. There were even applicants who indicated that they do not regard their acts as wrong and that in the same circumstances they would do it again (Jenkins 2000:480). Jenkins concludes chillingly by quoting Mrs Charity Kondile whose son was murdered by former security forces – ‘It is easy for Mandela and Tutu to forgive… They lead vindicated lives. In my life nothing, not a single thing, has changed since my son was burnt by barbarians… nothing. Therefore I cannot forgive’.

Maluleke (1997:329) refers to the ‘massive undercurrent of scepticism about the TRC in the black community’ and the fact that the TRC was referred to as the

> Nearly everybody wanted information, wanted to know what had happened to them or their loved ones, and why. Others requested that photographs and other personal possessions confiscated at the time should be returned, or that the mortal remains of a husband or a child be brought home for reinternment. Some requested gravestones, which they could not afford at the time of death. Mrs Mgwinya requested the TRC to assist her in returning the cutlery and chairs that she borrowed from her neighbour the day she lost all her possessions. Twelve witnesses requested help to keep their children at school. Others raised the point of medical care and housing, or talked about the need for a special day of reconciliation in the country. The strangest, and saddest, request came from Mrs Mhlawuli, who wanted her husband’s hand, which was severed by the police at the time and kept as a deterrent in a bottle of formalin, to be returned to the family. They wanted to bury it.
'Kleenex Commission' and the 'Tears and Reconciliation Commission'. While authors like Gobodo-Madikizela (2002) refer to the feelings of remorse, forgiveness and healing that some narratives evoked in the traumatic interplay between perpetrators and victims, 'black people are more interested in the fulfilment of the promises made to them at election time as well as a material demonstration of remorse and restitution by all white people in the country' (Maluleke 1997:329).

The ANC and organisations that supported the struggle against apartheid, felt that they had fought a 'just war'. The TRC however made a distinction between a 'just war' and 'unjust means' (Krog 1999:433). The Government's reaction to the final report echoed the same sentiments. The Minister of Education according to Krog (1999:87) said ‘…the Truth Commission will not be able to fulfil its implicit mandate to create a more moral order, if it does not make a distinction between those who fought against apartheid and those who defended it’.83

It is a legitimate concern that most of the White population has never ‘owned-up’ to what really happened under apartheid. The situation is exacerbated by the fact that this distinction of ‘those who fought against apartheid’ and those who did not or who benefited, runs like a leitmotiv throughout the social re-engineering from 1994 up to the present. While the majority of whites want to forget and get on with their lives, the rest of the population claim restoration and justice84.

The need for restorative justice, with the emphasis on re-engineering the socio-economic structural leftovers of apartheid points to the need for the Policy to also

83 This is a significant remark. Though the scope of the TRC was to establish a foundation for a more moral dispensation, this moral dispensation has been qualified and continues to be qualified in terms of ‘those who fought against Apartheid’ and those who defended or benefited from Apartheid.

84 I suspect that like Goldhagen's (1997) attempt to explore the role of the ‘ordinary’ Germans in the Holocaust, a similar exploration of the role of the ‘ordinary’ white in apartheid will not change the self-perceptions of whites (and especially Afrikaners). The reaction to such an exploration may be very much the same as the reactions to the publication of the Goldhagen book, as described by Hayward (2007). Also see Krüger's (2003) exploration of guilt.
address the role religion played in apartheid as well as the role religion can play
in restoring human and socio-economic dignity to South Africans. Without doing
so, the Policy will miss a crucial point in the quest for a more just, moral and
humane society.

Glimpse 3: Too much – a witch hunt

It is something of a pity that, by and large, the white community failed to
take advantage of the Truth and Reconciliation process. They were badly let
down by their leadership. Many of them carry a burden of guilt which would
have been assuaged had they actively embraced the opportunities offered
by the Commission; those who do not consciously acknowledge any sense
of guilt are in a sense worse off than those who do. Apart from the hurt that
it causes to those who suffered, the denial by so many white South Africans
even that they benefited from apartheid is a crippling, self-inflicted blow to
their capacity to enjoy and appropriate the fruits of change (Foreword by
Archbishop Desmond Tutu to the Final TRC Report 2003).

A small group of whites (of which the majority will most probably be Afrikaners)
still refuse to apologise for any wrong-doing during the apartheid years. In their
view, the atrocities that were committed were in service of a ‘higher calling’. Most
Afrikaners and probably most whites feel that the past should be forgotten as
soon as possible and that South Africans should embrace the future. Most of
these confess of never ‘knowing’ about the atrocities and the inhumaness of
apartheid as system. This collective amnesia reminds of the witnesses (quoted at
the end of Section 4.2) of reasons for not remembering witnessing the genocide
in Rwanda – ‘I remember nothing’, the middle-aged witness insisted to the court.
‘I was sick during the genocide… ’The next witness claimed to have been
watching her cows from her window when two girls were murdered outside her
home (Stansell 2007:1).

Petersen (1996:62) discusses the constant complaints from whites regarding
victims’ need for restitution (and socioeconomic redress) while they demonstrate
‘very, very little self-reflection, let alone self-criticism’ for the atrocities committed
and for the systems which made these atrocities possible. There may be many
reasons for this ‘apathy’ (Tutu 2003) or lack of self-criticism (Petersen 1996).
Krog (1997:10) postulates the possibility that the truth does not ‘automatically liberate’ but may overwhelm and numb.

Marx (2002:50) points to the fact that instead of analysing how Vlakplaas became possible, the problem becomes anthropologised by individualising the evil, as manifested in the naming of Eugene de Kock as ‘Prime Evil’. In contrast, the banality of human coldness, avarice and pathetic assumptions about racist superiority, as manifested in the electoral behaviour of the white minority during the apartheid years, are excluded … By remembering selectively the monstrosities, and by leaving out the everyday activities of white employers, the pettiness of the ‘madams’, or the permanent terror of the pass laws, any discussion of apartheid as a system is circumvented. The one-sidedness of forgiving without any adequate response in the form of regret can be explained through this separation of physical violence from the repressive structures that carried it out. It is like the call into an empty room – the addressees, the former supporters of apartheid, do not feel addressed.

While the Afrikaner has in their history also experienced gross violations of human rights, it would seem that this does not give them a bigger scope for self-reflection and self-awareness. In his discussion of Afrikaner Christian Nationalism, Krüger (2003:106) says ‘The supreme irony of this religion is that its burning sense of the injustice done to the Afrikaners by the British did not prevent it from becoming co-responsible in committing gross injustices to others’.

As I will explore in the next chapter (Chapter 5) Kader Asmal’s outspokenness with regard to the need for redress and justice, has influenced the ‘laager’s’ perception when it was Asmal who launched the ‘onslaught’ against the Christendom (read Afrikaner) as petitioned by Ferreira (2003:17) in an article in the Kerkblad Die nuwe onderwysbeleid: aanslag teen die Christendom, (‘The new education policy: onslaught against Christianity’).

85 Taking into account the exploration of Bosch (1986) and Krüger (2003) of the Afrikaner’s sense of being ‘chosen’ and being the ‘greatest work of art’ as D.F. Malan has been quoted to have said (Bunting 1969), the Afrikaner’s lack of remorse or amnesia may indicate a pathological preoccupation with survival and a ‘laager’ mentality (Bosch 1986). To admit any wrong-doing would effectively render the ‘laager’ defenceless.
Glimpse 4: *The cost of ‘the gift’*

Glimpse 2 explored the criticism that the TRC did not do ‘enough’ to restore dignity or justice, whether due to its legal framework, the time parameters in which it functioned or the impossibility of forgiveness without substantial restoration. The TRC on the other hand created a space of possibilities, where victims could narrate abuses and ask for reparations, perpetrators could tell their side of the story and in some cases ask forgiveness. The TRC was in the ‘grace’ business – whether to comfort and assist in healing, of in giving amnesty which, in effect, meant forgiveness and starting with a clean state (whether the victims agreed with the amnesty or not). There are many who warned that the TRC was on the verge of making grace ‘cheap’ (see the discussions of Meiring 2006 and Petersen 2004), or dealt ‘lightly with the wound of my people’ (Maluleke 1997). There were also legitimate remarks that forgiveness follows repentance and the rejection of innocence (as explored by Boesak 1977).

When we enter the space where victim and perpetrator meets, and forgiveness or atonement as ‘gift’ is either given or refused, then we realise that our expectations of and views on forgiveness, repentance, remorse, justice, resentment and remembering are much more complex than generally perceived. Victims and perpetrators discovered the uncomfortable and often incommensurable space created by claims for justice to be done, the Christian imperative to forgive, and dealing with resentment and memory.

Marcel Mauss’ *The gift* (1990) is an uncomfortable partner in reflecting on the TRC and its implications for educational policy. In his conclusion to his essay, Mauss (1990) declares after studying exchanges in archaic societies, that there is no such thing as a ‘free gift’. ‘There are no free gifts; gift cycles engage persons in permanent commitments that articulate the dominant institutions’ (Mary Douglas in the Foreword to Mauss 1990:xii). The exchange of gifts was also much more than economic or socio-political acts. These exchanges were permeated with *mana*, honour, prestige or ‘authority’. In his ethnographic
research, Mauss found that the objects exchanged were not “dead” but embodied (sometimes literally) a ‘life-force’ or ‘authority’ – ‘the thing received is not inactive. Even when it has been abandoned by the giver, it still possesses something of him’ (Mauss 1990:15). There are furthermore obligations to give, obligations to receive and the obligation to reciprocate. ‘To refuse to give, to fail to invite, just as to refuse to accept is tantamount to declaring war; it is to reject the bond of alliance and commonality’ (1990:17).

Although the TRC opened a space for reconciliation and restitution, the aftermath of the TRC is permeated with feelings of disappointment. Those who forgave looked for something in return. It was as if the TRC invited victims and perpetrators to a round table as symbol of a ‘common store of wealth’ and goodwill (Mauss 1990:106) and many perpetrators and more specifically the Afrikaner and their churches either did not accept the invitation, or came with provisos and disclaimers. The ‘gift’ and givers found no recipients. When the invitation to join the majority at this ‘round table’ was accepted, it was not to listen, share or receive, but to stake claims, justify, negate.

Forgiveness further may not be the most appropriate action in some circumstances. Jirsa (2004:14) states that there may be cases where ‘the act of forgiveness is not the proper response at all. If the act was by its scale and extent so evil that it produced such deep humiliation, forgiveness is already not a morally good act’ (italics added). He continues to explore the options for justice and dealing with resentment ‘when we do not forgive’ (2004:23). He therefore suggests that ‘feelings of resentment are thus nothing to be embarrassed about’ (2004:26) and that ‘it is not necessary to consider this feeling as something morally wrong and which has to be overcome at any cost’ (2004:27). Hamber and

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86 In exploring the relationship between the need for justice and forgiveness Jirsa (2004:12) says, ‘...being forgiven means not being freed from responsibility and the demands of justice’ (italics in the original). Mamdani (1996:5) makes the disconcerting remark that should the ‘gift’ of forgiveness and reconciliation not provide some “returns” for the majority of South Africans, that there is a real risk of “turning disappointment into frustration and outrage, creating room for a demagogue to reap the harvest...”
Wilson (2002:46) state ‘It is critical that victims are not expected, either implicitly or explicitly, to forgive the perpetrators, or forget about the past because some form of reparation (or a comprehensive report on the nature and extent of past violations) has been made’. It may be that the public nature of their narratives and their grief and reliving the trauma, brought with it, implicitly, some pressure to forgive – as it would have been seen by the audiences as ‘the right thing to do’, or even ‘the Christian thing to do’. Revenge and the expression of such desire to avenge the wrongs are often ‘regarded as low and unworthy emotion because its deep moral hold on people is rarely understood’ (Hamber & Wilson 2002:47).

‘The demands of some survivors for retributive justice need to be seen as just as legitimate a path to “reconciliation” as forgiveness’ (Hamber & Wilson 2002:48).

Verwoerd (1999:305) quotes a witness who said:

What really makes me angry about the TRC and Tutu is that they are putting pressure on us to forgive. For most black South Africans the TRC is about us having to forgive… I don’t know if I will ever be ready to forgive. I carry this ball of anger inside me and I don’t even know where to begin dealing with it… The oppression was bad, but what is much worse, what makes me even more angry is that they are trying to dictate my forgiveness.

Educational policy will therefore have to take seriously the ‘ball of anger’ many South Africans carry with them. Reconciliation without justice or justice without reconciliation may have the same outcome namely revenge (Mamdani 1996:5). If one considers the TRC’s parameters, taxonomies and processes as the result of a negotiated compromise, one should rather not be surprised when the results of the TRC also have a negotiated compromised character.

From this brief excursion it has however become obvious that ‘national healing’ and ‘reconciliation’ comprise uncomfortable paradoxes that can not be resolved with a dose of ‘cheap grace’. The Policy should therefore not be tempted into ‘cheap’ solutions and ‘tricks’ but should systematically develop spaces and taxonomies which will empower learners to speak out on their resentment, rage and hope, but also to explore new and different options for being human, together, in South Africa.
Glimpse 5: Public participation

The public participation in the hearings, processes and findings of the TRC can either be celebrated as indeed a national event, or an event that allowed actually very few people to tell their stories. The TRC and its proceedings was broadcasted on national television, was extensively reported on in daily news reports and newspapers and was, for its duration, in the public domain. Looking at the 17 commissioners divided into three committees, investigating the applications of 20 000 victims and 7 000 amnesty seekers (Maluleke 2001:190) – one realises that the TRC was a major attempt in providing a space for public participation in service of nation-building. The TRC made ‘findings on 36 000 alleged gross violations of human rights in around 20 300 statements from victims or survivors of these violations… On 30 June 1998, of a total of 7 127 amnesty applications, 2 684 still had to be finalised’ (Verwoerd 1999:303-304).

For 90 percent of the 21 000 people who made statements to the TRC about gross human rights violations, only 10 percent got the opportunity to relate their experiences at public hearings (Jenkins 2000:462-463).

Although the actual public participation is insignificant compared to the scale of apartheid mass removals and mass humiliation, the TRC did, however, provide a very public space for ‘the nation’ to come to terms with some elements of its past, however limited. But then again, as Hamber and Wilson (2002) explore, the expectations relating to the TRC’s ability to reconcile ‘the nation’ are based on the assumption that the ‘the nation’ as an entity exists. Hamber and Wilson (2002:36) remind us that ‘Nations do not have collective psyches that can be healed, nor do whole nations suffer post-traumatic stress disorder…’. They warn against the psychologising of an abstract entity like ‘the nation’. They quote (2002:36) Michael Ignatieff who wrote

We tend to invest our nations with conscience, identities and memories as if they were individuals. It is problematic enough to vest an individual with a single identity: our inner lives are like battlegrounds over which uneasy truces reign; the identity of a nation is additionally fissured by region, ethnicity, class and education.
Truth commissions cannot therefore ‘heal the nation’ as if it is a homogenous entity with a homogeneous past. According to Ignatieff (as quoted by Hamber and Wilson 2002:36) such commissions ‘can only provide a frame for public discourse and public memory. They can help to create a new public space in which debate and discussion on the past occurs. Beyond this they can do little…’. Hamber and Wilson (2002:48) conclude ‘There is not a single process of dealing with the past that restores the ‘national psyche to good health’ and that commissions such as the TRC ‘can provide a useful framework in which new rituals or spaces can be provided for the enactment of closure’. As such the TRC allowed for ‘performances of memory’ (Hamber & Wilson 2002:49). The effect of these public and broadcasted ‘performances of memory’ ‘was a growing awareness amongst South Africans of the extent of the atrocities committed and the role of societal structures in perpetuating them’ (Swartz 2006:553).

**Glimpse 6: Diversity and reconciliation**

In an article titled, *Can lions and rabbits reconcile*? Maluleke (2001) explores the complexities of reconciliation given the diversity in South Africa. The many forms of the fable of the Lion (strong but not very clever) and the Rabbit (small and clever), provide Maluleke with a basis to attempt a nuanced overview of the different claims and counterclaims in South Africa. After exploring various versions which will suit either ‘black’ or ‘white’ listeners, Maluleke states that ‘it is not always clear who is the Lion and who is the Rabbit’ (2001:193).

The TRC’s hearings revealed that religions did not *per se* play a role in the atrocities committed during apartheid. Perpetrators and victims both referred to the role their religion played in either legitimising or enduring oppression. In the South African context, religious intolerance has never played a role in conflict outside of either supporting opposition to apartheid or legitimising apartheid (Gouws & Du Plessis 2000:2).
These authors’ research refers to international studies, which found that active participation in a religion often corresponds to political and religious intolerance (2000:4). These studies also found that non-religious people were in general more tolerant than their religious counterparts (2000:4-5). Gouws and Du Plessis found (2000:6) that ‘the majority of people are very intolerant’ regardless of whether adhering to a religion or not. They further argue that their findings indicate ‘religion is not contributing to making people more tolerant. Religious beliefs do not inspire people to “love their neighbours’” (2000:7; italics added). They conclude that tolerance ‘does not reside in the hearts and minds’ of South Africans, regardless of religious adherence or affiliation (2000:15). These authors propose that churches and religious institutions ‘can take on a new role as agents of socialisation’ including acknowledging the ‘right to proselytise’ (2000:15)87.

Racism, xenophobia or whatever other ‘gestalt’ of prejudice and discrimination are based on a classification of the ‘Other’ as different from ‘us’, whether it is skin colour, culture, religion, etc. (Duncan, Rey and Braam 2001). Duncan et al. (2001) assert the theory that racism is an ‘ideology that justifies domination and marginalisation’. Domination and marginalisation are not only confined to the ‘big’ categories of ‘white’ and ‘black’, but increasingly applicable to practices of xenophobia, homophobia and other forms of prejudice and discrimination. The ideology of racism is institutionalised in ever-changing forms and gestalts (Duncan et al. 2001:10). These authors refer to ‘realistic conflict theory’ (RCT) which proposes a

…group-based understanding of the causes of racism. RCT basically suggests that incompatible goals or competition between racial groups over scarce resources lead to hostility and conflict and that superordinate goals of co-operative activities between these groups induce social harmony (Duncan et al. 2001:13).

87 Recent accounts and explorations of genocides in Rwanda (Mamdani 1996) and East-Central Europe (Esbenshade 1995) provide chilling evidence that genocide can take shape overnight between people of the same race, religion and history, as illustrated in the 1994 Rwandan genocides (Mamdani 1996:4).
Educational policy and more specific the Policy should take seriously RCT and other indicators that point to the nonnegotiable fact that social and economic justice be an integral part of any multicultural or cultural pluralism program.

Education policy should do much more than to celebrate and promote ‘diversity as ethos’ as Bakker (1999: 58) suggests. In the debate on the possibility to use education to address issues of diversity and reconciliation, we would benefit from taking seriously the warning of Bauman (2002: 115) that racism is much more and much more profound than just ‘a variety of inter-group resentment or prejudice’. Some ‘otherness’ seems so deeply ingrained in perceptions and notions of race, like Jewishness, that there ‘is no escape’ (Bauman quoting Hannah Arendt) from ontologically being part of that category (Bauman 2002: 114). Bauman uses a medical metaphor when he explains that ‘one can train and shape “healthy” parts of the body, but not cancerous growth. The latter can be “improved” only by being destroyed’ (2002: 117). The Holocaust and other genocides testify to the scary possibility that one’s ‘otherness’ can at a moment’s notice become a death sentence.

Searching for and the celebration of ‘common ground’ (Bakker 1999: 72) without fundamental socio-economic redress may perpetuate the criticism against multicultural education that it does not impact on the structural and institutionalised nature of inequality and racism, or address the multiple dimensions of intergroup conflict (Bornstein 2003; McLaren 1997; Shor 1992: 13, 46). We would do well, however, in developing educational policy, not to underestimate difference.

**Glimpse 7: Minority versus majority**

Henrard (2002) illustrates the negotiated and compromised nature of the process that eventually resulted in Codesa and the 1994 elections. During these negotiations the white population as minority suddenly discovered how vulnerable they really were and in a number of instances, e.g. language and education and self-determination, the Volkstaat and minority rights, demanded
compromises (Henrard 2002: 25-33). Minority groups claimed protection by the Constitution and more specifically the Bill of Rights to protect their languages, religions and the right to mother-tongue education, to mention but three contested areas. On the other hand, there are increasingly claims that the feelings of the majority of people regarding for example the death penalty and gay marriages should be tested through a national referendum. It would seem as if the public discourses in South Africa often nurture a sense of entitlement and not necessarily the values as embodied in the Constitution.

It is therefore unclear to what extent the TRC’s processes and findings really impacted on the values held by the majority of South Africans. Though the TRC embodied the spirit of the new Constitution of South Africa and the values that people lived and died for, the general population still has very little understanding of the full implications of the rights and responsibilities in a constitutional democracy.

**Glimpse 8: ‘Ubuntu’ as contested discourse**

Archbishop Desmond Tutu (during and after) the TRC proceedings exalted ubuntu as not only the principle which made the narratives heard by the TRC possible, but also to provide the only real possibility for reconciliation for a future South Africa (Marx 2002). Marx (2002:52) states that the way the TRC used the term ubuntu reveals a specific ‘Christian-inspired ideology of healing and nation building as the Commission propagated it’. Marx (2002:52) continues by stating that although ubuntu has become

…the main signifiers of African identity, there is significantly no historical evidence [that] has been produced to substantiate this alleged community value. … In this way, the various power structures, different forms of political rule, repression, and the exploitation of women, slaves and clients are left out of the picture.

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*88* Ironically, the same minority when in power did not care about the rights of the majority but in the turning of the tables, demanded to be respected and protected.
Marx (2002:52) states that Tutu ‘Christianised Ubuntu into a form of human compassion, which as a Christian commandment, could be contrasted to the divisiveness of the apartheid state’ (Marx 2002:52). Since then this notion of ubuntu has become embedded in the public discourses surrounding nation-building and the values that would make a more just and equitable society possible. Ubuntu as concept is also very prominent in the Government’s *Manifesto on values, education and democracy* (Department of Education 2001b) as well as one of the values mentioned specifically in the Policy. It is therefore crucial to take a moment to explore the hype as well as the possibilities of ubuntu as value.

There are several authors exploring the notion of ubuntu. Some of these authors celebrate ubuntu as a (if not the) unique African contribution to South Africa and the world (e.g. Coertze 2001, Louw 1998, Mbigi 1995, Teffo 1994, Tutu 1994). Other authors are more circumvent about the term and its currency in the discourse on nation-building and reconciliation in South Africa (e.g. Maluleke 1997, 2001; Marx 2002). Maluleke (1997:343) writes

> Although the notion of ubuntu has now become fashionable, it is by no means a self-explanatory idea. The notion of ubuntu is a fiercely contested one and it is not yet clear in whose hands it will finally land. Nor is it yet clear what this notion will be used for. It has been connected to theology, the purported African renaissance, management theory, educational theory, ethics and now the TRC.

There is a celebration of ubuntu as a ‘gift to share with the world, … that essence of being human in which my humanity is caught up in your humanity, where a person is a person through other persons because we are made for family, for togetherness, for friendship, for harmony, for sharing, for generosity and hospitality’ (Tutu as quoted by Maluleke 1997:325). Petersen (1996:63) calls ubuntu ‘an essential element in the politics of grace’.
Marx (2002:53) warns that the use of *ubuntu* in the nation building rhetoric ‘emerges as a formula that at one and the same time excludes and includes, integrates and rejects. On the goal of unity and harmony, the practice of exclusion and separation follows inevitably, because identity can only be established through difference’. From its ‘mandate from the concepts of Ubuntu and Africanism, the government is able to interpret any criticism of its actions as evidence of its critics’ own limitations’ (Marx 2002:54). In his article Marx (2002) continues then to draw parallels between Afrikaner nationalism and Africanism and the use of ubuntu in the nation building discourses. In the heydays of Afrikaner nationalism, the individual’s salvation and fulfilment was linked to his or her integration into the nation, in his or her self-denial as individual (Marx 2002:56).

Outside the community and the communication with other human beings the human being is not really human. Because he is a social being by nature he [sic] is and becomes truly human only within human community. … The human being is not just a social being; he is also a national being (Nicholas Diederichs (1930) as quoted by Marx 2002:57).

With the inauguration of the Voortrekker Monument Dr D.F. Malan called the Afrikaner the ‘greatest work of art by the Architect of all centuries’ (Bunting 1969). In similar vein did Tutu in 1988 invoke God as the One who commissioned the struggle – ‘our marching orders come from Christ Himself and not from any human being. Our mandate is provided by the Bible and the teachings of the church, not by any political group or ideology, Marxist or otherwise’ (as quoted by Marx 2002:58).

From this perspective, nation building is not simply an exercise that corresponds with the will of God. Nation building becomes instead a project embarked upon *according* to God’s will… . … the fundamentalist right to resistance becomes the commandment to reconciliation in the higher interest of nation building (italics in the original).

Ubuntu therefore ‘becomes the guiding star of nation building’ (Marx 2002:58-59). In stark contrast to the community aspect of *ubuntu*, Marx then points to the stark rise in xenophobia at the same time as the ‘triumphalist nationalism of the post-
apartheid era’. Critics of the new regime criticised ubuntu. ‘Ubuntu is an invented tradition, whose task it is to minimise historical chasms and fractures’ (Marx 2002:59). Ubuntu is furthermore used to contrast societies in Africa with the individualised ‘West’.

The discourse on ubuntu in the context of nation building is one that needs critical debate and deconstruction. It would seem as if ubuntu is part of a campaign to romanticise an ‘idealised, ahistorical, pre-colonial Africa’ (Marx 2002:60). Marx points to the fact that not one traditional Chief appeared before the TRC (2002:63) and postulates then that the ‘function of the Chief is removed form all historical contexts and treated as if it were part of a timeless culture. … The message is clear: whoever resists the power of the Chiefs is a traitor to his own culture, i.e. to the nation’ (Marx 2002:63).

Ubuntu in the wider discourse on nation building and the African renaissance should therefore be carefully used. Ubuntu as the ‘light’ that Africa (as if it is a uniform entity) can bring to the world may actually reproduce many of the colonialist assumptions, evoking an image of chimerical uniformity rather than treating the cultural diversity of Africans as an asset (Marx 2002:65).

There has yet to be an ethnographic and/or anthropological study providing a clear picture of ubuntu as Marcel Mauss did with his ethnographic study of reciprocal giving (1990). Most of the accounts dealing with ubuntu are examples of romanticised notions of life on the African continent before colonisation (or as a result of it e.g. the work of Charles, 1995, and Brantlinger, 1985). This does however not preclude the possibility that the term and concept of ubuntu to be given a new ideological content and praxis89. To what extent ubuntu as concept can provide an effective alternative to what McLaren calls ‘traumatised capitalism’ (1994:1), and De Jongh and Prinsloo (2005:5) call ‘rampant’ and ‘triumphant’ capitalism; and broader context of the ‘re-enchantment of consumption’ (Firat & Venkatesh 1995:251) still needs to be seen.

89 For a critical exploration of semantic shifts in the term ubuntu and its implications for the current use of the term see Coertze (2001).
Ubuntu, as it is currently used by politicians and educational policies should however be deconstructed and critically interrogated before it can be part of the strategy to create new taxonomies of democracy, memories and forgetting. This brings us to Glimpse 9.

Glimpse 9: New taxonomies of victims and perpetrators, beneficiaries and those left behind
Taxonomies of citizenship in the public domain are often the results of comments from politicians, public figures but also the result of determined strategies of the dominant discourses. A recent example of how terms and concepts are introduced and used is the reference to the existence of ‘two nations’ by Mbeki in 1998 (Nattrass & Seekings 2001). Mbeki attempted to describe the continued existence of inequality in South Africa and referred to two nations, the one white and rich and the other black and poor. As Nattrass and Seekings indicate (2001:47) rich and poor are no longer synonymous with black and white. They propose three broad classes, not two racially defined nations: an increasingly multiracial upper class, comprising not just high-profile corporate figures but much more broadly the professional, managerial, and business classes; a ‘middle’ class of mostly urban, employed workers; and a marginalised class of outsiders, comprising many of the unemployed as well as workers in agricultural and domestic employment (Nattrass & Seekings 2001:66).

More than ten years into the new democracy, taxonomies of who you are and who you were during the apartheid years continue to impact on the public discourse. Immediately following 1994 all race classification were abandoned, but then later re-introduced (Kahn 2004). Through various pieces of legislation Affirmative Action and Employment Equity sanction the classification of people according to their status as ‘previously disadvantaged people’ (PDP). There are also debates on who may consider him or herself an ‘African’ and recently Roberts (2006) has categorised South Africans according to their ‘native
intelligence’ (Robinson 2007:3). But taxonomies are nothing new to South Africa. As Maluleke (2001:193) stated ‘apartheid was the great simplification of a rather complex society’. The ‘simple’ classification of your race determined where you could live, till how late you could be in which parts of town, the curriculum you were taught and the options you had after Matriculation (if you got so far). South African society will for many years to come be shaped by the specific taxonomies of victims and perpetrators as used by the TRC.

The TRC not only institutionalised certain terms and concepts but also contributed to the emergence of taxonomies of transformation. Borer (2003) for example, speaks of ‘a taxonomy of victims and perpetrators’. But the taxonomies include not only categories of role-players in the apartheid years it also gives existence to categories of ‘being’ in the new South Africa. Marx (2002:53) points to the fact that victims’ openness to forgive their perpetrators was proclaimed and perceived as ‘a self-evident product of their Ubuntu’. He warns however, that ‘within this process, the victims, because of their moral superiority, became representative of the “Nation”, and were consequently “anonymised” once again’. On the other hand, deficits ‘in the present order are thus ethnicised, and attributed to Western individualism by nearly all authors writing on Ubuntu’ (Marx 2002:53).

In her thorough exposition of the taxonomy of victims and perpetrators, Borer (2003) states that we often talk of these categories as if they are on the one hand homogenous and secondly, as if these categories are mutually exclusive. She expresses her discomfort with the way these categories were used by the TRC (2003:1089) and states that ‘the reality on the ground is rather more complicated and much less clear, and that a fair amount of “muddying the waters” is warranted’.

Borer (2003:1092) reports that the terms ‘victim’ and ‘perpetrator’ were ‘neither nuanced nor contextual’. This resulted in the ANC (for example) being identified as a ‘perpetrator’ in the final report. The report simply states ‘the ANC and its organs… committed gross violations of human rights in the course of their

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For a detailed discussion on the taxonomies of victim and perpetrator see Borer (2003).
political activities and armed struggles, for which they are morally and politically accountable’ (TRC Final Report 5, 239 as quoted by Borer 2003:1093). The ANC disagreed and was angry that ‘the TRC was not properly distinguishing between the morality of the violence perpetrated by the state versus that perpetrated by those fighting against the state’ (Borer 2003:1093; italics mine)91.

Borer (2003:1094) continues to show that not only did the ANC find their classification as ‘perpetrator’ offensive but Mbeki also rejected the term ‘victims’ to be used for those who died and suffered during the struggle. As quoted by Borer (2003:1094) Mbeki said ‘Our fighters were liberation heroes. Do not demean them by calling them victims’ (italics in the original).

Borer (2003:1095) continues in a poignant way to show how this classification of ‘victim’ and ‘perpetrator’ disrupted expectations. She describes how ‘perpetrators became heroes’ referring to those who fought against apartheid and were considered by the then government to be criminals; ‘heroes who became perpetrators’ describing the position of those in the security forces and police forces who fought against the struggle and were often hailed as heroes. In the eyes of the new dispensation they were now ‘perpetrators’, their deeds criminalised. Borer (2003:1096) furthermore shows that not only did the heroes change into criminals, but they were suddenly also blamed in public for killing not only terrorists and insurgents, but ‘heroes’, and ‘innocent civilians’92.

Borer (2003:1096) continues by pointing to a further classification namely those ‘perpetrators who were victims’ referring to the ‘phenomenon of innocent informers’. The TRC ‘became aware that one of the most destructive legacies of apartheid was the labelling of sometimes innocent people as “informers” or

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91 Though the ANC objected that the gross violations done in the name of the struggle differed from those committed by the apartheid regime, the TRC held that ‘Just war does not legitimate the perpetration of gross violations of human rights in pursuit of a just end’ (TRC Final Report 5, at 210 as quoted by Borer 2003:1094). As Marx (2002:58) pointed out, the struggle (and whatever violence it used) was somehow in obedience to God and therefore above reproach.

92 Krog (1997:10) refers to this trauma of changing from heroes into villains to be overwhelming and numbing.
“collaborators”. The TRC heard how these informers and often their families were ‘killed, assaulted, harassed and ostracised as a result of their stigmatisation’ (Borer 2003:1096-1097). Borer (2003:1097) also documents the fact that many “victims” did not come forward because they could not identify with being a ‘victim’ but considered themselves ‘heroes’.

In concluding her comprehensive overview of the taxonomy used by the TRC, Borer refers to the position of Mandani (referred to by Borer 2003:1112) who suggests a further category namely ‘beneficiaries’. This category includes all those who, while never engaging in direct perpetration, turned ‘a blind eye to a system which impoverished, oppressed and violated the lives and very existence of so many of their fellow citizens’ (quoted by Borer 2003:1112). While Mandani categorises the majority of whites under being ‘beneficiaries’, she also warns that because of ‘gross systemic outcomes like those of pass laws and forced removals, abuses which racialised both poverty and affluence’ should be taken seriously in any nation building strategy (Borer 2003:1113). Which brings us to the question do we need taxonomies for dealing with the past? Does it make the task of redressing the inequities of the past easier to be able to ‘identify’ the category of the person or his or her community? As Borer (2003:1115) says ‘Are there hierarchies of pain and responsibility?

On the one hand we do need a vocabulary to deal with and confront the ‘banality of evil’ (Arendt 1994), in whatever category we would place ourselves. This will require more than just the need to ‘forge a vocabulary of peace and reconciliation’ as proposed by Gobodo-Madikizela (2002:20). South Africa needs

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93 It falls outside the scope of this study to discuss in detail Borer’s further classification of the categories of ‘victims’ and ‘perpetrators’ (2003:1101-1109). Suffice to indicate that she distinguishes further between direct and indirect perpetrators, individual and group perpetrators and ‘perpetrators by default’. This last category is described as those who failed to oppose the injustice around them (2003:1104). In trying to provide a nuanced interpretation of these categories of perpetrators and victims, Borer reports that the TRC tried to distinguish between ‘degrees of accountability’ ranging from ‘bystander complicity’, ‘politically and morally accountable’, ‘guilty through apathy’ and ‘directly accountable’ (2003:1107).
vocabulary to describe the indescribable, the unmentionable, and the horror that lurks inside each one of us. Educational policy is an important vehicle in not only creating new taxonomies, but also critically evaluating past and current taxonomies, whether describing race, position during the struggle or religious denomination.

4.4.3 Implications for the role of education post-TRC

There is a real expectation that education should and could provide new possibilities and taxonomies that could contribute to preventing the atrocities of apartheid from happening again. These new taxonomies should also ‘contribute to citizenship and democracy education through more than formal education’ (Enslin 2003:80). As Enslin documents (2003:80) the South African Schools Act of 1996 confirmed the ‘participatory notion of citizenship’ by providing for democratic governance of schools, with representatives from learners and parents playing crucial roles.

Before continuing our journey, let us just briefly recap our journey so far. The following Figure (Figure 4.5) illustrates what we have explored up to now and what lies in store for us.

Figure 4.5: Locating ourselves in Chapter 4
I have, so far, attempted to identify some of the tectonic layers of the Policy. Among the tectonic layers of the Policy, I postulate that the TRC was a major event which shaped and still will continue to shape educational policy in years to come. The TRC was the first major public event to deal with South Africa’s past – not only what we remember, but how these memories shape our future.

4.5 PREPARATION FOR THE FIRST CURRICULUM MOMENT – CLEANSING OF THE CURRICULUM

In August 1994, following the first democratic elections in South Africa the Minister of Education, Sibusiso Bengu, undertook the first direct intervention to impact on education in a post-apartheid South Africa. A series of advertisements were placed in newspapers inviting public inputs on possible changes in the school curriculum. As Jansen (1999:57) states in his account of this intervention, the intention was to ‘purge the apartheid curriculum of its most offensive racial content and outdated, inadequate subject matter’.

Henrard (2002:18) states that after the TRC, whatever its successes and failures, there was a strong agreement that everything possible should be done to create a society in which the ‘chance of occurrence of the kinds of gross violations of human rights that occurred in the past are reduced to the minimum’. Although there are many accounts of the processes that resulted in Curriculum 2005 and its Review (e.g. Chisholm 2005a; Jansen 2004), there are not many accounts of the events shaping the educational discourse in the period immediately following the first democratic elections. Jansen (1999:57) provides an insightful overview of the period stating that the syllabus alterations that followed ‘reflected, and deepened, a crisis within the state that had little to do with changing the school curriculum and much more to do with the politics of transition since South Africa’s first non-racial democratic elections in April 1994’. As Weiler (1990:16) puts it:

The emphasis of many curriculum reforms on the symbolism of change and innovation and on legalisation, expertise, and participation reflects the concerns of decision-makers over the legitimacy of the decision process,
and is designed to contribute, in a compensatory fashion, to the restoration of that legitimacy.

Weiler discusses the different influences of the work of Max Weber (1978), Jürgen Habermas (1975) and Offe (1976) on the state’s need (whether perceived or real) for legitimation (1990:16).

In other words: the precariousness (real or perceived, latent or actual) of the state’s legitimacy is likely to lead the maker of policies to a decision mode which is determined not only by the overt objectives of the policy…, but also by the policy’s suitability as a means of restoring the state’s legitimacy more generally – independent of, or in addition to, any specific policy outcomes (Weiler 1990:17).

The need for legitimation ‘should lead the analysis of policy to pay greater attention to the modalities (as distinct from the substance) of policies and to the nature of the policy process…’ (Weiler 1990:17). The need for legitimation as an important factor in the process and formulation of policies becomes even more important when the policies in question deal with curriculum reform. Weiler (1990:17) writes ‘In a very real sense, curricula…are the most tangible codification of the objectives a society wants to reach through its educational system, and of the skills and values it wishes to instil in future generations through its schools’.

Weiler (1990:18) then quotes the work of Kirst and Walker (1971), ‘The determination of the public school curriculum is not just influenced by political events; it is a political process in important ways’. Weiler (1990:19-23) lists a number of elements, which are characteristic to ‘curriculum reform as compensatory legitimation’. These are

- *The invocation of legal norms*: ‘statutorisation’ and ‘parliamentarisation’. Weiler (1990:21) states that ‘Where sensitive matters such as curricular objectives are concerned, the Court sees policy decisions as being in need of particularly high levels of legitimation – levels which require, at a minimum, the statutory authority of duly elected legislatures’.
• The utilisation of expertise: planning and evaluation. Weiler discusses the need for a ‘comprehensiveness and orderliness of the approach and the transparency and rationality of the process’ (Weiler 1990:22).

• The discourse of participation. Where curricula were ‘developed and decreed by administrative authority and bureaucratic fiat’ in the past, participation by teachers, students and parents play a role alongside the ‘intra-administrative or extra-administrative experts’ (Weiler 1990:22). Weiler (1990:22) writes, ‘It is this notion of ‘legitimation by procedure’ that opens the theoretical door to a variety of participatory arrangements in the making of curricular decisions’.

Jansen (1990a) explores the applicability of ‘curriculum reform as compensatory legitimation’ in post-colonial states/developing nations. Jansen (1990a:30) refers to a paper by Weiler and Gonzalez (1982) which found an additional (to the previously mentioned three aspects) instrument at work in educational reform as legitimation in the Philippines and in Tanzania, namely what they have called ‘external legitimation’ referring to ‘policy strategies which mobilise certain participants in the international system in order to bolster the legitimacy of the state in a given society’ (as quoted by Jansen 1990a:30).\footnote{In discussing curriculum reform in the context of post-colonial Zimbabwe, Jansen found the discourse of participation (as used by Weiler 1990) to take on a different format in Zimbabwe. ‘Centralised curriculum planning in Zimbabwe, on the other hand, assumes that the new state is representative, a perception gained as a result of the successful revolutionary struggle…’ (1990a:31; Italics in the original).}

Curriculum reform as compensatory legitimation as explored by Jansen (1990a) points to the possible paradox of the new state’s need for legitimation (with the blessing of an international community), but also between what Jansen (1990a:31) calls ‘socialist policy and social practice’. Here the new state is confronted with ‘inherited structural conditions, ethnic rivalry, international capitalism and regional conflict as conditions undermining socialist practice’ (Jansen 1990a:31-32). The paradox that arises from ‘unaltered material conditions’ and socialist ideals results in what Ake (1985, as referred to in Jansen 1990a:30).
1990a:32) calls ‘defensive radicalism’. In summarising his exploration of Zimbabwe curriculum reform as ‘compensatory legitimation’ Jansen (1990a:32) concludes that both ‘the notions of “external legitimation”; and “policy as defensive radicalism” are powerful constructs within third world settings’.

In exploring South African school curriculum since apartheid, Jansen (1999a) confirms the notion that all curricula are ideologically laden and politically motivated (see also Petrina 2004). Jansen (1999:57) points furthermore to the symbolic values that change in school curriculum hold in ‘transition societies’.

In this framework [of transition societies], curriculum reform is not primarily concerned with what it claims – learning objectives, content to be covered, teaching strategies, assessment procedures, and so forth – but with addressing political constraints, conflicts and compromises in and around the state (Jansen 1999:58).

Education was very much part and parcel not only of apartheid policies and legislation, but also in the struggle against apartheid and the violence that erupted in service of the struggle and different oppositional forces, whether factional, ethnically related or a complex mixture of elements in the heady days of the struggle (Ntshoe 2002:62). Ntshoe (2002:62) states that the ‘numerous student protests in the 1970s and 1980s were followed by an alternative education system called “People’s Education for People’s Power” which generated debate and challenged the apartheid regime’. While apartheid used the education system to ‘indoctrinate and subordinate the African “natives” [into] servants of the colonial system’ (Ntshoe 2002:63), the forces opposing apartheid were using schools, teacher colleges and universities as localities of opposition and protest.

During the 1970s and 80s education became the center of political struggle in South Africa when fierce and often violent anti-apartheid protests were held in school throughout South Africa. ‘Liberation before Education’ was the protest mantra that became the battle call throughout South Africa (Ntshoe 2002:64).

95 For a full discussion on ‘defensive radicalism’ in the context of Zimbabwe education, see Jansen (1990).
While Ntshoe (2002:63) refers to the fact that apartheid created ‘a taxonomy of racial classifications’, I suspect that the struggle created its own taxonomies and epistemologies. Ntshoe (2002: 64) refers to the ‘culture of violence that arose in schools as part of the resistance movement carried over into the learning climate and the way schooling was viewed’. These taxonomies, epistemologies and ‘culture of violence’ were not shelved after the democratic elections of 1994. These taxonomies and epistemologies influenced the debates immediately following 1994 as well as impacted on the processes, drafts and final Policy96.

Jansen (1999:58) traces the call for public input into the school syllabus in an initiative that was already launched in 1992 with The National Education and Training Forum (NETF) and its sub-committee, the Curriculum Technical Sub-Committee (CTSC). The CTSC chaired by Mary Metcalfe proposed ‘short-term syllabus revisions as one means for intervening in the education crisis’ (Jansen 1999:59). This initiative ‘lasted into the post-election period’ and under the direction of the Minister proposed ‘essential changes to syllabuses as quickly as possible [which] should not make it necessary to introduce new textbooks’ (Jansen 1999:60 quoting the Daily News 4 August 1994). Jansen (1999:60–63) continues to explore the political reasons for this haste and its consequences. One of the consequences Jansen (1999:61) reports on is the role the ‘powerful lobby of the white education constituency … and through political parties [which will] press for the status quo as it affected all education matters, including curriculum.’

As would become characteristic of the public outcry around the Review of Curriculum 2005, the proposal to take out ‘The Creator Clause’ created uproar. The clause was referred to in the science syllabuses which declared as objective

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96 Taking into account the role education played in Apartheid as well as in the struggle against Apartheid, it comes as no surprise that Jansen (1999:58) refers to the fact that the state ‘was increasingly vulnerable in its most volatile sector, namely education, during the immediate post-election period’.
(as quoted by Jansen 1999:62) – ‘that the child become aware of the majesty of creation through his [sic] acquaintance with the wonder and order of Creation … in this way develop a sense of awe and reverence of the Creator’.

The removal of the clause was directly in opposition to the thrust of CNE prior to 1994. Although the removal of the clause would not, according to Jansen (1999:62) have affected what was anyway taught in science classrooms, and was mainly ‘symbolic’, no consensus could be reached on the matter. The debate surrounding the removal of ‘The Creator Clause’ seems to point to the fact that what seems to be a (mere) ‘symbolic change’, represents for others (inter alia the Christian Right) a fundamental move away from the confessional curriculum as it was embodied in CNE.

Jansen (1999:63) summarises the consequences of these superficial and circumvent changes to the syllabi by stating ‘The more serious consequences of the process are political in nature. The process procured short-term political legitimacy for a crippled Ministry without having to demonstrate the need for substantial change’. The process furthermore

…set in place, and consolidated, a pattern of curriculum change which is context-blind, i.e. de-linked from the dynamics and complexities of school and classroom contexts, teacher development and support, systematic assessment reform, genuine grassroots participation and textbook development (Jansen 1999:64).

Most disturbingly the ‘process has generated a public understanding that minimalist revisions to school subjects are both acceptable and workable’ (Jansen 1999:64). Almost in mitigation, Jansen (1999:64-65) explores several aspects that influenced this process. He mentions the fact that these changes were initiated within the context of ‘the constitutional and bureaucratic constraints of political transition under a Government of National Unity’; the vulnerable and weak leadership of the Ministry; the pressure of civic and political forces that resulted in these changes (or lack thereof), and lastly the fact that the revision process ‘was made possible by a weak political challenge from the educational
community on the educational terms of this project’ (Jansen 1999:65; italics in the original). At this stage, Jansen (1999:65) concludes that the ‘the proverbial “balance of forces” was firmly entrenched in favour of the apartheid curriculum and its settled bureaucrats’.

4.6 THE FIRST CURRICULUM MOMENT – CURRICULUM 2005

Soudien and Baxen (1997:449) sketch the daunting background of the process to formulate a new curriculum in 1997 as follows:

During apartheid, education was used not only to achieve social separation but, insofar as it was built around a social philosophy, it was also the legitimating arena for White supremacy and for the complex system of racial and cultural ordering that evolved around it. Within the old order’s traditional educational institutions, the hidden and explicit curricula were configured to produce, reproduce, and validate racial separation and hierarchy. Presumptions of European superiority and African inferiority within this canon were commonplace – indeed, they were established as modern truths about human process and development. These truths provided the ideological foundation upon which apartheid education was built.

The first ‘curriculum moment’ according to Jansen (2004:59) was immediately following the elections of 1994. The values guiding the curriculum post-1994 were ‘non-racism, non-sexism, democracy, equity and redress’ (Jansen 2004:59; italics in the original). He continues to state that these values...

...were not really put into operation in curriculum terms, for there was no curriculum. Instead there was a set of broad policy options that would guide decision-making once a new government took power. These values were, if anything, signals or symbols of change that were not at all contested for they floated free of the public school curriculum and were not translated into the kind of ‘content’ that would redefine the substance of teaching and learning in South African schools (2004:59).

Jansen refers to the White Paper on Education and Training (1995:22) which required ‘...the active encouragement of mutual respect for our people’s diverse religious, cultural and language traditions, their right to enjoy and practice these in peace and without hindrance, and the recognition that these are a source of
strength for their own communities and the unity of the nation’. Greenstein observes (rightly so in the opinion of Jansen 2004:59) that ‘...the authors of the document chose not to enter this difficult and problematic area for fear of alienating one constituency or another and disrupting the cosy existence provided by the framework of “national unit”…’ (1997:132).

Jansen (2004:59) defines the first curriculum moment as the introduction of Curriculum 2005 and Outcomes-based education (OBE). The criticism against Curriculum 2005 had ‘very little to do with the content of the new curriculum and much more to do with its technical implementation and effects in the classroom’ (Jansen 2004:60). As Soudien and Baxen (1997:450) state ‘...those calling for a new national curriculum … sought to almost entirely re-imagine the architecture of the country’s learning apparatus at every level of its operation, from the formal to the most informal areas of education’.

OBE as an appropriate ‘vehicle’ to achieve such a total re-imagination of the eduscape was heralded by local as well as international proponents of OBE. They claimed that OBE has the capacity to meet the needs of all students regardless of their race, their background, their culture, and prior experiences (or lack thereof) in education (Soudien & Baxen 1997:450). The historical roots of OBE have been well-explored and documented (e.g. Jansen 1997, 2004; Soudien & Baxen 1997)97.

While Jansen (1997) very specifically criticises OBE’s chances of success due to mostly its hasty introduction without sufficient training and without seriously considering the state of teaching and schools in South Africa, other authors like Soudien and Baxen’s (1997:449) question not only who was ‘spearheading and

97 For Jansen’s opinion regarding why he believes OBE will fail, see Jansen (1997). Jansen (1997) closes his critical analysis of OBE with the statement:
Not a single official interviewed in the Department of National Education believed that OBE should be introduced so soon, yet they all work feverishly toward implementation at all costs in 1998. There is no other way of understanding such behaviour outside of a political analysis of state and curriculum in the South African transition.
managing the reform process and how’, but also ‘…what philosophical and pedagogical truths are being established in this process; what identity-producing mechanisms are at work; and what notions of a South African identity are being shaped as a result?’

Soudien and Baxen (1997:452) state that the processes resulting in the adoption of OBE as well as the curriculum framework and content, were not ‘entirely innocent’. This is not to suggest the existence of any conspiracy theories but to state the obvious that any curriculum process and framework flows from very specific political, cultural and socioeconomic hierarchies and structures and either replaces these with others, or perpetuates their existence (Prinsloo 2007). As Weiler (1990) and Jansen (1990a) indicate, the discourse of participation in the ‘curriculum as legitimation’ were formulated by the new government and included and excluded as the new regime saw fit. As stated by Soudien and Baxen (1997:453), ‘The strong hand of the formal bureaucracy in the crafting of educational reform and its content has been evident from the very beginning of the reform process. The entrenched South African educational bureaucracy not only facilitated the process, but also managed and conceptualised it’.

From the criticisms as expressed by Jansen (1990a, 1997) and others (like Soudien & Baxen, 1997) it would seem as if Curriculum 2005 did not take seriously the ‘complex manifestations of difference and inequality and therefore of equality and equity’ (Soudien & Baxen 1997:457). It would seem as if in the aftermath of the ‘failed’ impact of the TRC to really deal with trauma and need for justice, Curriculum 2005 was a hasty attempt in nation-building.

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98 Soudien and Baxen (1997:453) furthermore refer to the role played by international forces like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund and international education experts proposing specific OBE models, like the Scottish model. Soudien and Baxen (1997:457) also express their concern about the role and impact of ‘longstanding, White-dominated “old-boy” or “old-girl” networks of the apartheid era’. This results in questions about the ownership of the reform process and the perception that the process was hijacked by ‘an elite group of experts funded by government authorities’ (Soudien & Baxen 1997:457).
4.7 CONCLUSION

I started this chapter with a quotation from Booth (1999:259):

Forgetting and memory both seem vital to our common life, and it is equally possible that we may have too much of either. An excess of forgetting would turn us into leaves to be scattered by the winds, mere neighbours passing one another by in little more than a community of interests. Too much memory would be lead in our wings, denying us a future and closing off the possibility of openness to others who are not part of our community of memory.

In exploring the new South Africa as a community of memory and forgetting, this chapter revealed some of the ‘tectonic layers of our lives [which] rest so tightly against earlier events in later ones, not as matter that has been fully formed and pushed aside, but absolutely present and alive’ (Booth 1999:260). The purpose for exploring these tectonic layers (some of which are still ‘present and alive’ was to understand, not to judge. In Chapter 8 I will attempt a critical evaluation of the Policy against the background of these tectonic layers. I will evaluate the Policy as a response to these layers and as a sedimentation of discourses of legitimation and in a sense as a monument to a specific vision of citizenship.

Curriculum 2005 was an introduction to new possibilities, new taxonomies and new ontologies. Curriculum 2005 heralded the discourse on values in education which resulted in the Policy. In the chapter to follow, Chapter 5, we will explore the values movement and the processes, debates and discourses that resulted in the final Policy.
CHAPTER 5
THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE POLICY

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 4 we started a socio-historical overview of different processes and watershed moments that resulted or impacted in one way or another on the processes, content and discourses surrounding the Policy. Chapter 4 also explored the archaeology of various ideologies from the perspective of ‘memory and forgetting’. In this chapter we will explore the apparent move away from memory and forgetting, to imagining a new South Africa based on the values embedded in the Constitution.

In this chapter we will explore ‘conflicting notions of social membership’ (Ramphele 2001:6) in different events and processes that were aimed at arriving at a shared understanding of citizenship in the South African context. The ‘tectonic layers’ explored in Chapter 4 still influenced these events and processes but the impetus shifted towards re-visioning citizenship. Examples in the international domain of countries re-envisioning notions of citizenship as societies-in-transition include the debates in Germany after the Holocaust and after unification (as explored in Chapter 1) as well as the debates in Eastern Europe before and after 1989 (Esbenshade 1995).

Esbenshade (1995) describes various attempts of re-visioning democracy and citizenship in a context permeated by memories and ‘counter-memories’, ‘counter-narratives’ and name-changes as new regimes tried to ‘lobotomise’ memory in Prague in 1989 (Esbenshade 1995:73-74). Eastern Europe in 1989 witnessed ‘the seeming triumph of memory-as-resistance, the long struggle vindicated by official reburials; impromptu shrines; and the resuscitation of banned works, taboo issues, and blacklisted individuals’ (Esbenshade 1995:75). As ‘the state falsified history and manipulated collective memory’, individuals and

In this chapter I will provide an overview of the processes and the discourses that resulted in and accompanied the processes surrounding the Policy. I will identify the different voices and claims of different stakeholders in this process against the background of constant tension between memory and forgetting, between the past and the future. I propose that the Policy should be understood against various legitimising processes of the newly elected government. To assist in our understanding of the Policy-as-response, I will locate the Policy within a framework of an analysis of the state as constitutional, cultural, transformational and symbolic. I will then continue to outline the process that resulted in the Policy. I will close this chapter by identifying some patterns and trends that may assist us in firstly understanding the Policy-as-compromise and secondly, providing a heuristic framework for a critical evaluation of the Policy in Chapter 8.

5.2 LOCATING THE POLICY

The background and processes resulting in the Policy have been well-documented (e.g. Chidester 2003; Roux 2000; Walsh & Kaufmann 1999). Halevi (2002) analyses the transformation to a democratic state and refers to the possibility and reality that the new dispensation had to accommodate ‘competing narratives’. It would seem therefore necessary to analyse the Policy as a compromised response to competing narratives. The Constitution on the one hand celebrates diversity and encourages pride in culture and religion but also protects individuals and communities from coercion and discrimination. The Constitution (and the Policy) in more than one sense are ‘accommodating competing narratives’ (Halevi 2002).
The following has (so far) transpired as discourses or patterns surrounding the development of the Policy:

- The competing narratives, the compromises and negotiated settlements preceding the 1994 elections as well as the acceptance of the Constitution.
- The role education played in the previous dispensation as well as its envisaged role in realizing the re-imagination of South Africa.
- Educational reform as compensatory legitimation as described by Weiler (1990) and the “invocation of legal norms: ‘statutorisation’ and ‘parliamentarisation’, ‘utilisation of expertise: planning an evaluation’ and the ‘discourse of participation’ (Weiler 1990:20-23)
- Educational reform as symbolic process and action (Chisholm 2005a; Jansen 1999).

Chidester (2006) locates the Policy within an exploration of three ‘gestalts’ of the state, namely the state as constitutional, cultural and transformational state. As the three “curriculum moments” proposed by Jansen (1990a) assisted us to navigate through the multiplicity of layers and developments pre- and post 1994, I will use these three characteristics of the state as proposed by Chidester (2006) as hermeneutical framework to locate the processes and development of the Policy.

In his analysis of the processes and debates surrounding the formulation of the Policy, Chidester (2006) points to the fact that all of the discussions were based on interpretations of the new Constitution. Where debates in the past surrounding the relationship between religion and education mostly relied on the different confessional documents of the respective religions, now the debates claimed legitimacy on the basis of the Constitution (Chidester 2006:63). As Chidester (2006) and others (e.g. Sachs 1993) state, the Constitution was ‘the product of a negotiated revolution’ (Chidester 2006:63) and a document accommodating
competing narratives and claims (Halevi 2002). Chidester (2006:63-64) comments on three features of the Policy namely

- ‘the role of religion in public education had to be clarified in terms of the provisions, but also in the light of the values, enshrined in the Constitution’;
- the Constitution itself was explicitly founded on certain values. This tension between the commitment to a culture of human-rights and the commitment to promote and protect cultural rights has required the South African state to be both a constitutional and a cultural state;
- ‘its engagement with the long, difficult, and contested process of transformation from apartheid oppression to [a] democratic dispensation’.

Chidester (2006:64) locates the processes resulting in the Policy as well as its content in the discourses of ‘state-hood’ stating ‘Becoming a nation just when nations were supposedly going out of style, as national sovereignty was allegedly being swept away by global market forces, the new South Africa was faced with crucial dilemmas of nation building and social cohesion’99. He succinctly states (2006:64) that the Policy was much more than a ‘public-relations exercise in building a new nation as an imagined community’. The Policy should not only be understood as only about nation building but also ‘about state-making’. In order to understand the processes surrounding and resulting in the Policy it is important to locate the Policy against the broader discourses of the new democratic state as constitutional, cultural and transformational (Chidester 2006). After discussing these three locations as proposed by Chidester (2006), I will add and discuss a fourth state, namely the ‘symbolic’ state (following Jansen 2004). The following figure (Figure 5.1) illustrates this location of the Policy.

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99 For a discussion on the changing role and gestalts of nation-states see Chapter 1.
The apartheid government since 1948 saw itself as a ‘Christian state’. A specific version of the Christian religion ‘was drawn into reinforcing racist legislation and segregation on the basis of racial, ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and religious signs of difference’ (Chidester 2006:65). It is significant that in the processes and debates resulting in and surrounding the Policy, the Constitution and its interpretation by various stakeholders played a crucial role. Chidester (2006:68) writes that in ‘less than 10 years [of democracy], the provisions and protections of the new Constitution provided the framework for adjudicating religious interests within a secular state’ (Chidester 2006:68). Chidester (2006:70) also comments on the fact that ‘even those who rejected the policy accepted the Constitution’100. Chidester (2006:78) summarises that while the supremacy of the Constitution, as the rule of law, became established in South Africa within a remarkably short period of time, the cultural and transformational politics of the country have persisted in exposing the tensions between the many and the one, between the old and the new, in an emerging nation.

100 The Policy has (up to now) not been challenged in the Constitutional Court.
As I will explore later in this chapter, both supporters of and opponents to the Policy called on the Constitution for their support. The Constitution and its embedded values were used as interpretive framework for various strategies and processes of the new government to re-imagine citizenship. As explored in Chapter 1, the Constitution and its values and principles is also the foundation for the shaping of a unique South African constitutional patriotism.

5.2.1 The cultural state

The crux of the competing narratives in a post-apartheid society is to be found in the national motto !KeE.IXarra (Unity in Diversity). There is on the one hand a commitment to promote a profound appreciation for diversity and different forms of being South African, and on the other hand there are distinct strategies and interventions to promote a ‘one-ness’.

Chidester (2006:70-774) points to the role the ‘cultural state’ played in the processes leading up to the Policy as well as in the content of the Policy. ‘Essentially, the policy was a cultural project about culture, seeking to create an attitude of informed respect for the many religious cultures of South Africa’ (Chidester 2006:71). Chidester refers to many instances where the South African government ‘intervened directly in the arena of culture, and a human-rights culture – while seeking to draw support from people of all the many cultures in the country’ (2006:71). Exploring the cultural character of the Policy, Chidester (2006:71) discusses for example the unique differences between affording equity on the national broadcaster and the equity afforded to different religions in the Policy. He refers to the fact that equity in the broadcasting domain implied that 70 percent of religious broadcasting was to be Christian. While the Policy allowed equal access by all religious affiliations after school hours, the official curriculum treated all religions as equal. Chidester (2006:72) refers to several of the state’s cultural initiatives leveraging concepts such as ubuntu, the ‘rainbow nation’ and

\footnote{For a discussion of these instances, see Chidester (2006).}
the 'African Renaissance', as well as revisiting public holidays, commissioning new monuments, emblems, and a variety of other visual and symbolic elements\textsuperscript{102}.

The new cultural state also allowed for a resurgence of ethnic and cultural pride and claims of entitlement (see Wilmsen & McAllister 1996), as well as strategies to contribute to feelings of ‘oneness’, where individual and group differences do not matter. I will return to the issue of public holidays, emblems, name changes, and so forth under discussion of the ‘symbolic state’.

5.2.3 The transformational state

The new Constitution had also mandated a politics and poetics of transformation – a politics based on the progressive realisation of socio-economic rights and a poetics of memory and imagination, remembering the inequities of the past, redressing them in the present, and ensuring that they would never happen in the future (Chidester 2006:74).

According to Chidester (2006), the state’s commitment to deal with the past and to protect and structure a society based on human-rights, characterises the state as a ‘transformational state’. Chidester (2006:74) refers to a statement made by Constitutional Court Justice Kate O’ Regan that the Constitution ‘…compels transformation. The Constitution recognizes that for its vision to be attained, the deep patterns of inequality that scar our society, and that are the legacies of apartheid and colonialism, need to be addressed urgently’.

Among the initiatives that Chidester (2006) describes are the ‘Moral summit’ in 1998, the Values in Education initiative (2000), the Moral Regeneration Movement (MRM) launched in April 2002 as well as Freedom Park. Chidester (2006:75-76) refers to Freedom Park in religious terms – as a ‘sacred site’, a ‘ritualised bridge from the cultural nationalism of the old regime to the cultural

\textsuperscript{102} The different strategies of the newly elected government resemble the critical discussion of Esbenshade (1995) of the cultural domain in new states as the battleground for memory and forgetting, for new identities and lobotomising unwanted memories.
nationalism of the new government’, ‘a heritage site for pilgrimage’, and a site for ‘purification rituals’. Chidester (2006:76) locates the processes of the Policy within the broader context of the ‘transformational state’ and its attempts to celebrate and nurture a distinct sanctioned religiosity\textsuperscript{103}.

5.2.4 The symbolic state

In an essay on the changes in educational policy, Jansen (2000:86) asks for a theoretical understanding of ‘policy as political symbolism’. He continues ‘Every single case of education policy-making demonstrates, in different ways, the preoccupation of the state with settling policy struggles in the political domain rather than in the realm of practice’ (Jansen 2000:94). Policy changes often not really intend to change practice, but to represent ‘a search for legitimacy’ (Jansen 2000:98). The symbolic changes that take place when regimes are replaced often augment attempts of the new regime to institutionalise victory by changing the symbols and myths of the previous regime by creating new symbols, new myths and new and often different public processes of legitimisation.

Esbenshade (1995:72) quotes James Young who said ‘Memory is never shaped in a vacuum; the motives of memory are never pure’.

The transformational state (Weiler 1990) must also claim symbolic spaces, replacing old myths with new ones and often creates totally new ones. The issue at stake is not ‘truth’ but function\textsuperscript{104}. In his exposition of the role of memory in East-Central Europe before and after 1989 Esbenshade (1995) quotes Milan Kundera who cites the five different names of the same street in Prague, before 1989: ‘They just kept changing its name, trying to lobotomise it’ (1995:74). Kundera is also quoted (Esbenshade 1995:74) as having said ‘… and the names

\textsuperscript{103} We will return to this ‘distinct sanctioned religiosity’ during the evaluation of the Policy in Chapter 8.

\textsuperscript{104} The recent debates surrounding the proposed name change of Pretoria to Tshwane illustrate the emphasis on ‘function’, rather than the historical veracity of the existence of a chief named Tshwane (News24a, News 24b 2007). The same could be said of the myths surrounding the Day of the Vow (see Liebenberg (1988) and Ehlers (2003).
of the people who rose up against their own youth are carefully erased from the nation’s memory, like a mistake from a homework assignment’. These symbolic changes and ‘lobotomisation’ is a determined counter-narrative to the narratives that were accepted before the regime change. But these changes as counter-narratives also result in ‘memory-as-resistance’ (Esbenshade 1995:75).

This is the crux of the memory problem in the postwar East-Central European context. The state falsified history and manipulated collective memory. But the response of individuals, rejection of the state narrative and assertion of an untainted, “primal,” and collectively remembered past, falters when confronted with personal memory, which is alternately unreliable and all too reliable in dredging up a highly compromised past (Esbenshade 1995:76-77).

Those who claim to be ‘in the business of remembering’ in opposing name changes and other initiatives, will do well to acknowledge how myths were created in the service of white Afrikaner nationalism. I refer specifically to the myths surrounding the events of 16 December 1838. As Liebenberg (1988), Ehlers (2003) and others have postulated, the Battle of Blood River/Ncome and the Day of the Vow were surrounded by carefully created myths. The victory was retold as a result of Divine intervention and also symbolised the triumph of Christianity over heathendom. The victory furthermore illustrated that the Afrikaner had been selected by God as his chosen. Liebenberg states that ‘All [of these] are myths [which] have the common purpose of supporting Afrikaner nationalism’ and the further deduced claim that ‘God desires white supremacy in South Africa’ (Liebenberg 1988:17). Ehlers (2003) states that the Battle of Blood River/Ncome ‘was an important element in the master narrative of the Afrikaners as God’s holy chosen people with a mission to Christianise and civilise a barbaric country given to them by God’.

It is important to note that the factual historical occurrence of the day was never contested or questioned. It reminds of the quote by Esbenshade (1995:72) who quotes James Young who said ‘Memory is never shaped in a vacuum; the motives of memory are never pure’. As Liebenberg (1988) and Ehlers (2003)
indicate, the creation and sustaining of myths surrounding the day clearly illustrates these myths as being in service of Afrikaner nationalism. Interestingly, Ehlers (2003) states ‘By 1994 the hold that these myths and the accompanying master narrative had had on Afrikaner historical consciousness seemed largely broken, leaving a vacuum in Afrikaner historical thinking’. I agree with Ehlers (2003) that the hold of the ‘master narrative’ may be broken for the Afrikaner, but there seems to be a resurgence and growth in ‘memory as resistance’ (Esbenshade 1995).

In 1994 the Day of the Covenant was changed to the Day of Reconciliation. It was a major attempt of the newly elected government on the one hand to try to erase divisive elements from the calendar and focus on nation building and it was also a deliberate attempt to consciously address the ‘master narrative’ of the Afrikaner105. Contra to the envisaged outcome of the new gestalt of the 16th December, Ehlers (2003) indicates that it would seem as if the Day of the Reconciliation ‘…has taken on a new meaning appearing in a guise quite unintended by those who initiated the project: that of a symbol of or rallying point for protest against developments in the New South Africa which they dislike or reject’.

The day has become a ‘symbol of resistance and the commemoration of an act of defiance’ (Ehlers 2003). The debates surrounding the Day of Reconciliation, the right to mother-tongue education as well as the resurgence of ‘protest songs’ in Afrikaans, indicate that ‘memory-as-resistance’ and nostalgia are elements of ‘counter-memory’ and reaction to a state endorsed ‘lobotomisation’ (Esbenshade 1995)106. The resurgence of ‘memory-as-resistance’ especially among the

105 For an interesting and often chilling account of the formulation and impact of this ‘master narrative’ see Ehlers (2003).
106 For a discussion on the function of ‘memory-as-resistance’ in Afrikaans culture, see Groenewald (2007) and Steyn (2007). Memory, counter-memory and various acts of lobotomisation played and still play significant roles during the documentation of South African history.
Afrikaner may also resurrect and sustain the master narrative of defiant white supremacy. Suffice for the purposes of this study just to refer to what Wilmsen calls ‘the dialectic nature of ethnicity’ (Wilmsen 1996:5) in which a group’s self-definition as ‘politics of marginality’ forms ‘the basis for mobilisation and collective assertion’. Pieterse (1996:31) quotes Brass who says ‘The choice of the leading symbol of differentiation depends upon the interests of the elite group that takes up the ethnic cause’. In response to the government’s concerted efforts to create and establish symbols of national unity and reconciliation, the celebration of specificity in a group’s culture and self-perception becomes rallying points for resistance (Norval 1996:68). Sharp states that these rallying points often entail a claim to ‘absolute primordial continuity with the ‘precolonial past’ (Sharp 1996:91). In response to government efforts to create symbols of national unity and reconciliation, the celebration of specificity in a group’s culture and self-perception becomes rallying points for resistance (Norval 1996:68). Sharp states that these rallying points often entail a claim to ‘absolute primordial continuity with the ‘precolonial past’ (Sharp 1996:91). Within the broader discourse and praxis of nation building, the ‘resurrection’ and use of struggle songs like ‘umshini wami’ (Naki 2007:3); the slaughtering of a black bull in the beginning of summer in a festival called Ukweshwama (Oliphant 2006:2); the slaughtering of an animal by Tony Yengeni after his release from prison (Matshiqi 2007:14); the re-institution of virginity rites (Terreblanche 2006:2; Makhanya 2007:2), or ‘official reburials; impromptu shrines; and the resuscitation of banned works, taboo issues, and blacklisted individuals’ (Esbenshade 1995:75), are all part of the symbolic legitimisation of the state, and memory-as-resistance.

Pedagogy and curriculum are also part of the broader legitimisation discourse and praxis. According to Bernstein (1996), pedagogy is permeated with symbolic control and the shaping of identities. Pedagogy ‘translates’ ‘official knowledge’ in the classrooms (Bernstein 1996:39). Weiler (1990) would concur as he referred to curricular reform as compensatory legitimisation and Jansen (1999) referred to the often symbolic changes in curricula that signify a change of values and direction.

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107 For a discussion of the function of the ‘primordial’ in claims and counter-claims, see Sharp 1996.
The first education reform post-1994 was therefore the ‘cleansing’ of the curriculum. Commentators agree that these changes were cosmetic and did not really address issues like race and gender and that the intervention was mainly symbolic. Chidester (2006) suggests that the state entered the cultural domain by imagining a particular version of South African or African identity, necessitating the state’s symbolic entity as discussed by Jansen (2004). It is as symbolic state that the Policy signifies a major departure from the previous dispensation.

Preceding the debates surrounding a new dispensation for religion and education, there were several symbolic gestures that the new state not only respected the diverse religions but regarded them as equal. The opening of Codesa (Sachs 1993) as well as the inauguration of Pres Nelson Mandela as the first President of a democratic South Africa, gave South Africans a taste of what is to come. Not only was the stage shared by representatives of the major religions in South Africa, equal opportunity was given to them to pray or perform a ceremony. These ceremonies also introduced the majority of white South Africans to the role and function of praise-singers.

5.3 AN OVERVIEW OF THE PROCESSES RESULTING IN THE POLICY

In providing this chronological overview of the debates and processes resulting in the Policy, it is not my intention to provide an account of every nuance of each debate and process as well as the input of every stakeholder. This falls outside the scope and intention of this study. This overview has a specific purpose to enrich our understanding towards a critical evaluation, culminating in Chapter 8. The sources available in providing this overview range from articles in scholarly journals, articles in the public press, correspondence between various stakeholders (public and private) as well as conversations with some stakeholders involved in the process.
5.3.1 The processes preceding 1994

Religion has always been part of life on the southern tip of Africa (as explored in Chapter 4) and the Policy is but the latest gestalt of the role of religion in the public sphere in South Africa. For the purposes of tracing the roots of the Policy to the processes accompanying the transition to democracy, I propose to take 1992 as the starting point\textsuperscript{108}. Also in 1992, \textit{Religion in public education: Policy options for a new South Africa}, (Omar, Chidester, Mitchell, & Phiri 1992) was published\textsuperscript{109}.

In preparation for the democratic transition, the National Education Policy Initiative (NEPI) explored alternatives to the system of religious education as endorsed by the apartheid regime. NEPI had consensus that the previous dispensation had to change and three options were considered.

- \textit{Option 1:} Eliminating religion entirely from the school curriculum. ‘NEPI concluded that neglecting such a principal feature of South African life would not do justice to the importance of religious diversity in the nation’s history and society’ (Chidester 2006:66).

- \textit{Option 2:} Establishing parallel programs in religious instruction, developed by the different groups themselves. This option was also not considered to be viable as it would entrench a kind of ‘religious apartheid’ and students would be required ‘to study a single-tradition religious education program devoted to particular religious interests’ (Chidester 2006:66).

- \textit{Option 3:} Introducing a program of multi-religion education that would teach students \textit{about} religion ‘rather than engaging in the teaching.

\textsuperscript{108} In 1992 the Technical Sub-committee of the National Education and Training Forum, chaired by Mary Metcalfe proposed the removal of the ‘creator clause’ (see Chapter 4).

\textsuperscript{109} It is acknowledged that both NEPI and the publication by Omar et al. (1992) flowed from processes not covered in this study. The publication by Omar et al. was published as Chidester, D., Mitchell, G., Phiri, I.A. & Omar, A.R. 1994. Religion in public education: Options for a new South Africa. Cape Town: UCT Press.
confession, propagation, or promotion of religion’ (Chidester 2006:66; italics in the original)\textsuperscript{110}.

Another piece of evidence that could shed light on the thinking in this period is a lecture by Albie Sachs (1993) at a workshop hosted by the Institute for Comparative Religion in South Africa (ICRSA) in November 1992. The purpose of the workshop was to facilitate discussion around the future education and religion policy debates. Sachs (1993:170) traces the question on how to cope with the religious diversity in a democratic dispensation by reflecting on the arrangements for Codesa regarding the opening of these events with prayers from different denominations and religious affiliations. Deciding on how to open the event was shaped by the organisers’ intention to ‘find something that would bring out the variety that exists in South Africa in a way that was natural and comfortable and would make everyone feel at home’ (Sachs 1993:170). At the first Codesa, the arrangement was made for a variety of prayers from a number of faiths. This arrangement produced ‘extreme discomfort’ for some (Sachs 1993:170). For the second Codesa, it was decided to open the proceedings with prayers from Jewish and Christian representatives, and close the proceedings with prayers from Hindu, Muslim and Christian faiths. This also was found not to be acceptable for some (Sachs 1992:170). In reflecting on these arrangements as well as the reactions surrounding it, Sachs relates that it was their objective to ‘create a context of comfort, but not at the price of discomfort for some’ (1993:170).

Sachs (1993:171) indicates that a strict separation between religious and public life would have resulted in severe discomfort, because religion ‘bound us together and gave us a sense of strength and comfort’. In choosing between the different options of a theocratic state where religion and state overlap, or a strictly secular state where these two domains are separated, Sachs (1993:171) opted

\textsuperscript{110} A compromise between Options 2 and 3 was considered at that stage (Chidester 2006).
for a third possibility where state and religion are recognised as separate spheres, but with ‘a considerable degree of cooperation and interaction between the two’ (1993:171).

Interestingly, Sachs’ motivation for choosing the third cooperative model provides insight in the later formulation of the rationale for the Policy. Sachs (1993:171) states that the majority of South Africans belong to one or other faith.

It is not something that one wants to deny or lament. It is an important part of our reality. If an appropriate relationship can be established, it can be a source of tremendous upliftment for the whole of society, and a means of helping us to establish the maximum input for tackling and resolving the considerable problems facing our country (Sachs 1993:171).

Sachs (1993:171) also mentions a fourth possibility where the state would actually suppress, or try to deny or eliminate religious organisations. This, according to Sachs (1993:171) would have been ‘unthinkable’111. Of these four options, Sachs (1993:171-172) maintains that a cooperative model would be the best taking into account the specific South African context. He continues to explore the challenges inherent in a cooperative model, like the danger that religious bodies might feel that in cooperating with the state they are actually being co-opted. He also explores the dilemma of criticising the state in such a cooperative model (Sachs 1993:172).

With regard to religious education, Sachs (1993:173-174) admits that though the right to education is a basic right, religious education is ‘a tricky area’ (Sachs 1993:174). He suggested leaving a decision regarding the format of the role of religion in schools to a collective.

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111 The sensitivity shared by Albie Sachs (1993) in evaluating different options, is in stark contrast to what has been portrayed by the Apartheid regime in respect of the ANC as ‘atheist’, ‘Satanistic’ and the ‘anti-Christ’. As the processes around the Policy unfolded, these allegations kept making a comeback in the public debates regardless of a vast body of evidence that would contradict such allegations.
This is something new to South Africa. We are not used to trusting people with making decisions about their own lives and entering into real dialogue. We are much more used to secret committees, sitting in the background somewhere, working out what they think is best and then selling it, either clandestinely, not even trying to promote what they are doing, or just doing it, in a covert way, or else using all the mechanism of the modern state, all the forms of bribery and inducement, to try to impose a certain kind of policy. That is very wrong (Sachs 1993:174).

In conclusion Sachs (1993:174) suggests two principles to be followed in working out the practicalities of the role of religion in education and public life, namely that the process should be democratic and participatory, and that ‘we should think in terms of phases and transition’. In the light of the second principle, Sachs states that the transition to a democratic dispensation is ‘very disruptive for many people’ and that religion is for many people an anchor and giving ‘people a sense of comfort in the midst of transformation and disruption’ (1993:174).

It might be that changes in the role of religion in public education will be experienced by many people as [a] little destabilising. However, provided that there is honest debate within the ranks of the communities, rather than policies imposed from outside by the state or government departments. I think the process of change will be less destabilising, than important (Sachs 1993:174).

Sachs (1993:174) petitions for a ‘programme for religion in public education [that] can be worked out that will provide essential comfort’⁷¹².

In 1997 Krüger (1997) submitted an article to the Challenge magazine on Models of religious education. In the article, Krüger (1997) refers to the formation of the Independent Forum for Religion in Public Education in October 1993. The group consisted of ‘about thirty representatives form various churches and various departments of Religious Studies and Biblical Studies at universities and teachers training colleges in various provinces’ (Krüger 1997:1). The purpose of the group was to discuss ‘the future of religious education in South African schools’ as well as ‘to promote the formation and implementation of a new Policy’.⁷¹² In the same edition of ‘South African Outlook’ (1992:175-178) there is an overview of the ICRSA report on ‘Policy options for a new South Africa’.

⁷¹²
Krüger (1997:1) describes points of departure which acknowledge religion as a ‘given’ in South African society; the power of religion ‘to motivate and inspire people, and to provide vision and hope’; religion as part of the identity and security of individuals and groups of people; the multi-religious nature of South Africa. The location of the responsibility for religious nurturing lies with parents, while it would be unfair to expect of parents to provide information regarding religions different from their own. Though there is an undisputed need for ‘technical education’, a number of African countries have included the study of religion as part of the official curriculum; in ‘well-rounded holistic education’ the study of religion is justified; officialising the study of religion will protect religion ‘against misinformation, misrepresentation and denigration in all schools’; and the necessity to ‘deploy professionally trained, capable and well-respected teachers’ to implement the curriculum.

The article contemplates four possible models (Krüger 1997:3):

A The secular model, completely banning education in religion from public schools.
B The mono-religious model, adopting one religion as the official or unofficial state religion and reflecting that in the educational system.
C The particularistic model, differentiating education in religion to the extent that learners will have access to the study of one (their own) religion only. It differs from (B) in that a plurality of religions is accommodated in the school system as a whole, but that any learner will study only one of them.
D The integrated-pluralistic model, offering one subject, in which a learner will be educated in major religions in South African society.

The article (Krüger 1997:5) concludes that the solution ‘at this juncture in our national history lies in a combination of (C) and (D). The article then proposes a model where education in religion ‘should comprise two disciplines: “Religious Education”, and “Studies in Religion”’ According to Krüger, (1997:5)

113 The article (Krüger 1997) does not indicate whether the content of the article, published in 1997, reflects the proposals of the Independent Forum for Religion in Public Education or whether the article is the reflection of the author on and since the discussions during the meeting of the Forum.
114 For a discussion of these different models, see Krüger (1997).
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION should be generally formative in character (with strong emphasis on factual information, and the nurturing of pupils by the way of developing appropriate attitudes and values). STUDIES IN RELIGION should provide the specialised hermeneutical, historical, comparative and critical intellectual and interpersonal skills necessary for a wide range of careers in the governmental and non-governmental sectors: for example social workers, health workers, peace workers, teachers and other educators, clergy and community leaders would all benefit from having done the subject (capitals in the original).

Krüger (1997:5-6) further defines the parameters of these proposals for Religious Education and Studies in Religion.

(a) Religious Education should be introduced as an examinable subject, offered in all school years.

(b) The content and method of this subject should:
   (i) Give pupils the opportunity to examine their own religion in an educational (non-proselytising, non-catechetical way)
   (ii) Lead pupils to an awareness of the religious beliefs and traditions of fellow-pupils and fellow-South Africans
   (iii) As far as possible, be relevant to the life-experiences of the pupils, and enable them to relate values to life-issues.

(c) The current ‘conscience clause’ will apply.

Studies in Religion, is described by Krüger (1997:6) as follows:

(a) Studies in Religion should be introduced as an optional, externally-examinable academic discipline at secondary level.

(b) This discipline may include the following academic possibilities:
   (i) Religious Studies
   (ii) Studies in African religions
   (iii) Biblical (or Christian) Studies
   (iv) Islamic Studies
   (v) Jewish Studies

Krüger (1997:6) closes his article by petitioning for ‘space’ to be created for religion in education. ‘Can our society afford not to have it? I believe not!’

5.3.2 Processes post-1994: the Bengu Committee

As discussed in Chapter 4, 1994 also saw the call for the ‘cleansing’ of the curriculum. In 1996 the National Education Policy Act was published as well as the South African Schools Act (No. 84 of 1996). In 1997 Curriculum 2005
(Grades 1-9) was published for comments as well as Outcomes-based education (OBE) launched. In August 1998, the Minister of Education, Sibusiso Bengu appointed a Ministerial Committee ‘to look into the diverse ideas, approaches and outcry from religious communities. Especially Christians who wanted to retain the previously Christian evangelical approach in most of the mono-religious public schools’ (Roux 2000). As Stonier (1999) reports, the resulting deadlock originated from not reaching agreement on whether such an education program should be educating learners to be religious or educating learners about religion and religions (Chidester 2006:67). Stonier (1999) suggests furthermore that the deadlock can also be ascribed to the fact that the majority of the commission consisted of ‘committed Christians’. Steyn (1999:67) reports that the result of this impasse was a decision that local schools choose from ‘a menu of options: teaching learners to be religious, teaching learners about religions, or a combination of both’. 115

In January 1999, a Report of the Ministerial Committee on Religious Education was published. The Committee consisted of

- Rev Elijah Mahlangu
- Imam A Rashied Omar
- Ms Janet Stonier
- Ms Joey van Niekerk
- Mr Paul Faller (Chairperson)

The Report (1999:10) states that the confusion and controversies surrounding the issue can be attributed to two ways of understanding religious education, namely

- educating learners to be religious; and
- educating learners about religion and religions.

115 When a new Minister of Education, Prof Kader Asmal took over in 2000, he did not include members of the Bengu-committee in his newly constituted advisory committee. This exclusion continued to haunt the debates surrounding the Policy.
The Report (1999) discusses the rationale for the inclusion of religion in Curriculum 2005; discusses several international trends; explores the implications of the inclusion of religion into the curriculum against applicable legislation and states 'Directive principles for religious education policy' (1999: 27-45) as well as explore the role the study of religions can play in learners attaining a number of critical outcomes (1999:46-49).

Discussions regarding the Report (1999) continued amongst different stakeholders and lobbies. For example, in a letter dated 9 March 1999, a group of Departments of Religious Studies at East Rand College of Education, the Johannesburg College of Education, Unisa, University of the North as well as the University of Pretoria was submitted to the office of the Minister (correspondence addressed to Mr R.D. van Rensburg (Krüger 1999). This submission’s main concern was that the Report ‘is not based on a strong, consistent theoretical/religio-philosophical foundation, with the result that the proposal makes the impression of a mere juxtaposition of two possibilities … instead of real co-ordination and integration of the two’ (Krüger 1999:3). The submission also makes it clear that the Report’s critique against a pluralistic model is ‘based on an embarrassing lack of knowledge/understanding of what this model is about’ (Krüger 1999:4).

5.3.3 Minister Asmal: a new draft Policy and values-education

A new Minister of Education, Prof Kader Asmal was appointed in 2000 and in a letter to Prof Lubbe (Department of Religious Studies, Unisa) early in 2000 indicates his willingness to meet with Prof Lubbe and his colleagues on 13 March 2000 (Asmal 2000). On 6 May 2000 a Ministerial workshop on Religion in Public Education was held in Pretoria. As a result, a Working Document (2000) was formulated which proposed a model of religious education as ‘education

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116 The outcome of that meeting is not known but could provide insight in the early direction Asmal would give to the shaping of the processes surrounding the Policy.
about religion, refraining from a specific religious purpose, but led by general educational interests’ (2000:2). It further proposed that religious observances should be treated ‘as not being part of public school’s activities’ (2000:2). The Working Document (2000) further aimed at resolving the tension between the different options for religious education and with regard to the ‘conscience clause’ stated ‘If religion education is offered professionally in a fair and religiously unaligned manner, the need to invoke the conscience clause will be redundant. However, it remains available as a mechanism to allow withdrawal from such education’ (Working document 2000:37).

In February 2000 Minister Asmal requested the formation of a working group on values in education. The formation of such a working group was foreseen to be ‘a starting point in what ought to become a national debate on appropriate values South Africa ought to embrace in its primary and secondary educational institutions’ (Department of Education, 2000). In July 2000 the Draft Religion in Education Policy was circulated and made available for public comment. The Report of the Working Group on Values in Education (9 May 2000) formed the basis of a meeting of more than 400 people in Kirstenbosch, 22-24 February 2001 at a ‘Saamtrek: Values, education and democracy in the 21st century’. A glossy and comprehensive report and proceedings was published afterwards (Department of Education, 2001a). One of the outputs of the ‘Saamtrek’ was the Manifesto on values, education and democracy (Department of Education, 2001b).

Jansen (2004) describes the Report (Department of Education 2000) that arose from a Working Group on Values in Education as the second ‘curriculum moment’. According to Jansen (2004) the most vociferous opposition to this

\[\text{117 It is important to note that there were therefore two processes running concurrently. On the one hand the Draft Policy was circulated in the public domain and on the other hand there were the processes and debates surrounding the ‘values-movement.’ In this latter movement, debates regarding the introduction of the study of religion in schools focused on religion as vehicle for moral regeneration. The Draft Policy also influenced and shaped the proposals regarding the study of religions as proposed by the different ‘value’ documents which followed.}\]
document came from ‘progressive academics’ like Nazir Carrim and Margaret Tshoane (2000). These authors questioned the ‘uncritical acceptance’ and ‘blind following’ required in service of ‘loyalty’ to the new dispensation. They critiqued the discourse on morality as being ‘antithetical to democracy’, and alleged that it ‘significantly undermines the development and consolidation of a culture based on human rights’ (2000:5).

From these comments of Carrim and Tshoane (2000) and Jansen (2004:61) it would seem as if the Report of the working group on values in education (Department of Education, 2000) brought to the fore possible conflict between patriotic behaviour (as described in the document) and the duty to be critical, the social and economic conditions that undermine such values as access to education, the corrupt behaviour of prominent public servants, the potential divisiveness of the oath of allegiance in schools with legal (and illegal) immigrants, and the complexity of implementing values in the shadow of apartheid (Jansen 2004:61).

The conflict between building a new democracy and initiatives to shape a new patriotism but also shaping a critical citizenry prepared the ground for multiple players, lobbies and stakeholders to partake in the ‘discourse of participation’ (Weiler 1990). In his analysis of curriculum as compensatory legitimation, Weiler (1990:22) highlights the ‘discourse of participation’ where ‘integrated planning and decision processes’...play an important role alongside intra-administrative or extra-administrative experts. It is this notion of ‘legitimation by procedure’ that opens the theoretical door to a variety of participatory arrangements in the making of curricular decisions.

This initiative by Minister Asmal, illustrates not only Weiler’s ‘discourse of participation’ but also the different processes and artefacts giving gestalt to the legitimation of the new democracy. The Report of the working group on values in education (Department of Education 2000) was published and distributed widely, and the Minister of Education called for public response. The responses received took four specific forms. Firstly, there were published critiques and commentary in the media and in
academic and educational journals; secondly, individual members of the public and organisations responded directly to the Minister; and thirdly, extensive school-based research was conducted on behalf of the Department of Education. In the last instance, responses were submitted by way of the papers and inputs presented at the Saamtrek Conference (Department of Education 2001a:8).

There are some overlaps and differences between these three artefacts, namely the Report of the Working Group on Values in Education, the Saamtrek document as well as the Manifesto on values, education and democracy. The following table (Table 5.1) provides a cursory comparative overview of the three documents.

Table 5.1: Overview of the three documents addressing values, education and democracy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Report of the working group on values in education</th>
<th>SAAMTREK: Values, education and democracy in the 21st century</th>
<th>Manifesto on values, education and democracy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identifies six core values, namely</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Equity</td>
<td></td>
<td>It adopted the ten values as identified by the Saamtrek, namely</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Tolerance</td>
<td></td>
<td>1. Democracy</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Multilingualism</td>
<td></td>
<td>2. Social Justice and Equity</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Openness</td>
<td></td>
<td>3. Equality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Accountability</td>
<td></td>
<td>4. Non-racism and Non-sexism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Social honour</td>
<td></td>
<td>5. Ubuntu (Human Dignity)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6. Openness</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7. Accountability (Responsibility)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8. The Rule of Law</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>9. Respect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10. Reconciliation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nine recommendations:</td>
<td>Sixteen recommendations:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. The adoption of a social contract between</td>
<td>1. Outreach on SABC TV and Radio to publicise the values.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Provincial units to be set up to deal with racism and values.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The Manifesto accepted the sixteen strategies as proposed by the Saamtrek for implementation.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The Manifesto did not have any ‘recommendations’ of its own.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
educators, administrators, parents, trade unions and professional associations to give gestalt to the above values.

2. Pre-service and in-service training of teachers in educational inequalities and the need for equity, an African language and the performing arts.

3. The reintroduction of history in the school curriculum through consultation with historians, archaeologists and human biologists.

4. The introduction of a school based artist-in-residence and the strengthening of the performing arts programmes in schools.

5. Tougher policies against illegitimate and harmful discrimination in schools.

6. Introduction of schools-based debating societies.

7. Introduction of a national grid of

3. Higher education institutions to get involved with performing arts outreach and to have artists-in-residence to service nearby schools.

4. A national endowment for the arts to fund talented individuals in schools.

5. The establishment of a national writing centre with prizes and projects.

6. In-service and pre-service educator training to address training on values.

7. A more deliberate pursuit of affirmative action to improve equity of access.

8. The recruitment of teachers to ensure diversity in schools.

9. A national action plan for the introduction of African languages into the schools, universities and adult education.

10. Civics education as part of the new curriculum.

11. A national conference for historians and history teachers to plan a strategy for teaching History and for the discipline.

12. Ongoing upgrading of history teachers and special bursaries to attract students to study History.

13. A national conference on HIV AIDS, values and sexuality education.


15. The dissemination of the proceedings of this conference to participants.

16. The production of a revised document on values that would become the policy of
adult learning opportunities.
8. The promotion of social honour and the embrace of national symbols.
9. Research on the nature and scale of the diversity of learners and educators.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sixteen strategies are proposed:</th>
<th>Sixteen strategies are proposed:</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Nurturing a culture of communication and participation in schools.</td>
<td>1. Nurturing a culture of communication and participation in schools.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Role-modelling: promoting commitment as well as competence among educators.</td>
<td>2. Role-modelling: promoting commitment as well as competence among educators.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Ensuring that every South African is able to read, write, count and think.</td>
<td>3. Ensuring that every South African is able to read, write, count and think.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Infusing the classroom with the culture of human rights.</td>
<td>4. Ensuring equal access to education. [order change was 10 in Saamtrek list]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Making arts and culture part of the curriculum.</td>
<td>5. Infusing the classroom with the culture of human rights.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Putting History back into the curriculum.</td>
<td>6. Making arts and culture part of the curriculum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Introducing religion education into schools.</td>
<td>7. Putting History back into the curriculum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Ensuring equal access to education.</td>
<td>10. Using sport to shape social bonds and nurture nation building at schools.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Freeing the potential of girls as well as boys.</td>
<td>12. Freeing the potential of girls as well as boys.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Making schools safe to learn and teach in and ensuring the</td>
<td>14. Making schools safe to learn and teach in and ensuring the</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The most obvious differences noticeable in these three artefacts focusing on the nature and role of values in shaping a new democracy are as follows:

1. Where the *Report of the Working Group on values in education* (Department of Education 2000) identified and worked with six values, the *Saamtrek* as well as the *Manifesto* identified a list of ten values. It is interesting, and may be significant that ‘equity’, ‘tolerance’, ‘multilingualism’ and ‘social honour’ were left out of the ten values identified by the *Saamtrek* and the *Manifesto*. These five values were replaced or expanded by ‘democracy’, ‘social justice and equity’, ‘equality’, ‘non-racism and non-sexism’ and ‘Ubuntu’ (Human Dignity).

2. Professor Asmal promised the ‘*speedy publication of the Department's policy on religion education*’ (Department of Education 2001a; italics mine). From the same document however there is ample evidence that the issue of religion education ‘remained thorny and unresolved’.

There are various sources clarifying the delay in the publication of the promised Policy. It seems as if Minister Asmal firstly did not expect the delay of the publication of the Policy. From the *Saamtrek* (Department of Education, 2001a) report it is however clear that even during the *Saamtrek* concerns were expressed that would have warned that the issue would prove more contentious than at least Minister Asmal expected.

The report on the *Saamtrek* points to certain key trends or patterns that emerged during discussions at the conference. The four dilemmas included

1. Prescription vs. Dialogue: How do we root values in schools?
2. Frameworks vs. Mindsets: Can we change material conditions before we change consciousness, and vice versa?
3. ‘Human Rights’ vs. ‘Law and Order’: Is there another way?
4. Educating for the Market-place vs. Educating for Citizenship: Can we do both?

The Saamtrek report refers to ‘religion’ 26 times (including the Table of contents and headings). It is in the context of the second ‘framing dilemma’ that ‘religion’ is making its first appearance. During the discussion of ‘Religion Education vs. Religious Education’, Father Albert Nolan explained the relationship between ‘values’ and ‘morals’ by referring to the writer Lawrence Kohlberg, who defined the levels and stages of moral development in the typical person. The first level of morality is about obeying laws to avoid punishment and gain reward. The second level of morality is about doing one’s duty out of a sense of conscience and group identity, and the third and final level of morality is about ‘a conscious choice of values based upon one’s consciousness of who one is and what life is about. Values have been internalised and a sense of duty has been replaced by a sense of personal responsibility’. While ‘a government must of course make laws and impose them in order to protect the rest of society from those with asocial and criminal tendencies, this is not how you educate people in the spontaneous adoption of moral values. This requires a change of consciousness – something which education can do’ (Department of Education 2001a:12).

If I understand Father Nolan’s suggestion correctly it would seem as if he claims that real change in the values people cherish takes place only if you ‘educate people in the spontaneous adoption of moral values. This requires a change of consciousness – something which education can do’ (Department of Education 2001a:12). The inclusion of Religion Education in the school curriculum is proposed to assist in doing this. In the discussion of the Conference theme, Rooting the new patriotism in the Constitution,

Professor Ndebele also spoke of the need for ‘symbolic actions’ that would ‘capture our unity as a people’, and Professor Asmal said, in his opening remarks, that although he was not a ‘flag-waver’ himself, he was impressed by the way that, in those ex-model C schools where flags were flown, there was a ‘sense of identification of the children when you talk to
them’. Nonetheless, there was a feeling, from delegates, that extreme caution had to be exercised in using schools as the blunt implement for nationalism – or, as had traditionally happened in South African schools, for religion. Sunday Independent Editor John Battersby felt it would be ‘too dogmatic and too centralised a prescription that schools have to start on Monday mornings with singing the Anthem or reciting the vow’ (Department of Education 2001a:23; italics mine)\(^{118}\).


The act of reading, which used to be a complex social and epistemological discipline based not only on knowledge of both a classical and vernacular language, but on the science of philology, seems slowly to be losing its considerable existential density, its enormously rich web of association as an activity with such cultural processes such as education, ethics and religion. We tend to forget how the culture of book reading in nearly every civilization known to our planet once entailed a vast communicative structure of other human activities, from prayer, to love-making, to school instruction, to decoration, and silent meditation (Department of Education 2001a:91).

In a second reference to ‘religion’ Said refers to the role the Book (referring to the Old Testament) plays in different struggles about interpretation:

The point to be made is that in all three religions the book is at the heart of the struggle over whether it will emerge as a regressive fundamentalism or as enhanced freedom, ‘the letter killeth but the spirit giveth life’. This is the choice posed for the reader who has the alternative of either being a Spinoza, a Kierkegaard, a Nietzsche on the one hand, or an inquisitor, a commissar, a sultan or a judge on the other. No one here needs reminding about canonical texts such as the Old Testament or the writings of the founding fathers can either issue forth in wholesale oppression or in the struggle for justice. Collective passions derived from uncritically memorised texts are the bane of human life and whether they flow directly

\(^{118}\) This discussion seems to have warned against ‘using’ schools and the study of religion in the service of nationalism.
into political dogma or into simplified versions of the past, they have atrocious results, which it must be every teacher’s obligation, to combat with the weapons of criticism (Department of Education 2001a:92).

Said refers here to the ‘use’ of religion to ‘issue forth in wholesale oppression or in the struggle for justice’. He explicitly locates it within the responsibilities of the teacher to ‘combat with the weapons of criticism’ the use of the ‘uncritically memorised texts’ in its use in political dogma or in ‘simplified versions of the past’, each of which ‘has atrocious results’.

We find the only other reference to ‘religion’ outside the specific theme dealing with Religion Education, in the Keynote address by Njabulo Ndebele of the University of Cape Town, ‘The Social Bases of Values for South Africa: Prospects and Challenges’. Njabulo Ndebele explores the notion of what binds South Africans in their diversity and distinguishes them from other nationalities.

I would then pose the question: if fifty thousand South Africans of various races, classes, ethnic groups, and religions were airlifted into New York, right now, what is it, once they have settled, that would make them gravitate towards one another? What is it that would distinguish them from other nationalities in such a way that their distinctiveness becomes a basis on which they might become economically or culturally useful to New York? Would the answer to this question matter if they were airlifted in one major operation, or if they were carefully brought to New York through a simulation of a migratory process over a determined period of time? Would they be bringing something with them, or would they evolve new forms of social practice, remembering mainly their geographical origins instead of compelling memories of the texture of organised social life? (Department of Education 2001a:100).

In essence he is asking whether our classification as ‘South African’ is anything more but a shared origin in a specific geographical location, or whether we share ‘compelling memories of the texture of organised social life’. If I understand him correctly, he seems to postulate whether there exists something shared by us all that somehow binds us together despite our diversity regarding ‘classes, ethnic groups and religions’.
In the panel discussion on ‘Religion, Diversity and Democracy’ the possibility was discussed that the study of religion in schools could actually encourage tolerance and ‘promoting diversity rather than entrenching chauvinism, exclusivism and discrimination’ (Department of Education 2001a:30). Manila Soni-Amin of the University of the Western Cape

... saw in religion education the best possibilities for the promotion of pluralism and diversity within the classroom. She cited the American theologian [sic] Ninian Smart: ‘In a plural society, the need for a cultural contract is very vital. Moreover, to imagine that religious education should be biblical is presumptuous and insensitive ... But the new South Africa has a marvelous opportunity to reform education and to promote a plural society. Pluralism and openness are the heart of academic life’. Within the African context, the need to teach and learn about traditional indigenous religions was a key dimension of this (Department of Education 2001a:30).

The three issues reported on are therefore

- The parameters and content of Religion Education
- How will it relate and embody the Constitution of South Africa?
- How can it contribute to the promotion of pluralism and diversity?

What is significant about the report on the panel discussion, is the fact that more than a quarter of the section is allocated to the fact that the issue ‘remained thorny and unresolved’ (Department of Education 2001a:30). The concerns reported on were

- whether teachers would be able to maintain distance from their own personal convictions, and to present religion in a multicultural, multifaith context;
- whether the values arising from the religions could be taught in such a way that they could be relevant to people who did not have religious faith;
- the danger, too, of sanitising religion and making it purely a matter of intellectual knowledge or morals or ethics, without any spiritual content. (Department of Education 2001a:30).
From the above exploration of the public discourse at the Saamtrek it seems as if there was agreement that certain values needed to be promoted in school curricula. There also seems to be consensus on which values were to be covered, and to a large extent consensus on how they should be introduced and covered and by whom. It is obvious from the Saamtrek report that the different constituencies and lobbies were still a far way off from having consensus on the inclusion of Religion Education as part of an overall strategy to define the values South Africans will stand for and be known for.

The Manifesto’s proposal for the introduction of Religion Education in schools deals with the following issues:

- The South African context
- The role of religion in society
- The relation between faith, culture and religion
- The difference between Religion Education and Religious Instruction and Observances
- The different responsibilities of the Constitution, the schools and the home
- The approach to Religion Education and its envisaged impact
- The need for training of educators and school governing bodies

**The South African context**

Referring to the context of the proposed introduction of Religion Education in schools, the Manifesto states, ‘South Africa is recognised as being a deeply religious society, and religions offer highly organised and often very effective moral codes upon which value systems are based’ (Department of Education 2001b: 32). Two reasons why religions seem to be an effective vehicle for promoting values are the fact that religions are ‘highly organised’ and ‘often very effective moral codes’ (Department of Education 2001b: 32).
The role of religion in society

Religions being ‘highly organised’ seem to refer to the fact that the major world religions are well-documented with enough doctrinal artefacts and rituals to make them accessible to teachers and learners. Religions are also ‘often very effective moral codes’ and the diversity of religions ‘impel(s) and inspire(s) society, and the morality and values that underpin them’. Religions are furthermore ‘resources for clarifying morals, ethics, and regard for others’ and religions ‘embody values of justice and mercy, love and care, commitment, compassion and co-operation. They chart profound ways of being human in relation to other humans’ (Department of Education 2001b: 32).

The above indicates that the Manifesto presents a very positive and sanitized view of the role religions play and can play in society. There is no mention of the fact that religions also often ‘flow directly into political dogma or into simplified versions of the past,[where] they have atrocious results’ (Edward Said as quoted in Department of Education 2001a:92)\textsuperscript{119}.

The relation between faith, culture and religion

‘Faith, whatever its core might be, and however public its expression, is the consequence of spiritual journeying that is, at heart, a voyage of intimacy. Religion, which expresses it, is a matter of choice in conscience’ (Department of Education 2001b:31-32). The Manifesto clarifies ‘faith’ as being the result of a spiritual and intimate journey expressed by a conscience choice of a ‘religion’ that embodies this journey. While religions function as ‘resources for clarifying morals, ethics, and regard for others’, cultural systems ‘transmit’ values.

\textsuperscript{119} Although it is true that religions ‘embody values of justice and mercy, love and care, commitment, compassion and co-operation’ the contrary can also be claimed that religions are divisive, partisan in conflicts and sustaining inequality in the world. This duality in the ‘reputation’ of religion does not prevent it from being used as vehicle for moral regeneration. To the contrary, it supports the inclusion of religion in the school curriculum. The sanitisation of the study of religion and its implications will be a critical element or criterion in the evaluation of the Policy in Chapter 8.
From these statements it would seem as if the Manifesto sees religion as an integral part of broader ‘cultural systems’, which then functions as the space in which faith finds a specific expression.

- The difference between Religion Education and Religious Education and Observances

In explaining the difference between Religion Education and Religious Education, the Manifesto refers to the Saamtrek where Albert Nolan of Challenge ‘argued that while religious education was about ‘nurturing a religious consciousness’, and ‘should be done in churches’, the aim of ‘religion education’ was to provide knowledge about different religions (Department of Education 2001b:32). A further difference is that Religion Education falls within the specific domain of schools while Religious Education falls within the scope of responsibility of parents and the ‘home’.

If religious education, with specific spiritual aims, is the responsibility of the home, family and the community of faith, then religion education, with clear educational aims, is the responsibility of the school. ‘Religion education’ is not engaged in the promotion of a religion but is a programme for studying religion, in all its many forms, as an important dimension of human experience and a significant subject field in the school curriculum (Department of Education 2001b:32).

The Manifesto furthermore demarcates the scope for ‘religious observances’ at schools and during school hours as follows:

According to the Constitution, schools may be made available for religious observance so long as it is outside of school hours, association is free and voluntary rather than mandatory, and the facilities are made available on an equitable basis to all who apply. School governing bodies need to be familiarised with these conditions (Department of Education 2001b:33; italics mine).

Where weekly assemblies in the past had a specific Christian character, the Manifesto states
Weekly assemblies are a long-standing tradition of many of our schools, and play an important role in bonding and unifying the school community. Nevertheless, they should not be compulsory and should, under no circumstances, be used as occasions for religious observance (Department of Education 2001b:33).

The different responsibilities of the Constitution, the schools and the home

I have already pointed out that the Manifesto foresees different domains of responsibilities for schools and parents. These responsibilities give expression to the Constitution, which protects the individual’s right to choice as well as protection from coercion. The Manifesto expresses the role of the Constitution as follows:

And, under the Constitution, that choice – and the observances that go with it - is subject to protection as one of the freedoms guaranteed in the Bill of Rights. There is no place in the classroom, then, for an education that promotes any one creed or belief over any other. Yet, there is every reason for schools to expose learners to the diversity of religions that impel and inspire society, and the morality and values that underpin them. As has been noted, the Constitution guarantees the right to equality, to non-discrimination on the basis of religion, and to freedom of belief, thought and conscience. Schools can reinforce the Constitution by using ‘religion education’ to reaffirm the values of diversity, tolerance, respect, justice, compassion and commitment in young South Africans (Department of Education 2001b:32).

What is interesting in referring to the role of the Constitution and the rights, privileges and responsibilities it offers, are the two values ‘compassion and commitment in young South Africans’. The value of ‘commitment’ can still be seen to relate to either the values of ‘accountability’ or the value of ‘social honour’ that the Report of the Working Group (Department of Education 2000) referred to. The only time that the value of ‘compassion’ is referred to, is within the context of the values integral to ‘religion’ – ‘Religions embody values of justice and mercy, love and care, commitment, compassion and co-operation’ (Department of Education 2001b:32).

In this specific section of the Manifesto discussing the introduction of Religion Education in schools, this reference to ‘compassion and commitment’ is
furthermore qualified as what is expected of "young South Africans". Though ‘Nurturing the new patriotism, or affirming our common citizenship’ is a specific strategy in the *Manifesto*, here it would seem as if the introduction of Religion Education in schools and the fact that religions embody certain values, that the introduction of Religion Education in schools will directly contribute to 'new patriotism'.

*The approach to Religion Education and its envisaged impact*

There are six references to the content and approach of Religion Education within this section of the *Manifesto*.

Adopting a multi-tradition approach to the study of religion is one way of achieving this [referring to the values as embodied in the Constitution], enabling students to examine, critically and creatively, the moral codes embedded in all religions, their own and others' (Department of Education 2001b:32).

This seems to indicate that the introduction of Religion Education in schools is directly related to ‘strengthening’ the values as embodied in the Constitution. *Religion Education in school curricula stands therefore in the service of a specific description of citizenship and nationhood.*

A second comment resulting from the above quotation is that Religion Education in school curricula will specifically be a ‘multi-tradition’ approach. This excludes therefore explicitly single-faith or secular approaches. Religion Education is furthermore ‘not engaged in the promotion of a religion but is a programme for studying religion, in all its many forms, as an important dimension of human experience and a significant subject field in the school curriculum’ (Department of Education 2001b:32; italics mine). This statement, although explicitly stating that Religion Education will not promote a specific religion, what it *implicitly* states is that it will promote religion as phenomenon as ‘an important dimension of human experience and a significant subject field in the school curriculum’ and increase a ‘consciousness about the role and effect of religion’.
The scope of Religion Education in school curricula will take on a specific format and scope within the further education and training band for matriculation purposes ‘as an optional, specialised and examinable subject’. The scope of Religion Education as an educational approach to the study of religions, also impacts all religious materials when used in assembly. This educational scope and function of the diversity of religions should also transform ‘assemblies from being occasions for imposing religious uniformity to being forums where diversity is celebrated, along with the values of our Constitution’ (Department of Education 2001b:33).

The need for training of educators and school governing bodies

Lastly, the Manifesto clearly stipulates the need for training for educators and school governing bodies to be able to realise the educational goals of Religion Education. The Manifesto states

> Religion education’ should be taught by trained professional educators, rather than by professional clergy, who must be motivated by educational outcomes. … Because ‘religion education’ should be taught according to educational rather than religious outcomes, educators – particularly those in Life Orientation and Social Studies – will require significant retraining. (Department of Education 2001b: 33; italics mine).

This training and retraining also applies to school governing bodies (SGBs) which according to the Manifesto needs to be ‘familiarised’ and ‘empowered’ with the scope and parameters of Religion Education and the guidelines for religious instruction and observances (Department of Education 2001b:33). It would therefore seem as if the Manifesto and the Review of Curriculum 2005 were part of a broader strategy ensuring that the values as embodied in the Constitution are being addressed in school curricula and practice.

5.3.4 The Review of Curriculum 2005

The second element of this ‘second curriculum moment’ was the Review of Curriculum 2005. The Review of Curriculum 2005, the Saamtrek and the
Manifesto are all examples of a ‘discourse of participation’ (Weiler 1990) in which different stakeholder groups and lobbies would participate in a ‘multiplicity of dynamics, lobbies, and interests impacting on and shaping the curriculum’ (Chisholm 2005b:195). In her analysis of the Review of Curriculum 2005, Chisholm uses the concept of ‘lobby and/or interest groups’ as an heuristic device ‘to examine those social forces that impacted on the curriculum’ (Chisholm 2005b:195).

The parameters for the Review of Curriculum 2005 were set by Minister Asmal and the National Department of Education (DoE). The brief’s foci were ‘to simplify the complexity of the curriculum and ensure a stronger human-rights content within the existing outcomes-based framework’ (Chisholm 2005b:196). The review process entailed the establishment of eight working groups for each learning area as well as three cross-cutting groups dealing with human rights and inclusivity, qualifications and implementation. Chisholm (2005b:196) writes ‘Working groups developed drafts, tested them informally, and revised them. The revised drafts were made available for public comment, which was gathered, analysed, and used for further decision’.

During these processes ‘distinct lobbies with defined approaches to curriculum’ claimed not only the right to be heard, but also the right to have the curriculum shaped according to their specific interests. ‘The most powerful [of these lobbies] included a vocational lobby, an environmental lobby, a history lobby, and a religious lobby’ (Chisholm 2005b:197). It falls outside the parameters of this study to discuss in detail the role and interests of each of these lobbies. Suffice to show how these lobbies linked to bigger and sometimes international discourses. For example, the ‘vocational lobby’ emphasised the need ‘to position South Africa as a leading player technologically on the African continent’ and South Africa’s position as a ‘modern’ economy (Chisholm 2005b:198). This lobby had the support of Cabinet, which saw the curriculum as tantamount in its adoption of a
‘development path that challenged South Africa’s modernisation through integration into a global world on the basis of markets and advanced technology’.

The history lobby encountered resistance on two fronts, namely on the specific inclusion of history as part of the official curriculum, and then secondly, the content of such a history curriculum. Resistance came mainly from two fronts, namely an educational constructivist group and the Christian Right (Chisholm 2005b:199). Claims against the proposed content included statements that the curriculum resembled a ‘Marxist agenda …[of]… indoctrination, guilt manipulation and propaganda’ (as quoted by Chisholm 2005b:200).

In her analysis of the ‘history lobby’ Chisholm makes the succinct point by referring to the role teachers, material developers and textbook writers will play in allowing the curriculum to develop as envisaged. She states:

> The official history is one that aims at permitting the unofficial, the hidden, to become visible. *Much, however, depends upon the materials developers, the textbook writers, the teacher trainers, and teachers’ own understandings brought to bear on these issues. History is present not only in the writing of the official curriculum, but also in its interpretation and enactment* (Chisholm 2005b:201; italics my own).

Chisholm’s remarks are valid also for the Policy and its envisaged impact. Should materials developers, textbook writers, the teacher trainers and the teachers themselves not embody the original intentions of the Policy on Religion in Education the envisaged impact will be hampered. I will return to this point when analysing the Policy (Chapter 6).

The ‘conservative Christian lobby’ (Chisholm 2005b:202) campaign was ‘squarely focused on the aims and values that the curriculum consciously promoted’. I will deal with their arguments in discussing the processes leading to the Policy in the next section (5.3.5), but suffice to point to the common elements in their position namely their animosity towards what they labelled the ‘exposure of white and
Christian children to “pagan” faiths and cultural practices’ (Chisholm 2005b:203). This lobby was ‘the loudest and the most visible’ in their condemnation of the Draft Revised National Curriculum Statement but the revised curriculum was, in the end, ‘…shaped by a multiplicity of new, diffuse social forces, voices, and educational philosophies, much less visible and loud than the evangelical Christians, but also far more powerful in the new South Africa’ (Chisholm 2005b:204).

Chisholm summarises this curriculum as ‘an historical product of its time, representing a particular selection dependent on the multiplicity of players involved in its construction’ (2005b:205). As Jansen indicates (2004:62) the Review Committee was very clear about the partiality of the curriculum:

Curricular content is by its very nature never neutral. It is always connected to a social project. This does not mean that its specification should be avoided, however. What it means is that we should be as clear as possible about the social project to be supported. This report is predicated on a curriculum based on the values of social justice, equity and development; one that seeks to foster the values of human rights, anti-racism and anti-sexism, relevance, critical thinking and problem solving. It is to a curriculum content for these values that we now turn (2000:48).

In discussing the furore that erupted about the NCS, Jansen states “most of the contentions lie within the Social Sciences and the Life Orientation learning areas’ (2004:62). Jansen continues then to state that the ‘sustained and intense onslaught by Christians against the curriculum makes it an historic document’ (2004:63).

Jansen (2004:66) then summarises the development as follows: ‘This movement from the political accommodation of diverse values to the political assertion of preferred values in education and society created the most intense public challenge to state education since the introduction of Bantu Education (and its ethnic variants) in the 1950s’. Jansen continues to analyse the reaction to signify that the political radicalism during the struggle years ‘do not mean that a post-
colonial curriculum can be installed on the grounds of radical social values’ (2004:66). He postulates further that the conservative Christian core ‘remained undisturbed despite the years of liberation struggle’; that

conservative Christian communities that remained relatively dormant throughout the years of political struggle could be mobilised into action when official values like those concretised in curriculum statements – were perceived to fly in the face of dominant social values

and that ‘the irony of new democracies is that the very space created by post-colonial society for democratic practices provokes into action those elements (such as conservative churches) that through silence or complicity played a subdued role under white rule’ and ‘the conservative Christian response to the public curriculum is not racially exclusive – the spectrum of responses covers both traditionally white and conservative black churches’ (2004:66). I agree with Jansen’s sense that ‘The opposition in South Africa is not galvanised by feelings of exclusion; rather, it is the loss of privilege, the erosion of a long-standing dominance of Christian values in the public school curriculum, that lie at the root of awakening of the Christian Right’ (2004:67).

In closing this exploration of the three curriculum moments as proposed by Jansen, he points to two distinct aspects that impact on the successful implementation of the Policy. The first aspect he points out is the role teachers will play in translating the Policy and NCS into practice in different contexts.

There is evidence from curriculum research to show that even when teachers in the same national context are provided with the same curriculum specifications, they translate them into very different meanings based on who they are and also where they are in a specific school locale (2004:67; italics in the original).

I will return to this aspect later in the analysis of the Policy (Chapter 6). Suffice to state that the successful translation of the Policy into practice will depend on a number of interpretations and phases. Should the Policy be based on faulty or misguided assumptions, successful implementation may be sabotaged from the start. The Policy and the NCS are also interpreted and ‘translated’ into Learning
Programme Guidelines (LPGs). These LPGs may misinterpret (whether willingly or by accident) the Policy. The next possible level of misinterpretation is when the Policy, the NCS and its LPGs select learning and teaching resources. At the same time, when teachers are trained to implement the Policy, the NCS and its LPGs, the trainers themselves may wilfully or by chance misinterpret the Policy’s intentions and applications\(^{120}\). What happens in classrooms may be the result of misinterpretation. The school classroom is a complex mix of structural, community and ideological nuances that impact on the curriculum. Finally, whether the pupil will attain the outcomes as envisaged by the Policy and translated a number of times - is the final ‘test’ of the Policy.

The central role the teachers play in this ever-generative cycle of interpretation is the second aspect Jansen refers to (2004:67). He questions the fact that the curriculum makes the values to be attained by pupils so central without attention being given to how teachers are to change or transform their own value commitments. This is especially crucial if teachers are regarded as the final filter through which official values reach the classroom. If this position is taken seriously, the values debate as a learner-focused event could be regarded as a distraction, given the very disparate values of teachers and their professional identities, and how such divergence in the value bases of teachers influence the curriculum (2004:67-68).

Jansen therefore petitions for a strategy that will transform teacher values, rather than learner values (2004:68). Jansen closes his exploration of values within the curriculum of a post-apartheid and post 9/11 society with expressing concern that the ‘deeply contested nature of faith, and its rooted values’ should not be underestimated. Jansen proposes that the writers of the National Curriculum Statement ‘made the crucial error of underestimating’ exactly this deeply contested nature and rooted-ness of values. He therefore proposes that this requires

\(^{120}\) Articles by Ferguson and Roux (2003) and Roux (2005) provide crucial insight regarding the preparation of teachers for the implementation of the Policy.
a curriculum and pedagogy that foster genuine and sustained dialogue within and outside schools on faith, commitment, respect and understanding. It requires a demonstration of the fact that learning to respect other faiths could lead to deepening of one’s commitment to one’s own faith and a broadening of one’s faith horizons. And it requires, most of all, a clear understanding of consequences: that dogmatism and demonised depictions of those who are different have no place in a human rights culture and can, quite literally, destroy civilisations (2004:69).

I could not trace any evidence of a public discourse regarding the Saamtrek’s discussion of the role of religion in public education. Shortly after the Saamtrek, there was however a public outcry against Minister Asmal as can be seen in the following Afrikaans newspaper articles. ‘Asmal braak gal oor Christene’, (Politieke Redaksie, Beeld 22 Maart 2001), ‘Christelike toorn ontlam teen Asmal’ (Politieke Redaksie, Beeld 2001) as well as ‘Groot grief oor Asmal en die Christene’ (Gunning, Rapport 25 Maart 2001). Although these three articles do not have anything to do with either the draft Policy or the Saamtrek, it signifies how many Christians (and Afrikaners) felt about Asmal. As Minister of Education and driver of the processes to formulate the position of religion in education, the public press presented a tainted view of Asmal121. These newspaper articles refer to comments made by Asmal about (according to him) an exclusionary meeting for Christians held on Human Rights Day in 2001. His comments were seen as divisive and he was branded to be the ‘Mugabe’ of South Africa.

5.3.5 Public discourses and participation

The public fall-out regarding Asmal’s remarks was soon to be used in casting a general question about his proposals for religion in education. On Saturday 24 March, Beeld published an article written by Prof Pieter de Villiers titled ‘Asmal uit pas met die wêreld’ (24 March 2001:9). The article’s main thrust is to cast doubt about the ‘true’ intentions of Asmal. De Villiers (2001:9) states that Asmal did not continue the processes started by Minister Bengu when he was Minister of

121 To what extent the specific role of Prof Asmal influenced the Policy, the processes and debates surrounding the Policy are difficult to ascertain. From these and other newspaper articles it is clear that he, in his role as Minister of Education, was considered to be controversial.
Education but summarily stopped the processes. De Villiers (2001:9) questions the fact that not one member of the previous committee under Bengu became involved in the advisory committee appointed by Asmal. He further alleges that this new committee was appointed in an atmosphere of secrecy, and that there was neither a public call for persons to serve on such a committee nor an invitation to experts to join the committee. Among a number of allegations, De Villiers (2001:9) states that Asmal wants to force an ‘inter-faith’ approach upon schools which will be value-neutral. De Villiers further casts doubt about the intentions of several scholars of religion who were co-opted by Asmal as well as their academic and research standing. De Villiers’ second argument is that international developments indicate that the ethos of specific groups should be allowed to dictate curriculum as well as how schools are run.

Minister Asmal (2001) responded to these allegations in a letter to Beeld in which he encourages and invites debate and further refutes the allegations made by De Villiers (2001). Asmal (2001) states that the draft Policy is not ‘value-free’ but embodies the specific values ‘of being factually informed about others in an unprejudiced manner, real understanding of them as human beings, tolerance, acceptance and a spirit of co-operation between all the groups of our society’. Asmal continues to reiterate the implications that the government and religious bodies operate and should operate in two different spheres. With regard to the allegation by De Villiers that Asmal proposes an ‘inter-faith’ approach, Asmal (2001) acknowledges that dialogue between faiths should be encouraged but that such an initiative falls outside the responsibility and mandate of the state. De Villiers also made the allegation that the draft Policy (and Asmal) is out of pace with developments in the rest of the world. Asmal (2001) refers to the fact that there are a number of international examples that point to the contrary. He concludes that the Policy will be announced ‘at the right time’ and that the broader public should not ‘be misled by false rumours’ (Asmal 2001).
A number of articles\textsuperscript{122} in the public domain from this period indicate the intensity as well as content of the public discourses. In the Editorial of the \textit{Kerkblad} (18 July 2001:4) titled ‘Hoe rym veelgodsdienstige opvoeding met ons doopbeloofte?’, the Editor starts by claiming that there has been, in recent years, a deterioration of the role of Christianity in public schools. The response of many Reformed parents was to start private schools. \textit{The Editorial suggests that there is a determined strategic drive to move towards a ‘faithless’ school system}\textsuperscript{123}.

The Editorial refers to an article by Dr Roux, which was published in \textit{Beeld} of 15 June 2001 in which she motivated the drafting of a new policy. The Editorial accuses her of representing ‘religion neutrality’. It further states that the new policy does not propose neutrality as such, but rather the replacement of Christianity with a new ‘religion’, namely multi-religion education. The Editorial is strongly opposed to the policy and its roots in the World Parliament of Religions that took place in Cape Town, which basically stated that all roads eventually lead to God.

In the Cape Times of 19 October, Mike Kantey analyses ‘Education in the cultural maelstrom of a modern South Africa’ (2001:9). The author first locates himself as a ‘Boerejood’ and traces his ancestors back to Jews who escaped the tyranny of Tsarist Russia, through to him leaving the ANC to support the Green Party. He reacts to a series of letters in the Cape Times written by Sue Keegan from the home schooling movement, and more specifically the Pestalozzi Trust. Kantey (2001:9) states that there is a strong and noble history of independent schooling.

\textsuperscript{122} Articles were sourced using the Magnet database of SA Media reports during August 2007. The search keywords were ‘religion’ and ‘education’ and the periods demarcated were from 2007 and 2001. Within these parameters, a number of 554 finds were returned. Those with titles provided were 189. From these 189, a number was selected trying to cover English and Afrikaans media, from all church groups, from correspondents as well as letter columns and editorials. Articles that had the keywords ‘religion’ and ‘education’ but which did not refer to the Policy were disregarded.

\textsuperscript{123} An analysis of the discourses in the public press shows vast misrepresentation of the draft Policy and the later accepted Policy. Whether this misrepresentation was due to ignorance or a willful and intentional misrepresentation will be discussed at the end of this chapter as well as in Chapter 8.
movements and mentions Waldorf, Herzlia, Habibiya and Montessori. He however takes Keegan up on her challenge of the new curriculum as being ‘Marxist, secular, Darwinian, materialist, anti-Christian, heretical, narrowly political and coercive’. He shares his suspicion that ‘there is far too much associative thinking, and too little empiricism at work, too much criticism and too little critique’. After exploring some examples of the following religion has in South Africa, Kantey (2001:9) continues to say

If, therefore, a tiny majority seek the privilege of instructing their own children according to their own beliefs, they should be entitled to do so, but without jeopardising their children’s future careers in a modern, secular world, where the preservation of faith is a private affair…. If they wish to opt out of the challenges that such a universalist, multi-cultural and multi-faith opportunity provides, it is their human right and prerogative to do so, but they have equally less right to carp and criticise from an isolationist position. The correct and fitting place for future, integrated and fully welcome citizens of our country is in the hurly-burly of the classroom and the playgrounds where the true depth of faith is measured against a supermarket of choice.

Kantey (2001:9) closes his article with the following paragraph: A country where Jew and Afrikaner, Christian and Canadian, Muslim and Somali, might wish to settle down, safe in the knowledge that their religious and cultural preferences will not be sown on their jackets as a signal to waiting cattle cars. A country where the bombs have finally fallen silent, and the wailing of sirens is heard no more; where learning knows no language, no religion, no time and no place, and where everyone is welcome to share in the rich bounty that has come down to us from every continent.

Joey van Niekerk, (who was a member of the Bengu’s advisory committee), writes on 19 October in ‘Kerkbode’ an article titled ‘Die probleem met “multi-religie” onderwys’ (2001:13). Van Niekerk takes position against Asmal’s new proposed policy. She states that the multi-religion model of Asmal is nothing else than a mono-religion model being forced on everyone. She then continues to quote from a British study, which found that very few British children really knew about the Christian rendition of Easter. Van Niekerk (2001:13) also has it against the attempts by Asmal through various public forums to sell his ‘neutral’ values. She states that the policy will result in Christian children knowing less about their
own religion. She refers to the time that Muslim and Jewish children spend learning about their own religion while Christian children only have one hour’s catechism over weekends. Van Niekerk (2001) fails to state why public schools must address the resultant lack of knowledge in Christian children. Although she refers to the strategies and action that two other religions have outside school hours to educate their children, Van Niekerk seems not to ‘own up’ but feels the state should take responsibility for the backlog in Christian children. She continues to explore the embarrassment Christian children will experience when they do not know as much of their own religion as children from other religions. Van Niekerk (2001) completely refuses to acknowledge that the type of knowledge that she refers to as being ‘foundational’ to the Christian faith like the doctrine of the Trinity or the two natures of Christian, should be the responsibility of the church and not public schooling.

Between 15 August and 11 December 2001 Minister Asmal held nine extensive consultations with leaders from various religious organisations (as reported on in an Analytical resumé of discussions between Minister Asmal and religious leaders on the matter of religion in education, dated 13 December 2001). The groups covered the entire spectrum of religious leadership in the country and consisted of representatives from

(a) Various (Dutch) Reformed Churches
(b) The African Indigenous Churches
(c) African Traditional Religion
(d) The Catholic Bishops Conference
(e) Various Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches
(f) A representative body of Muslim leaders (the Jamiatul Ulama, Transvaal)
(g) The South African Council of Churches
(h) National Religious Leaders Forum
(i) Various minority religions (Baha’i, Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism) (Analytical resumé 2001:1)
The *Analytical resumé* (2001:3) shares that ‘virtually all religious leaders expressed an understanding and appreciation of the Minister’s intent that all future citizens should be educated about the various religions constituting the pluralistic national religious mosaic’. The *Analytical resumé* (2001:4-6) furthermore notes some misunderstandings and clarifies the Policy’s intention regarding these. The misunderstandings included

(a) The concern that religious observances will not be allowed.
(b) The concern that religious freedom and choice will be affected.
(c) The concern that the policy may be driven by a ‘secularist’ animosity towards religion.
(d) The concern that the state may be embarking on a feat of social and religious engineering, forcing a set of alien values on pupils in state schools.
(e) The concern that teaching about religion may result in merely a ‘flat’, superficial inventory of information, devoid of any human or spiritual value.
(f) The concern that such a policy might threaten the religious identities of young pupils, and confuse them.
(g) The concern that the policy will result in renewed caricaturing of some religions.
(h) The concern that the new policy is aimed at, or will result in, a syncretistic ‘New Age’ mixing of religions, and that ‘inter-faith’ religious views will be foisted on pupils.

The *Analytical resumé* (2001:6-8) further refutes the following conflicting viewpoints:

(a) ‘The notion that allowance be made for state schools that would in their overall character express, and serve, the religious content of one specific religion (for example Christianity) or even a subgroup within a religion’. This would prevent any religion-based ideology like CNE to dominate education, or that schools become the ‘battlegrounds for religion-based
dominance’, or that schools provide a ‘captive audience for the inculcation of religious instruction’.

(b) ‘The insistence that the state school must confirm and reinforce the values of parental homes and religious bodies’. It was emphasised that the state cannot be held responsible for the responsibilities of religious bodies to inculcate specific belief systems.

(c) ‘The insistence that education in moral and civic values in state schools must necessarily rest on explicit religious foundations to which the state must commit itself’.

(d) ‘The insistence that the “majority” sentiment of the public at large should be solicited and implemented’. This insistence was based on an ‘insufficient understanding of the working of a democratically elected government’.

(e) ‘The insistence that religion education should be optional’. The Analytical resumé states ‘The state cannot renege on its basic responsibility to educate the young in the development of knowledge, attitudes and social skills absolutely vital in a pluralistic society’.

Very few of the articles published in the popular press of this period reflect a positive appreciation of the draft Policy. An example of a positive evaluation of the draft Policy is an article published in ‘Die Kerkbode’ by Cornelia Roux on 2 November 2001, ‘Religieuse onderrrig: die ander kant van die munt’ (2001:10). Roux (2001) provides a short historical overview of the study of religion in schools in the previous dispensation and shares the findings of research that support the fact that learning about other religions does not confuse learners124.

Positive interrogations of the draft Policy125 was swamped by the negative and distorted opinions presented in and by the popular press. Joey van Niekerk states in the Beeld of 12 November (2001:12) ‘U gaan kinders verwar, Asmal’

124 Except for this article by Roux (2001), the evidence provided by research regarding the critical relation between age and the curriculum is never discussed or referred to in the public press.

and Alet Rademeyer reports on the same day in Beeld ‘Nog teenkanting teen Asmal’ (2001:4). Willem Steenkamp in the *Independent on Saturday* (17 November 2001:2) reports on the ‘Multi-faith studies row’ and warns that the national Department of Education’s plans to introduce religious and sex education will result in “complete social chaos” (2001:2). It continues to state that ‘The State does not have the right to enforce its secular values on parents’ according to Ms Julia Swain, spokeswoman for the Concerned Communities for Education, ‘a broad-based organisation representing teachers, parents and people from various religious backgrounds’ (2001:2). The main point of contention seems to be that people [read parents] have ‘the constitutional right to have their children educated according to their choice and beliefs’ (Swain quoted by Steenkamp 2001:2). ‘The State will be forcing its secular values on our children. These values written into the curriculum are not neutral. They were written by people who have their own values, their own agendas. This is a clear intrusion into the role of parents by the State’ (Swain quoted by Steenkamp 2001:2).

In an interview with Asmal in the Rapport on 16 December 2001 Van Eeden (2001) (again) explains the difference between religious instruction and religious education, as well as emphasising the different mandates and spheres of responsibility between the state and religious bodies. In the interview he petitions that all religious groups will be treated equally. Interestingly, in the interview Asmal shared that he had stayed in Northern Ireland for a number of years and that he had experienced that religious division lay much deeper than racial divisions and tensions. He again invited readers to take part in the public discourse.

5.3.6 SACRED: the process and public debates

On 13 September the *Sowetan* (2002:2) writes ‘Religious body to advise Asmal’. The article reports on the first meeting of the committee set up by Asmal to
advise him on the new policy. Asmal is quoted to have said that the committee was ‘making history’. The article also quotes Mr Edcent Williams who said ‘We needed to get an educational viewpoint from religious organisations so we are able to manage religious expression in the curriculum with the required sensitivity’. The committee that the Sowetan refers to, although not stated, is the Standing Advisory Committee for Religion in Education (SACRED) as published in the Government Gazette Vol 448, on 29 October 2002. SACRED was established in terms of sections 20.2 and 20.3 of the Public Finance management Act, 1999. According to the proclamation (Government Gazette 2002:3) the committee was in response to ‘Widespread consultation [which] has shown support for such a committee’. A number of nominations were also received from ‘religious and other organisations’ (Government Gazette 2002:3). The purpose of the committee was to ‘advise the minister in consolidating policy for Religion in Education’ within specific terms of reference, which the Gazette sets out as follows (2002:3-4):

1. Policy implementation for Religion in Education with reference to its implications for initial and ongoing teacher development programmes. This includes the quality of religion education in schools, assessment standards and practices.
2. The development, selection, procurement, supply and quality of learning and teaching support materials.
3. How religious observances conducted on public school premises outside the National Curriculum Statement and after school hours will be accommodated.
4. The organisation and conduct of school assemblies.
5. Monitoring the quality of religious education and religion education in schools.
6. Any matter referred to it by the Minister of Education\textsuperscript{126}.

\textsuperscript{126} From these terms of reference it would seem as if the rationale and content of the Policy was not part of the focus for SACRED, but that the committee was to advise on the implementation of the Policy, for example, learning materials’ development and teacher training. It would also seem
Table 5.2 lists the members of SACRED and their envisaged tasks (Gazette 2002:4-5):

**Table 5.2: Members of SACRED**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title and name</th>
<th>Designated tasks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dr Daniel Maluleke</td>
<td>Chairperson and advisor on uniting churches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Nokuzola Mndende</td>
<td>Advisor on African Indigenous Religions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prof Russell Botman</td>
<td>Advisor on Christianity and large scale organisational frameworks for Religion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sister Margaret Kelly</td>
<td>Advisor on role of women in Religion Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bishop Busi Kumalo</td>
<td>Advisor on Leadership in Religion and on the role of women in Religion Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Paul Farrell</td>
<td>Advisor on pedagogy related to Religion in Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prof Rambhujan Sitaram</td>
<td>Advisor on Hinduism and its approach to education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shaikh Mohammed Faakiel Latief</td>
<td>Advisor on Islam and its approach to education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rabbi Warren Goldstein</td>
<td>Advisor on Judaism and its approach to education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prof Gerrie Lubbe</td>
<td>Advisor on role of academics in Religion Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nominee from teacher organisations</td>
<td>Liaison with teacher organisations and their views on Religion in Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Tina Joemat</td>
<td>Liaison with the Council of Education Ministers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prof Kobus Krüger</td>
<td>Technical Assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bishop Peter Storey</td>
<td>Advisor on various persuasions of Christianity and implications for Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr Gustav Claassen</td>
<td>Advisor on Religion in Education from the viewpoint of the Afrikaans speaking churches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Edcent Williams</td>
<td>Ex-officio member</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

as if these terms of reference were taking seriously some of the public concerns and practical matters that were raised in the press.
SACRED was to meet at least three times a year for a period of three years. Committee members could then be re-appointed. All members participated on a non-remunerative voluntary basis (Gazette 2002:4). From the constitution of SACRED the following seems obvious at face-value:

- Of the sixteen members two members were specifically from a Religion Education background, namely Prof Gerrie Lubbe and Prof Kobus Krüger. This is not to say that the other members did not have expertise in the discourses surrounding Religion Education.
- Two members were designated to specifically represent the ‘role of women’ in Religion Education. Four of the sixteen members were female.
- There was no representation from a specific non-religion or anti-religion viewpoint or organisation.

Though SACRED oversaw the implementation of the Policy, a separate Curriculum Committee was set up to oversee the development of curriculum for Religion Education (as part of Life Orientation) and Religion Studies (Grades 10-12). This committee consisted of representatives of different religious groupings, representatives from the National DoE as well as departmental experts in curriculum development. The committee was however only constituted after September 2003 when the Policy was promulgated.

The second half of 2002 continuing into the whole of 2003 saw a vibrant (and at times almost hysterical) discussion in the public press. The following table (Table 5.3) contains some examples of the titles of articles and letters appearing from the end of 2002 towards the end of 2005.

**Table 5.3: An overview of some published articles**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20 December 2002</td>
<td>Kerkbode, page 2</td>
<td>‘Godsdienstonderrig op skool het gefaal, sê Claassen’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 April 2002</td>
<td>Business Day, page 3</td>
<td>‘MEC says religious element of new curriculum will be reviewed’</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Linda Ensor, Political</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Source</td>
<td>Correspondent</td>
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<td>-------------</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| 17 October 2002 | *Weekly Mail and Guardian*, page 18 | 'Pagan values are being forced on our children’
Rob McCafferty, United Christian Action |
| 24 October 2002 | *Weekly Mail and Guardian*, page 14 | 'Enough of this religious dogma’
Harry Sewlall, Sandton
'Dowsabel' (A pagan)
Henry Crumb, United Atheist Action, Cape Town |
| 2 April 2003 | *Beeld*, page 12      | 'Godsdienis’, Editorial                                                       |
| 6 April 2003 | *Rapport*, page 22    | 'Asmal krap weer waar dit nie jeuk nie. Dié keer is dit godsdienis in skole’
Tim du Plessis |
| 13 April 2003 | *Rapport*, page 18    | 'Godsdienis op ‘n sinnryker manier’
Letter from Mr Corrie Louw, Oberholzer |
| 13 April 2003 | *Rapport*, page 18    | 'Asmal is reg met skool-godsdienis’
Dr Duan van der Westhuizen, Rand Afrikaans University, Johannesburg |
| 13 April 2003 | *Rapport*, page 18    | 'Onderwysbeleid nie net uit die lug gegryp’, Molatwane Likethe, Spokesperson for the Department of Education |
| 16 April 2003 | *Citizen*, page 17    | 'Intervening in religion is dictatorship’
Rev K. G. Webb, Benoni |
| 20 April 2003 | *Sunday Times*, page 5 | 'State pushes policy on religion in schools’
Cornia Pretorius |
| 23 April 2003 | *Beeld*, page 13      | Geloof is tuis by kerk of ouerhuis’
Dr Gerrie Lubbe |
<p>| 27 April 2003 | <em>Rapport</em>, page 13    | 'Só kan plan gemaak word met godsdienis op skool’, Christo Lombard |
| 1 May 2003    | <em>Beeld</em>, page 5       | 'Geloofsleiers en onderwys vergader ‘oor skoolbeleid’, Neels Jackson |
| 14 May 2003   | <em>Beeld</em>, page 13      | 'Leer ken mekaar se God’, Joey van Niekerk |
| 17 May 2003   | <em>Beeld</em>, page 4       | 'Onnies kan weier om godsdienis aan te bied, sê kenner’, Alet Rademeyer |
| 24 May 2003   | <em>Burger</em>, page 15     | 'Die ander kant van multireligieuse onderrig’, Prof Cornelia Roux |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Article</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13 June 2003</td>
<td>Kerkbode, page 1</td>
<td>‘Nog vrae oor skolegodsdienis nadat Asmal sy standpunt “versag” het’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 June 2003</td>
<td>Cape Argus, page 21</td>
<td>‘Faith in compromise’</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Rev Keith Vermeulen, Director, SA Council of Churches, Parliamentary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 June 2003</td>
<td>Kerkblad, page 17</td>
<td>‘Die nuwe onderwysbeleid: aanslag teen die Christendom’</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ds Naas Ferreira (Rietvallei)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 July 2003</td>
<td>Afrikaner, page 1</td>
<td>‘Kaser (sic) Asmal dwing Nuwe Wêreldgodsdienis op skole af’</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>JB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 July 2003</td>
<td>Kerkbode, page 16</td>
<td>‘Nuwe godsdienisbeleid vir skole is minder voorskrifteklik’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 July 2003</td>
<td>Rapport, page 8</td>
<td>‘Sê nog jou sê oor skole se godsdienis’, Eugene Gunning,</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Political journalist</td>
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<tr>
<td>22 July 2003</td>
<td>Sowetan, page 16</td>
<td>Schools’ religion policies flawed’</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cheryllyn Dudley, African Christian Democratic Party, MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 August 2003</td>
<td>Beeld, page 10</td>
<td>‘Bidbeleid op die spits gedryf’, Alet Rademeyer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 August 2003</td>
<td>Star, page 3</td>
<td>‘Main faiths to get equal opportunity in schools’</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Peroshni Govender</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 August 2003</td>
<td>Leader, page 1</td>
<td>‘Controversial religion in education adopted’</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Dan Naidu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 August 2003</td>
<td>Pretoria News,</td>
<td>‘Another first for SA education’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>page 3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 September</td>
<td>Hervormer, page 5</td>
<td>‘Die krisis in die onderwys: Wat kan jy doen?’ Dr Hannes Beukes en Dr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ferdinand Potgieter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 September</td>
<td>Sowetan, page 14</td>
<td>‘Education laws might promote religious strife’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td></td>
<td>Cheryllyn Dudley, African Christian Democratic Party, MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 September</td>
<td>Sowetan, page 14</td>
<td>‘Asmal sets a trend – again’, by</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td></td>
<td>Victor Mecoamere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 September</td>
<td>Volksblad, page 2</td>
<td>‘NG Kerk in VS verwelkom beleid’,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td></td>
<td>Erika Fourie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 September</td>
<td>Rapport, page 18</td>
<td>‘Godsdienis’, ‘Religion’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td></td>
<td>Editorial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 October 2003</td>
<td>City Press, page 22</td>
<td>‘The new vision of religious education’ by Console Tleane</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Source</td>
<td>Article</td>
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<td>------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 October 2003</td>
<td><em>Sunday Independent</em>, page 8</td>
<td>‘Human values cannot be traded in the marketplace’ Kader Asmal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 November 2003</td>
<td><em>Citizen</em>, page 3</td>
<td>‘No ban on religion: Asmal’, Thulani Msimang</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 December 2003</td>
<td><em>Business Day</em>, page 7</td>
<td>‘Religion education may face challenge’ Claire Barclay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 January 2004</td>
<td><em>Beeld</em>, page 8</td>
<td>‘Skoolgodsdien onderzoek’, Alet Rademeyer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 May 2004</td>
<td><em>Rapport</em>, page 6</td>
<td>‘Skoolgodsdien bly in kruisvuur’ Christo Lombard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 March 2005</td>
<td><em>Afrikaans</em>, page 3</td>
<td>‘Christelik-nasionale opvoeding. Aanskou die rots’ Dr Sydney Gregan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 April 2005</td>
<td><em>Star</em>, page 6</td>
<td>‘Yarmulkes, headscarves and crosses are fine. Beards? Maybe.’ Angela Quintal Group Political Editor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 September 2006</td>
<td><em>Pretoria News</em>, page 6</td>
<td>‘New dress code guide introduced lines for schools’ Rivonia Naidu</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Considering that the Policy actually provides a framework for what happens for a maximum of 0.5 percent of the total curriculum from Reception year to Grade 12 (Chidester 2003:273), the public outcry and intensity of the debates raise interesting and serious questions. Chidester classifies the opponents to the Policy in four different Christian positions – namely Reconstructionist, Protectionist, Ecumenical and Interfaith (2003:266). He discusses their different positions in detail (2003; 2006). Table 5.4 presents the main points of these four groups as explored by Chidester (2003).

**Table 5.4: Four different positions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reconstructionist</th>
<th>Protectionist</th>
<th>Christian Ecumenical</th>
<th>Interfaith</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>They claimed that the Policy promoted ‘a single set of values under</td>
<td>They wanted to retain the religious benefits of the old system</td>
<td>The South African Council of Churches (SACC) supported the</td>
<td>This group did not object to learning about other religions, ‘but to</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

297
the guise of tolerance’ (2003:267).

They claimed that the actual values of the Policy were ‘relativism, situational ethics, and the equality of all religions’ which they said were characteristic of the New Age movement.

The Policy, according to them, promoted secular humanism. They were supported from right-wing organisations in the USA. The ‘home-schooling’ movement of the Pestalozzi Trust supported their campaigns.

of religious education’ (2003:268). This group wanted ‘separate programmes in Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, and perhaps “other” religious instruction…

A main proponent of them was Prof De Villiers who made the assertion that ‘Christian religious education can provide the basis for ‘understanding among faiths’ (2003:269).

They therefore claim that Christian education would be a ‘good basis for dealing with religious diversity in South Africa’ (2003:269).

idea that ‘it is important for learners to be informed about the various religious beliefs of the people of South Africa’ (2003:269).

At the same time, the SACC supported a policy that would make provision for ‘both a multi-religious approach and for single-faith programmes’ (2003:270).

the apparent absence of explicit attention to spirituality in the new policy’ (2003:270).

They wrongly assumed that learning about religions is only a cognitive function and that it will not engage the affective, emotional or spiritual development of learners.

As an exponent of this group, Paul Faller (Director of the Catholic Institute of Education) called for a ‘formative rather than a purely descriptive Religious Education’ (2003:270).

While opponents to the Policy were very vocal, the Policy had support from ‘religious leaders from a variety of religious communities’ (Chidester 2003:270), albeit not as vocal nor as visible in the public domain as the opponents (as illustrated in Table 5.3).
5.4 AN ANALYSIS OF PATTERNS AND TRENDS

I started this chapter by locating the Policy within the context of the legitimation discourses of the new democratic state in its four gestalts, namely the constitutional state, the transformational state, the cultural state as well as the symbolic state (See Diagram 2). I suggested that understanding the processes, discourses and public participation surrounding the Policy could benefit from locating the Policy in these four gestalts of nationhood (in following Chidester 2003).

In the next chapter (Chapter 6) I will analyse the Policy according to a specific methodology proposed in Chapter 2. Before I proceed to analyse the Policy, it is necessary to reflect back on Chapters 4 and 5 in an attempt to identify possible patterns and trends that would assist firstly in understanding the Policy as a specific response to the context post-1994, and secondly, to identify patterns and trends which may assist in critically evaluating the Policy (Chapter 8).

1 The distrust and accusations that the government was driving a specific ideologically coloured agenda of enforcing ‘inter-faith’ education was not as visible during the work of the Bengu-committee. With the appointment of Minister Asmal in 2000, the processes towards defining the Policy started over. Minister Asmal provided the impetus for formulating the Draft Policy not building on the Ministerial Committee appointed by Bengu, nor appointing the members of the Bengu committee. Minister Asmal’s stature in especially the Afrikaans press was often tainted by allegations that he had ‘a bone to pick’ with the Afrikaner and with Christianity in particular. The various allegations and accusations in the mainstream Afrikaner press were spearheaded by editors, members of the Bengu-committee and comments by political editors and reporters. The debates and articles in the public press were essentially political and not educational. It is on the one hand easy to characterise these accusations as being ‘sensational’
and ‘hysterical’ (and some of the articles were) – but somehow the intensity of the debate requires a more thorough response and analysis.

2 The articles and public participation were permeated with evidence that there was a Babylonian confusion in the use of terminology and concepts. Contributors used terms like ‘syncretism’, ‘neutrality’, ‘democracy’, ‘multi-religious’ and many other terms within a range of different meanings. In some cases one could excuse the ‘wrong’ use of a term, but in many cases the misuse of terms were done by people who should have known better. In these cases one could suspect another agenda.

3 From the start of the public processes, the debates were cluttered and distorted by confusion regarding the roles of the state, the National DoE, parents, churches, SGBs, teachers and religious organisations. These distortions and misunderstandings (whether intentional or due to ignorance) were understandable when considered that in the dispensation prior to 1994, public consultation was not practiced and spheres of government overlapped. State and Christianity were synonymous in the previous dispensation and profoundly shaped perceptions regarding the roles of the various stakeholders, specifically the roles of the state, education as well as religious organisations.

4 One cannot help but sense that the debate was ‘driven’ by persons feeling disenfranchised by and in the new political dispensation. The debates surrounding the Policy were part of the broader legitimisation discourses of the new state as well as communities of memory and forgetting. The previous regime consciously and deliberately characterised the ANC as ‘Communist’, ‘heathen’, ‘atheist’, ‘satanic’ and as part of the domain of the ‘anti-Christ’. The propaganda of the apartheid regime and misinformation campaigns had a profound effect on generations of Afrikaners. In many cases the opinions of contributors in the public press accused the new
government in terms that reveal the impact of the misinformation and propaganda of the previous regime.

5 A significant part of the public debates regarding the Asmal-era was also driven and continuously (mis)informed by individual members and supporters of the Bengu-committee. Why Minister Asmal did not use or include members of the previous committee is open for speculation and misinterpretation. A possible hypothesis would be that Minister Asmal disagreed with the Bengu-committee’s proposals and favoured the multi-religious approach proposed by various other stakeholders. The Bengu-proposals were also contestable on grounds of their weak theoretical grounding in the discourses surrounding religion and education. The majority of the Bengu-committee also consisted of Christians and the Bengu-committee was not truly representative of all the different religious groupings in South Africa.

6 One of the major elements in the debate was specific understanding of ‘democracy’ almost in opposition to the implications of having a ‘constitutional state.’ Numerous contributors demanded that the opinion of the majority should be taken into account, referendums to be held and local SGBs to decide on the ‘group-ethos’ of schools. A further element in the debate was feelings of entitlement and the privileging of individual and group rights contra the constitutional right of others and specifically minorities.

7 There were clearly different opinions of the parameters of ‘nation building’ and citizenship. Accusations were common that the government drove an agenda where ‘we are one’ evolved into ‘we are the same’, in an inter-faith and cultural hotchpotch. The new regime rightly questioned the role Christianity, and more specifically white Afrikaans Christianity played in sustaining the hegemony of white superiority and crude inequalities based
on race and gender. Although white Afrikaans Churches confessed their support and formulation of apartheid as a sin, the general Afrikaans Christian public was unrepentant.

8 There was a crucial dearth of information in the public domain regarding other international examples as well as on research findings regarding the impact of the study of religion on children during different ages. There was confusion regarding the content of such a curriculum as well as deliberate misinformation. Although the lack of correct information regarding the rationale and content of the Policy is fairly evident in scrutinising the public press, the reasons for the lack of visibility of the correct information are open to speculation. The fact that the debates in the public domain were mainly political and not educational is also reason for concern and further research. The lack of transparency of the early Asmal processes could have resulted in many of the allegations and suspicions that permeated the public debates later on.

9 Education is never neutral and is always an expression of one or more ideologies or meta-narratives. It is interesting how people accused the government of making education ideological, forgetting how ideology formed the previous dispensation’s curricula. The values as found in the Constitution were taken to be the guiding principles for shaping the new curriculum and yet, allegations regarding the ‘neutrality’ of the new curriculum are puzzling. Could it be that the move away from CNE and the values and ideologies it supported, was the main concern and not necessarily the values of the new curriculum?

10 Not only was there a determined effort to create suspicion regarding the motives of the government for introducing the new policy, but there were also a number of cases where the persona, character and scholarly integrity of members of SACRED were deliberately questioned and
tainted. Possible reasons include the exclusion of members of the Bengu-committee from the Asmal initiatives as well as historical differences of opinions between stakeholders.

11 Although there were constant allegations of a lack of consultation, the evidence points to the contrary. Not only were all possible religious groupings included, there were several public hearings where the public could have made their submissions. Minister Asmal is on record to have invited public participation.

12 Anxiety about the availability of suitably qualified teachers and support staff, networks, learning and resource materials was acknowledged and processes put in place to address the training of teachers and prospective teachers.

13 While satisfaction was expressed with the final policy, there was a number of voices who stated that the implementation of the policy should be monitored by parents, churches and school governing bodies. Some of these remarks may indicate suspicion that the government should not be completely trusted to abide by the policy.

14 The Policy embodies a specific notion of ‘sanctioned religiosity’ and possibly a sanitised use of religion as vehicle for moral regeneration.

5.5 CONCLUSION

In the processes described in the chapter, the re-visioning of citizenship was shaped and impacted upon by memories and counter-memories. The debates
surrounding the Policy should further be understood within the context of the four gestalts of the state, namely constitutional, cultural, transformational and symbolic. These different gestalts of the newly elected state introduced and shaped memory and counter-memory, the re-writing of the history of South Africa as well as counter-narratives; name-changes and acts of lobotomy as well as ‘memory-as-resistance’. The four gestalts of the South African state were the result of the impact of the ‘tectonic layers’ explored in Chapter 4, still shifting and moving.

In Chapter 5 I attempted to understand the Policy-as-compromise on the one hand, and on the other hand understand the Policy-as-nonnegotiable as an embodiment of the protection awarded by the Constitution as well as the guaranteed equalities. As such the Policy is a major departure from the previous dispensation’s unequal treatment of religions. What the Policy and the previous dispensation have in common, though, is the use of religion in the service of particular ideologies. In the case of the apartheid regime, the Christian religion served an ideology of white supremacy. In the post-1994 dispensation, the Policy will result in learners as would-be citizens having a shared vocabulary regarding their own religion but also the religions of others.

Chapter 5 is therefore a necessary foundation for the analysis of the Policy, which is to follow.

CHAPTER 6
AN ANALYSIS OF THE POLICY

6.1 PROLOGUE
... a perfumer, however, needs more than a passably fine nose. He needs an incorruptible, hard-working organ that has been trained to smell for many decades, enabling him to decipher even the most complicated odours by composition and proportion, as well as to create new, unknown mixtures of scent (Süskind 1986:77)

I don’t need a formula. I have the recipe in my nose (Süskind 1986:78)

The above two quotes from Perfume (Süskind 1986) are situated in the first encounter between Grenouille, a deformed tanner’s apprentice and a perfume master, Maître Baldini, in eighteenth century Paris. In the encounter Grenouille boasts that he could mix the perfume, ‘Amor and Psyche’ using only his nose and intuition, while the perfume master, Baldini, claims that it is impossible to duplicate an existing perfume without knowing the formula. In support of his argument Baldini claims that it is not only necessary to be able to identify the different essences of jasmine, bergamot, attar of roses and cloves in an existing perfume; but also crucial to know the exact amounts of these essences. Therefore, without knowing the formula, Baldini claims that it is futile to attempt to duplicate a perfume. Grenouille however proves him wrong.

In this analysis, at this stage of our journey, I will attempt not to judge or criticise the Policy but to analyse its content, its structure, its assumptions and traces of its belief systems. In Chapter 5 we discovered the Policy-as-response; on the one hand a compromised response and on the other hand an embodiment of the values of the Constitution. In this chapter we will explore the Policy-as-text. We may discover at times very clear traces of assumptions and beliefs, while at other times, only nuances – like the faint smell of perfume after someone has walked past. These traces of smells entice you to stop in your tracks and analyse the odours like an eighteenth century perfumer trying to analyse a new perfume.

In this chapter we will engage with the Policy as a perfumer who analyses a perfume looking for traces of rose and clove, jasmine, bergamot and rosemary. While all perfumes are eventually judged by perfume masters, clientele and
passers by, the purpose of this chapter is to uncover and discover the unique elements of this Policy, its overt and covert assumptions and beliefs.

6.2 INTRODUCTION TO THE CHAPTER

In this chapter I will set out to analyse the Policy. In Chapter 2 I provided an overview of policy analysis as hermeneutic activity. I also reflected on the nature of policy analysis as well as the practicalities of doing a policy analysis.

In the first part of this chapter (6.3) I will very briefly recapture the implications of opting for a post-structural approach doing this analysis. I will then continue to actually do an analysis of the Policy (6.4). I will start by analysing the range and application of the Policy (6.4.1) and continue to analyse the definitions as proposed by the Policy (6.4.2). This will allow me to analyse the Policy argument (6.5) – looking at Policy information: the policy problem (6.5.1.1), alternatives (6.5.1.2), warrants and backing (6.5.1.3) and Policy claims (6.5.1.4).

I will then continue to analyse the Policy implications for implementation and evaluation (6.6) and analyse the logic of the Policy (6.7). In analysing the Policy, I will be specifically using Dunn’s (1994) analysis of a policy argument.

6.3 A POST-STRUCTURAL APPROACH

In a post-structural hermeneutics, the interpreter engages not only with the text, but also with the historical and cultural context in which the text was produced and in which the interpreter finds him or herself. The act of interpreting is furthermore not a one-way action from interpreter to text, but also from text to interpreter. Out of this dynamic interaction between interpreter, historical and cultural context and text, meaning transpires, for now. Such a post-structural analysis is therefore time-bound in acknowledging that the interpreter, contexts or even texts may change. In the following diagram, Demetrio (2001) illustrates a post-structural system of interpretation (Figure 6.1):
Figure 6.1: Post-structural system of interpretation (Demetrio 2001)

In Chapter 1 I revealed my personal interests and passion regarding the research in an attempt to take seriously the involvement of the interpreter with the texts, contexts and possibilities of meaning, as implied by a post-structural approach. Chapters 1 and 3 provided a thorough exploration of the academic discourses surrounding the study of religion in the public sphere in the context of constitutional patriotism. Chapters 4 and 5 explored the historical and cultural contexts of the processes surrounding and resulting in the Policy. In this chapter I move to specifically analyse the Policy-as-text, acknowledging the patterns and trends that became visible in the first five chapters.

This analysis of the Policy is also distinctly critical, against the background of my exploration of critical theory and critical pedagogy (Chapter 2). This critical policy analysis follows authors such as Taylor (1997), Dryzek (1982) and others in supporting critical policy analysis as an appropriate point of departure for policy analysis in complex and layered contexts. Taylor (1997:26), for example, refers to the concern expressed by Fulcher (1989) that most of the analysis done convey ‘no sense of the political struggles involved in developing and implementing policy’. These authors propose policies-as-texts as products of
various and layered struggles and compromises over meaning. Codd (1988:237) shares Taylor’s view and says: ‘...policy documents can be said to constitute the official discourse of the state’ (Codd 1985; italics added).127

According to Troyna (1994:70) the role of the analyst is to scrutinise policy for its use of ‘symbolic language’ and ‘condensation symbols’. I accept the nature of policy analysis as technical, political as well as ethical as proposed by Wildavsky (1987). With regard to the practicality of doing this analysis, I will first follow the structure of the Policy before I return to apply the steps and analysis proposed by Dunn (1994) and analyse the Policy argument’s elements, namely Policy-relevant information (I), the Policy-claim (C), the Policy Warrant (W), the Policy Backing (B) as well as the Policy Qualifier (Q).

6.4 THE POLICY – RANGE AND DEFINITIONS

6.4.1 The range and application of the Policy

The Policy describes its ‘range’ as follows:

The policy covers the different aspects of Religion Education128, Religious Instruction and Religious Observances, and is applicable in all public schools. The spirit of the policy, which is to embrace the religious diversity of South Africa, must also be applied at other levels of the education system, including District, Provincial and National level gatherings (paragraph 15; 2003:12; italics mine).

The Policy describes its range firstly as covering three distinct concepts namely Religious Instruction, Religious Observances as well as Religion Education. The Policy further describes its range as having application on District, Provincial and National levels. On a third level the Policy deals with public schools and independent schools.

127 See Chapter 5 for a discussion of the location of the Policy within the constitutional, cultural, transformational and symbolic state.
128 Please take note that the Policy here refers to Religion Education as part of Life Orientation (Grades R-12) in contrast to Religion Studies, as part of the FET band for Grades 10-12. Religion Education in the context of the definition should be read in juxtaposition to the other two concepts mentioned in this definition namely Religious Instruction and Religious Observances.
With regard to independent schools the Policy prescribes its application as follows in paragraph 16 (2003:12):

Citizens do have the right, at their own expense, to establish independent schools, including religious schools, as long as they avoid racial discrimination, register with the state, and maintain standards that are not inferior to the standards of comparable public educational institutions (Section 29(3) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa). Similarly, Section 57 of the Schools Act provides for ‘Public Schools on Private Property with a recognised religious character’, which also have the right to specify a religious ethos and character, subject to an agreement with the provincial authorities (in terms of Section 14 of the South African Schools Act). In both such institutions the requirements for Religious Instruction and Religious Observances would not be prescribed by this policy. However in maintaining the curriculum standards with respect to Religion Education, both independent schools and public schools on private property with a recognised religious character (as provided for in Section 57 of the South African Schools Act) are required to achieve the minimum outcomes for Religion Education (italics mine).

Therefore, although some independent schools may have a specific single-faith focus and ethos, the curriculum as taught from R-9 in these schools will have to comply with the outcomes and assessment criteria as envisaged by the Policy and the RNCS\(^{129}\).

As the definitions used in the Policy provide a particular framework for understanding to the Policy, the analysis of the Policy will start with the ‘Definitions’, and then analyse the Policy’s description of its background, its context and its values. The analysis will then continue to look at the distinction the Policy makes between Religion Education, Religious Instruction and Religious Observances before analysing the application of the Policy as stated by the Policy itself.

### 6.4.2 An analysis of the definitions used in the Policy

\(^{129}\) As will be explored in detail in Chapter 7, Life Orientation (Grades R-9) is covered by the RNCS (DoE 2002a). Life Orientation (Grades 10-12) is covered by the NCS (DoE 2003a). The LPGs for Life Orientation were published in 2008 (DoE 2008a). Religion Studies (Grades 10-12) is covered by the NCS (DoE 2005) and its LPGs were published in 2008 (DoE 2008b).
In this analysis it is not the focus to evaluate or judge the definitions, but rather to look at how the definitions exclude and include specific elements. In this analysis I may also refer to some tacit or latent assumptions and the assumptions that are explicit. It is also clear that the definitions may include elements that may become clearer in the Learning Programme Guidelines (LPGs) (as interpretations of the NCS and RNCS), e.g. the definition of ‘religion’. The Policy and its definitions will therefore have to be read together with the RNCS, NCS as well as the LPGs.

6.4.2.1 Religion

Religion is used to describe the comprehensive and fundamental orientation in the world, mostly with regard to ideas of divinity, spiritual and non-secular beliefs and requiring ultimate commitment, including (but not restricted to) organised forms of religion and certain worldviews, as well as being used collectively to refer to those organisations which are established in order to protect and promote these beliefs (2003:30).

This definition of ‘religion’ contains the following elements:

- It is an orientation which is both comprehensive and fundamental.
- This orientation mostly refers to ideas of divinity, spiritual and non-secular beliefs.
- This orientation requires ultimate commitment, includes (but not restricted to) organised forms of religion and certain worldviews.
- This definition will also encompass those organisations which sole reason to exist is to protect and promote these beliefs.

This definition is fairly clear on what it includes. It is wide enough to encompass all the world religions. From the definition it is also clear that the major defining factor seems to be the binary of secular and non-secular. Non-secular beliefs and

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130 What exactly is meant by ‘mostly’ may be further explained in the Learning Programme Guidelines and will be addressed in Chapter 7.
131 What exactly is meant by ‘worldviews’ may be further explained in the Learning Programme Guidelines and will be addressed in Chapter 7.
worldviews are included in the definition of ‘religion’. It is not clear whether non-secular encompasses worldviews or whether non-secular only refers to beliefs. In this regard the interpretation of the RNCS and LPGs will be enlightening.

In the Foreword to the Policy the Minister makes it clear that South Africa is not a secular state. ‘We do not have a state religion. But our country is not a secular state where there is a very strict separation between religion and the state’ (2003:6). The Policy itself continues to describe its view of a secular state and the implications of such a state for the relationship with religion:

A modern secular state, which is neither religious nor anti-religious, in principle adopts a position of impartiality towards all religions and other worldviews. A separationist model for the secular state represents an attempt to completely divorce the religious and secular spheres of a society, such as in France or the United States. Drawing strict separation between religion and the secular state is extremely difficult to implement in practice, since there is considerable interchange between religion and public life. Furthermore, a strict separation between the two spheres of religion and state is not desirable, since without the commitment and engagement of religious bodies it is difficult to see us improving the quality of life of all our people (paragraph 3; 2003:8).

The Policy judges that a secular state is ‘extremely difficult to implement in practice, since there is considerable interchange between religion and public life’. Such a strict separation is also not necessarily desirable, since it is difficult ‘to see us improving the quality of life of all our people’ without the ‘commitment and engagement of religious bodies’. The Policy however acknowledges that secular worldviews are a reality in the present South African context and that tolerance between religions also extends to the relationship between religions and secular worldviews. Paragraph 14 states ‘Religion in education must contribute to the

132 In Chapter 1 I already indicated that the Policy’s definition of ‘religion’ will be scrutinised. In my critical evaluation of the Policy (Chapter 8) I will return to discuss this definition of ‘religion’, and consider the exclusion of atheism, secularism and Satanism as examples of structures of meaning and meaning-making.
133 Also see Paragraph 14 of the Policy where it would seem as if secular worldviews are specifically addressed.
advancement of interreligious toleration and interpersonal respect among adherents of different religious or secular worldviews in a shared civil society’.

Not only will learners be taught tolerance towards religions and secular worldviews, the Policy also prescribes that any overt or covert ‘denigration of any religion or secular world-view’ will not be tolerated (paragraph 14, 2003:12). The Policy therefore not only acknowledges the reality of securalism, but also warrants that secularism, as a worldview will not be denigrated. The Policy however goes one step further to state that children will be exposed not only to different religions but also to secular worldviews. The Policy states that

We believe we will do much better as a country if our pupils are exposed to a variety of religious and secular belief systems, in a well-informed manner, which gives rise to a genuine respect for the adherents and practices of all of these, without diminishing in any way the preferred choice of the pupil (paragraph 29; 2003:16; italics added).

Paragraph 62 warrants that students who hold ‘secular or humanist beliefs’ will not be forced to partake in any activities where they may feel denigrated or compromised.

The separation of learners according to religion, where the observance takes place outside of the context of a school assembly, and with equitably supported opportunities for observance by all faiths, and appropriate use of the time for those holding secular or humanist beliefs (2003:26).

Paragraph 63 further warrants parity in the allocation of resources ‘with respect to religion, religious or secular belief’ (2003:27). Though secular worldviews may ‘naturally’ be part of the rest of the school curriculum, the Policy specifically describes its inclusion of secular worldviews as a feature of how the Policy views Religion Education. Paragraph 29 (2003:16) refers to the fact that pupils will be exposed to ‘a variety of religious and secular belief systems’. The Policy furthermore undertakes to teach about ‘secular values’. Paragraph 30 states:
By teaching about religious and secular values in an open educational environment, schools must ensure that all pupils, irrespective of race, creed, sexual orientation, disability, language, gender, or class, feel welcome, emotionally secure, and appreciated (2003:17).

From the Policy it would seem as if learning about secularism could be seen as being part of the scope of the Policy’s understanding of the range of the curricular content. From the ‘Definitions’ of the Policy (2003:30) it is however clear that secular worldviews may be excluded from the Policy’s range. The Policy defines ‘religion’ as follows:

Religion is used to describe the comprehensive and fundamental orientation in the world, mostly with regard to ideas of divinity, spiritual and non-secular beliefs and requiring ultimate commitment, including (but not restricted to) organised forms of religion and certain worldviews, as well as being used collectively to refer to those organisations which are established in order to protect and promote these beliefs (italics mine).

The Policy’s definition of ‘religion’ on the one hand specifically includes ‘non-secular beliefs’. It reiterates a certain openness by stating that the definition includes ‘organised forms of religion and certain worldviews’ (italics mine) and that the definition is not restricted to these. The Policy is clear that it is biased towards religion. Paragraph 2 states ‘we therefore promote the role of religion in education’ (2003:7) and ‘genuinely advance the interests of religion’ (2003:7).

With regard to claims that the Policy promotes religious relativism, paragraph 68 of the Policy illuminates the Policy’s understanding of the different truth claims of different religions. The Policy states

Religion can contribute to creating an integrated educational community that affirms unity in diversity. In providing a unified framework for teaching and learning about religion, religions, and religious diversity, this policy on Religion and Education does not suggest that all religions are the same. Nor does it try to select from different religious traditions to try and build a new unified religion. The policy is not a project in social or religious engineering designed to establish a uniformity of religious beliefs and practices.

The policy does not promote religious relativism, religious syncretism, or any other religious position in relation to the many religions in South Africa and the world. By creating a free, open space for exploration, the policy
demonstrates respect for the distinctive character of different ways of life (2003:28).

The Policy refutes the notion (and allegations) that ‘all religions are the same’ or that the Policy attempts to build a ‘unified religion’. The Policy does not want to bring about ‘uniformity of religious beliefs and practices’. By refuting these claims or allegations, the Policy refuses to be drawn into a debate about the ‘truth’ of each religion or worldview compared to others. The word ‘compare’ is not used by the Policy at all. Neither does the word ‘truth’ appear in the Policy. Paragraph 22 (2003:14) specifically states that the Policy chose against the alternative to follow a confessional approach to Religious Studies.

If any accusation of ‘relativity could be entertained, it would be the allegation that the Policy is particularly positive about the role and content of religion. The outcomes for Grades 8 and 9 state that a pupil can discuss ‘the contributions of organisations from various religions to social development’ and that a pupil ‘reflects on and discusses the contributions of various religions in promoting peace’ (Appendix to the Policy, 2003:32; italics mine). In Chapter 8 when I will evaluate the Policy I will return to the question whether the Policy foresees a ‘sanitised’ curriculum.

6.4.2.2 Confessional or sectarian approaches

Confessional or sectarian approaches are used to describe those approaches to religion which take as a starting point a particular set of beliefs, or a particular perspective informed by these beliefs, and advance a position that is narrowly based on these beliefs and perspectives (2003:30).

The ‘or’ in the title of this definition may imply that these two concepts are regarded as opposites or that the Policy regards these two concepts as synonyms. From the definition it is however clear that the title of this definition could have read ‘confessional/sectarian approaches’. The Policy therefore does not refer to the popular use of the concept ‘sect’ or ‘sectarian’, where one group defines the other as being a ‘sect’ implying that the other group is further from the
‘truth’ than they are. Teachers will encounter claims in their classrooms of students considering their own faith as being the ‘true’ faith while claiming that other faiths are sects in a negative connotation.

6.4.2.3 Religion Education

Religion Education describes a set of curriculum outcomes which define what a pupil should know about religion. Further definition is provided in paragraphs 17 to 19 of the policy (2003:30).

From this definition it would seem as if the Policy defines ‘curriculum’ and ‘curriculum outcomes’ as ‘what a pupil should know about religion’ (emphasis mine)\(^{134}\). This definition also refers to specific paragraphs of the Policy itself, namely paragraphs 17 to 19. For the purpose of coherence, I will now analyse paragraphs 17 to 19.

**Paragraph 17**

Religion Education is a curricular programme [referring in a footnote to the National Curriculum Statement for Grades R-9 (2002)] with clear and age-appropriate educational aims and objectives, for teaching and learning about religion, religions, and religious diversity in South Africa and the world. The study of religion must serve recognisable educational goals that are consistent with the aims and outcomes of other learning areas, and like other learning areas in the curriculum, programmes in Religion Education must contribute to developing basic skills in observation, listening, reading, writing, and thinking.

The elements of Religion Education this paragraph uses are:

- There are clear and *age-appropriate* educational aims and objectives.
- The focus is on teaching and learning *about* religion, religions and religious diversity in South Africa and the world.
- Religion Education as part of the school curriculum contributes to ‘recognisable educational goals that are consistent with the aims and outcomes of other learning areas, and like other learning areas in the curriculum’.

\(^{134}\) In Chapter 8 I will return to this definition of ‘curriculum’.
• Religion Education ‘must contribute to developing basic skills in observation, listening, reading, writing, and thinking’.

Paragraph 17 explains the interrelatedness of the outcomes envisaged for Religion Education as curricular programme and the broader educational goals of the total school curriculum.

**Paragraph 18**
Religion Education may also be justified by the educational character of the programme, which includes the common values that all religions promote, such as the human search for meaning and the ethic of service to others, and by the desirable social ends, such as expanding understanding, increasing tolerance, and reducing prejudice. Religion Education is justified by its contribution to the promotion of social justice, and respect for the environment, that can be served by this field of study within the school curriculum (2003:13).

Although paragraph 18 justifies the inclusion of Religion Education in the school curriculum, it does not necessarily assist in ‘defining’ the concept. In this justification as provided in Paragraph 18, it becomes clear what is expected of the inclusion of Religion Education in the curriculum and how the Policy intends to define the concept. The paragraph describes the educational character of the programme as promoting values common to all religions. As examples of such values, the meaning and ethic of serving others as well as serving ‘desirable social ends’ like ‘expanding understanding, increasing tolerance, and reducing prejudice’. Religion Education is further justified for its promotion of social justice and respect for the environment.

Paragraph 18 illustrates the ideological nature of policy-making, although the Minister (Foreword to the Policy) states that the Policy does not ‘impose any narrow descriptions or ideological views regarding the relationship between religion and education’ (2003:6; italics added). The Policy foresees an implicit and explicit function of the study of religions in the context of the ideology of constitutional patriotism and nation-building. From paragraph 18 it is clear that the focus will be on not only those values common to all religions, but more...
explicitly on the positive values common to all religions. Without judging or evaluating this ‘sanitisation’ of the curriculum\textsuperscript{135}, it suffices to state that the Policy embodies and translates the values as envisaged within the Constitution and the NCS to the extent that they are also found common in religions. There is an interesting possibility for conflict here between the Policy as embodiment of the values contained in the Constitution and values as embodied in a specific religion.

**Paragraph 19**

Religion Education, with educational outcomes, is the responsibility of the school. Religion Education shall include teaching and learning about the religions of the world, with particular attention to the religions of South Africa, as well as worldviews, and it shall place adequate emphasis on values and moral education. In this, we re-assert the policy of the Revised National Curriculum Statement to offer education about religions for the purposes of achieving ‘religious literacy’. Religion Education is therefore an educational programme with clearly defined and transferable skills, values and attitudes as the outcomes. It is a programme for teaching and learning about religion in its broadest sense, about religions, and about religious diversity in South Africa and the world. Religion Education should enable pupils to engage with a variety of religious traditions in a way that encourages them to grow in their inner spiritual and moral dimensions. It must affirm their own identity, while leading them to an informed understanding of the religious identities of others (2003:13).

Paragraph 19 deals with two issues. Firstly it locates Religion Education and secondly clarifies the purpose of Religion Education within the broader curriculum.

The Policy locates the responsibility of Religion Education with the school. Secondly it locates Religion Education within the curricular domain of values and moral education. The location of Religion Education is important and significant as it establishes accountability and responsibility. The Policy locates the responsibility with the school, and not with religious leaders in the community or religious organisations or parents. Though all of these role players were involved in the drafting of the Policy and all of them may to a certain extent be involved in

\textsuperscript{135} The sanitisation of the curriculum will be discussed in Chapter 8.
the teaching of Religion Education, the responsibility of Religion Education is located with the school. This does not only make schools accountable for the implementation of the Policy but also require schools to translate the LPGs against the intentions of the NCS and Policy.

Religion Education is secondly located within the curricular domain of values and moral education. Other options may have included antiracist or genocide/holocaust, citizenship or peace education. It could also have been located in multicultural studies. The implications of locating Religion Education within the curricular domain of values and moral education will be discussed and evaluated in Chapter 8.

Paragraph 19 further describes the purpose of including Religion Education within the school curriculum. Paragraph 19 states that the purpose of Religion Education is to entail learners' achievement of ‘religious literacy’. Paragraph 19 repeats the parameters as being ‘religion in its broadest sense, about religions, and about religious diversity in South Africa and the world’. The purpose for engaging learners ‘with a variety of religious traditions’ is to encourage ‘them to grow in their inner spiritual and moral dimensions. It must affirm their own identity, while leading them to an informed understanding of the religious identities of others’ (2003:13).

The term ‘religious literacy’ as such, occurs only once in the Policy in the context of other literacies. Paragraph 44 states the following:

The Revised National Curriculum Statements of Curriculum 2005 understand literacy to include cultural literacy, ethical literacy, and religion literacy; creativity to include developing capacities for expanding imagination, making connections, and dealing with cultural difference and diversity; and it understands critical reflection to include comparison, cultural analysis, ethical debate, and the formulation and clarification of values. These capacities are captured in the outcome statements and assessment standards of the curriculum, and are obligatory for all pupils.
The Policy does not define or describe what it means with ‘religious literacy’, unless this is defined in Paragraph 19’s statement that Religion Education should ‘affirm their own identity, while leading them to an informed understanding of the religious identities of others’ (2003:13). Should this be the case it would seem as if religious literacy has, according to the Policy, two dimensions namely to be firstly grounded in their own identity and spiritual growth, and secondly, to have an informed understanding of other religious traditions. This seems to concur with a definition of religious literacy provided by Prothero (2007). Prothero compares religious literacy to literacy in general and says:

…literacy refers to the ability to use a language – to read and perhaps to write it, to manipulate its vocabulary, grammar, and syntax. In this sense religious literacy refers to the ability to understand and use in one’s day-to-day life the basic building blocks of religious traditions – their key terms, symbols, doctrines, practices, sayings, characters, metaphors, and narratives (2007:22).

He expands the parameters of his definition by referring to ‘religious literacies’ to not only refer to different bases for religious literacies e.g. ‘Protestant literacy, Sunni literacy, Zen literacy’, but also to include ‘functional capacities of religious literacy’ namely

- ritual literacy (knowing the meaning and content of different rituals)
- confessional literacy (a foundational understanding of the basic doctrines)
- denominational literacy (knowing about the differences between e.g. Reform and Conservative Judaism)
- narrative literacy (knowing the foundational narratives and characters in the major religions) (Prothero 2007:23).

He compares his own understanding of religious literacies with that of Clooney (2002) who speaks of ‘interreligious literacy’ (Prothero 2007:24). Prothero warns however that ‘religious literacy cannot and should not be reduced to memorizing and regurgitating dogma’ but ‘It is the ability to participate in our ongoing conversation about the private and public powers of religions’ (Prothero 2007:27). This also means to ‘firm up’ students’ knowledge of their own religions (Prothero 2007:28).
In Chapter 8 I shall return to the definition and description of the term ‘religious literacy’ and compare it to ‘religious competency’ (as described by Heimbrock, Scheilke & Schreiner 2001).

6.4.2.4 Religious Observances

Religious Observances are those activities and behaviours which recognise and express the views, beliefs and commitments of a particular religion, and may include gatherings of adherents, prayer times, dress and diets (2003:13).

The definition of ‘religious observances’ identifies the following elements, namely

- activities and behaviours which
- recognise and express the views, beliefs and commitments of a particular religion and
- may include gatherings of adherents, prayer times, dress and diets.

The inclusion of a definition for ‘religious observances’ in the Policy has as purpose to address the past practices in schools where school assemblies or even official school time have been used for religious observances. As will be discussed later, the Policy specifically regulates religious observances on school premises.

6.4.2.5 Religious Instruction

Religious instruction refers to a programme of instruction which is aimed at providing information regarding a particular set of religious beliefs with a view to promoting adherence thereto (2003:13).

The definition of ‘religious instruction’ clearly distinguishes it from Religion Education. Where Religion Education teaches ‘about religion in its broadest sense, about religions, and about religious diversity in South Africa and the world’ (2003:13; italics added), ‘religious instruction’ has as focus to promote adherence to a specific faith/belief.
6.4.2.6  Religious Studies\textsuperscript{136}

Religious Studies is a subject which is being proposed for the Further Education and Training band (Grades 10-12), in which pupils undertake the study of religion and religions in general, with the possibility of specialisation in one or more in that context.

While Religion Education is the focus within the Learning Area called Life Orientation (Grades R-12), Religious Studies (later Religion Studies) is an independent subject in the Further Education and Training Band (FETB) (Grades 10-12). From the definition the following is clear:

- The difference between Religion Education and religious instruction is maintained in this subject.
- Only during the FET phase are learners allowed to specialise in a specific context\textsuperscript{137}.

6.4.2.7  The school day

The School Day entails that portion of each day in which it is compulsory for teachers and pupils to be at school. The seven hours of contact time that is expected of teachers is part of the school day, but the latter also includes breaks and compulsory activities, including assemblies, designated extra-mural activities and possible disciplinary sanctions. No pupil or teacher may be absent from school during the school day, without permission (1996:31).

From the overview of the historical development of the Policy it is clear that it was necessary to describe the parameters of the 'school day'. As indicated in Paragraph 19 and explored during the discussion of the definition of Religion, Religion Education is located as ‘the responsibility of the school’ (2003:13). Religion Education is furthermore differentiated from Religious Observances and

\textsuperscript{136} This proposed subject is called Religious Studies in the Policy but in the NCS (Grades 10-12) it is referred to as Religion Studies.

\textsuperscript{137} The Learning Programme Guidelines for the FET will give clearer guidance with regard to what is meant by ‘specialisation’ and ‘context’.
Religious Instruction. The Policy’s guidelines regarding religious observances during and after the official school day necessitates defining ‘the school day’.

The definition of the ‘school day’ specifically sets its parameters as

- The period in which pupils and teachers are compelled to be at school.
- The seven hours of contact time expected of teachers including ‘breaks and compulsory activities, including assemblies, designated extra-mural activities and possible disciplinary sanctions’ (2003:31).
- No teacher or pupil may be absent (without permission) from school during the school day.

The definition of the ‘school day’ therefore indicates that during these hours in the location of the school, Religion Education (Grades R-12) is a compulsory part of the school curriculum for which the responsibility lies with the school.

6.5 ANALYSING THE POLICY ARGUMENT

In analysing the Policy argument, I will adapt the framework for a policy argument as proposed by Dunn (1994). Under Dunn’s definition of ‘Policy Information’ I will include Bardach’s (1977) steps of looking at the policy problem and the alternatives the policy considered. In Chapter 8 I will evaluate the different outcomes and tradeoffs of the alternatives (Bardach 1996) as mentioned in the Policy as well as those alternatives that are not mentioned by the Policy.

To reiterate, Dunn’s schema of analysing a policy argument (1994:66) includes the following six elements, namely Policy-relevant information (I), Policy-claim (C), Warrant (W), Backing (B), and Qualifier (Q). I will start by analysing the Policy information: how the Policy defines the problem and what alternatives the Policy considers. The policy itself proposes four alternatives on a state versus

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138 The previous dispensation allowed and supported religious observances during official school hours. It is therefore crucial for the Policy to define Religious Observances and the “School day” as this is a significant departure from past policies and practices.
religion level as well as four policy specific alternatives. I will then continue to look at the Policy warrants and backing and then finally at the Policy claim(s).

6.5.1 Policy information

Policy-relevant information (I) includes all evidence at the analyst’s disposal. ‘Information about policy problems, policy futures, policy actions, policy outcomes, and policy performance’ (Dunn 1994:66).

6.5.1.1 Policy problem

The policy problem as defined and described by the Policy seems to be multi-layered or multi-dimensional. The Policy tries to translate practical consequences flowing from the reality of the religious diversity in South Africa, the guidance of the Constitution with regard to this diversity as well as trying to provide a framework for engagement between the state and religions on the one hand and specific curriculum guidelines for religion education on the other.

The following figure (Figure 6.2) illustrates the problem-spaces the Policy addresses:

![Figure 6.2: The Policy problem](image)

Figure 6.2: The Policy problem
While South Africa has no history of religious conflict, our past is permeated with examples of unjust treatment of specific ‘others’ whether religious, race or gender. There are also examples where a specific race or religion was treated preferentially to others. The Policy therefore attempts to take diversity as a characteristic of South Africa seriously. The Constitution as well as the Policy are aimed at preventing discrimination and ensuring equality and equity, but also to find ways to celebrate diversity. In the Foreword to the Policy, the Minister already indicates, ‘The Policy is necessary and overdue to give full expression to the invocation of religion in our Constitution and the principles governing religious freedom’ (2003:6). Paragraph 9 (2003:10) states:

South Africa is a multi-religious country. Over 60 per cent of our people claim allegiance to Christianity, but South Africa is home to a wide variety of religious traditions. With a deep and enduring indigenous religious heritage, South Africa is a country that also embraces the major religions of the world. Each of these religions is itself a diverse category, encompassing many different understandings and practices. At the same time, many South Africans draw their understanding of the world, ethical principles, and human values from sources independent of religious institutions. In the most profound matters of life orientation, therefore, diversity is a fact of our national life (italics mine).

The Policy is very explicit in moving beyond a strict ‘regulatory’ or ‘legislative’ prohibitive of discrimination environment to a framework where diversity is celebrated –

Our diversity of language, culture and religion is a wonderful national asset. We therefore celebrate diversity as a unifying national resource, as captured in our Coat of Arms: !KeE.IXarra (Unity in Diversity). This policy for the role of religion in education is driven, by the dual mandate of celebrating diversity and building national unity (paragraph 10; 2003:10).

In dealing with the ‘given’ nature of diversity, the Policy tries to ‘translate’ and embody the Constitution’s guidelines regarding diversity. In the Foreword, the Minister already states that ‘The Policy is necessary and overdue to give full expression to the invocation of religion in our Constitution and the principles governing religious freedom’ and ‘Following the lead of the Constitution and the South African Schools Act, we provide a broad framework within which people of
goodwill will work out their own approaches’ (2003:6). The Policy is founded on
four principles of which the first principle is that the relationship between
education and religion ‘must flow directly from the constitutional values of
citizenship, human rights, equality, freedom from discrimination, and freedom of
conscience, religion, thought, belief, and opinion’ (paragraph 8: 2003:9).
Paragraph 11 reiterates this position and adds, ‘By enshrining these basic
values, the Constitution provides the framework for determining the relationship
between religion and education in a democratic society’ (2003:10).

The Policy very specifically provides guidance regarding creating spaces for
expression and personal choice, and prevention of coercion. The Policy states

Our Constitution has worked out a careful balance between freedom for
religious belief and expression and freedom from religious coercion and
discrimination. On the one hand, by ensuring that ‘Everyone has the right
to freedom of conscience, religion, thought, belief, and opinion’, the
Constitution guarantees freedom of and for religion, and citizens are free
to exercise their basic right to religious conviction, expression, and
association. On the other hand, by ensuring equality in the enjoyment of
all the rights, privileges, and benefits of citizenship, the Constitution
explicitly prohibits unfair discrimination on grounds that include religion,
belief, and conscience. Protected from any discriminatory practices based
on religion, citizens are thereby also free from any religious coercion that
might be implied by the state (paragraph 12; 2003:10-11 – referring to
sections 15(1) and (2) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa).

Although the Policy embodies and translates the Constitution, the Policy also
refers to and quotes other legislation and frameworks, like the South African
Schools Act (Act 94 of 1996), the National Curriculum Statement for Grades R-9
(Schools) (2002), Norms and Standards for Educators (Government Notice #82
published in Government Gazette 20844 of 4 February 2000) and the National
Curriculum Statement and Assessment Standards for Life Orientation.

In translating and embodying the Constitution, the Policy also makes visible a
specific understanding of the relationship between the state and religion. The
Minister of Education foreshadows the cooperative model the Policy proposes
between state and religion by saying in the Foreword of the Policy that the Policy
‘…displays a profound respect towards religious faith and affirms the importance of the study of religion and religious observances’ (2003:6). Paragraph 5 (2003:9) states –

Under the constitutional guarantee of freedom of religion, the state, neither advancing nor inhibiting religion, must assume a position of fairness, informed by a parity of esteem for all religions, and worldviews. This positive impartiality carries a profound appreciation of spirituality and religion in its many manifestations, as reflected by the deference to God in the preamble to our Constitution, but does not impose these.

It is crucial to notice that the Policy describes the relationship as ‘neither advancing nor inhibiting religion’ and assuming a ‘position of fairness, informed by a parity of esteem for all religions, and worldviews’. The Policy describes the state’s position towards religion as ‘positive impartiality carries a profound appreciation of spirituality and religion in its many manifestations, as reflected by the deference to God in the preamble to our Constitution’ but also states that as state it would ‘not impose these’ (paragraph 5; 2003:9)

The last dimension of the Policy-problem is to provide a framework for the relationship between education and religion that would take the previous three dimensions seriously. The Policy states ‘we identify the distinctive contribution that religion can make to education, and that education can make to teaching and learning about religion, and we therefore promote the role of religion in education’ and ‘In doing so we work from the premise that the public school has an educational responsibility for teaching and learning about religion and religions, and for promoting these, but that it should do so in ways that are different from the religious instruction and religious nurture provided by the home, family, and religious community’ (paragraph 1; 1996:7). The necessity to define the relationship between religion and education is also necessary in the light of the past. ‘We do so also in the recognition that there have been instances in which public education institutions have discriminated on the grounds of religious belief, such that greater definition is required. In many cases pupils of one religion are
subjected to religious observances in another, without any real choice in the
matter’ (paragraph 2; 2003:7).

The Policy is a therefore a specific response to these four circles but is also
embedded in a wider context of education in South Africa. The Policy describes
this context as follows – ‘This policy links religion and education with new
initiatives in cultural rebirth (the African Renaissance), moral regeneration, and
the promotion of values in our schools. Religion can play a significant role in
preserving our heritage, respecting our diversity, and building a future based on
progressive values’ (paragraph 7; 2003:9). The Policy continues

An open, plural, historically informed, intercultural and interdisciplinary
study of religion in public schools is consistent with international
developments, and it is also a model gaining popularity and relevance
throughout Africa. This approach engages religion as an important human
activity, which all pupils should know about if they are to be deemed to be
educated (paragraph 24; 2003:15; italics mine).

The Policy therefore re-imagines a definition of what it means to be educated and
includes “religious literacy” as a key ingredient. The Policy however goes further
to state that the study of religions is also a vehicle for imparting morals and
values. The Policy states –

As systems for the transmission of values, religions are key resources for
clarifying morals, ethics, and building regard for others. Religions embody
values of justice and mercy, love and care, commitment, compassion, and
coopération. They chart profound ways of being human, and of relating to
others and the world. Moral values are not the monopoly of religions,
much less the exclusive property of any one religion However, when
Religion Education is given its rightful place in our education system, the
important process of imparting moral values can be intensified through
teaching and learning about religious and other value systems (paragraph

6.5.1.2 Policy alternatives

The Policy distinguishes between several alternatives or options. From the Policy
it is clear that there are three different layers of issues that the Policy considered.
The meta-level deals with the broadest context of the relationship between state
and religion and explores the possible alternatives to guide this relationship. On a meso-level, the Policy considers different alternatives regarding the relationship between education and religion. Lastly, on a micro-level the Policy shares its framework for specific curriculum outcomes according to various education levels. The following table (Table 6.2) describes the meta-alternatives for the relationship between state and religion as described by the Policy:

Table 6.2: The meta-alternatives for the relationship between state and religion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alternatives for the relationship between state and religion (meta)</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Appropriateness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theocracy</strong></td>
<td>A theocratic model identifies the state with one particular religion or religious grouping. In some cases, this model has resulted in a situation in which the state and religion become indistinguishable (paragraph 3; 2003:7).</td>
<td>‘In a religiously diverse society such as South Africa, this model clearly would be inappropriate’ (paragraph 3; 2003:7).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Repressionist</strong></td>
<td>At the other extreme, a repressionist model is based on the premise that the state should act to suppress religion. In such a model, the state would operate to ‘marginalise or eliminate religion from public life’ (paragraph 3; 2003:7).</td>
<td>In a religiously active society such as South Africa, any constitutional model based on state hostility towards religion would be unthinkable (paragraph 3; 2003:7).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Secular/separationist model</strong></td>
<td>A modern secular state, which is neither religious nor anti-religious, in principle adopts a position of impartiality towards all religions and other worldviews. A separationist model for the secular state represents an attempt to completely divorce the religious and secular spheres of a society, such as in France or the United States (paragraph 3; 2003:8).</td>
<td>Drawing strict separation between religion and the secular state is extremely difficult to implement in practice, since there is considerable interchange between religion and public life. Furthermore, a strict separation between the</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
two spheres of religion and state is not desirable, since without the commitment and engagement of religious bodies it is difficult to see us improving the quality of life of all our people (paragraph 3; 2003:8).

| Cooperative model | In a co-operative model, both the principle of legal separation and the possibility of creative interaction are affirmed. Separate spheres for religion and the state are established by the Constitution, but there is scope for interaction between the two. While ensuring the protection of citizens from religious discrimination or coercion, this model encourages an ongoing dialogue between religious groups and the state in areas of common interest and concern. Even in such exchanges, however, religious individuals and groups must be assured of their freedom from any state interference with regard to freedom of conscience, religion, thought, belief, and opinion (paragraph 3; 2003:8). | In this manner the complementary, cooperative principle as regards the relationship between the state and organised religion is given substance in education, and optimised in the best interests of both spheres (paragraph 66; 2003:27). |

In regard to the relationship between religion and public education, we propose that the cooperative model which combines constitutional separation and mutual recognition, provides a framework that is best for religion and best for education in a democratic South Africa (paragraph 4; 2003:8).

The table that follows (Table 6.3) attempts to describe the meso-alternatives the Policy considered determining the exact relationship between education and religion:

**Table 6.3: The meso-alternatives**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alternatives for the relationship between education and religion (meso)</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Appropriateness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Confessional or sectarian forms of religious instruction</td>
<td>Religious instruction is understood to include instruction in a particular faith or belief, with a view to the inculcation of adherence to that faith or belief (paragraph 54; 2003:24). Religious instruction of this sort is primarily the responsibility of the home, the family, and the religious community, and more needs to be done to strengthen this role, in place of the school. Religious Instruction would in most cases be provided by clergy, or other persons accredited by faith communities to do so (paragraph 55; 2003:24)</td>
<td>Confessional or sectarian forms of religious instruction in public schools are inappropriate for a religiously diverse and democratic society. As institutions with a mandate to serve the entire society, public schools must avoid adopting a particular religion, or a limited set of religions, that advances sectarian or particular interests. Schools should be explaining what religions are about, with clear educational goals and objectives, in ways that increase understanding, build respect for diversity, value spirituality, and clarify the religious and non-religious sources of moral values. We owe this to our pupils, as well as to parents, citizens, and taxpayers (paragraph 22; 2003:14).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single-faith approach</td>
<td>…a single-faith approach to religious education… provides religious instruction in one religion (paragraph 23; 2003:15).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple single-faith approach</td>
<td>…provides parallel programmes in religious instruction for an approved set of religions (paragraph 23; 2003:15).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi</td>
<td>… a multi tradition approach</td>
<td>Instead of promoting a religious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tradition approach</td>
<td>to the study of Religion Education does not promote any particular religion. It is a programme for studying about religion, in all its many forms, as an important dimension of human experience and a significant subject field in the school curriculum (paragraph 23; 2003:15).</td>
<td>position, a programme in Religion Education pursues a balanced approach to teaching and learning about religion. Religion Education can provide opportunities for both a deeper sense of self-realisation and a broader civil acceptance of others. It can balance the familiar and the foreign in ways that give pupils new insights into both. It can facilitate the development of both empathetic appreciation and critical analysis. It can teach pupils about a world of religious diversity, but at the same time it can encourage pupils to think in terms of a new national unity in South Africa. By teaching pupils about the role of religion in history, society, and the world, a unified, multi-tradition programme in the study of religion can be an important part of a well-balanced and complete education (paragraph 25; 2003:15).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On a micro-level regarding the specific outcomes of what the curriculum should entail at every level, the Policy does not share the different options it had\(^{139}\). It does provide the rationale for introducing Religious Education at an early age by referring to international research –

Research has concluded that Religion Education can be introduced at an early age, in ways that are appropriate to the development of pupils. With an age-appropriate emphasis placed on living together, and without any overt or covert pressures, religion education can start at a very early stage. Pupils in the Foundation Phase could begin a study of religious diversity by exploring the more tangible forms of religion, the observable aspects of religious diversity found in churches, mosques, synagogues, |

\(^{139}\) Where the Policy shared the alternatives it considered on the meta- as well as meso-levels, the Policy does not share which outcomes it rejected, or considered in deciding stated outcomes at the end. Paragraph 50 states that the Policy considered research evidence with regard to the age-appropriateness of the curriculum.
temples, and other places of gathering for religious life (paragraph 50; 2003:23).140

Table 6.4 provides an overview of the assessment criteria per level for Religion Education as part of Life Orientation (the micro-level of the curriculum).

Table 6.4: The outcomes and assessment criteria as per Grade

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>We know this when the learner:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grade R</td>
<td>Identifies and names symbols linked to own religion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 1</td>
<td>Matches symbols associated with a range of religions in South Africa.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 2</td>
<td>Describes important days from diverse religions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 3</td>
<td>Discusses diet, clothing and decorations in a variety of religions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 4</td>
<td>Discusses significant places and buildings in a variety of religions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 5</td>
<td>Discusses festivals and customs from a variety of religions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 6</td>
<td>Discusses the dignity of the person in a variety of religions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 7</td>
<td>Explains the role of oral traditions and scriptures in a range of the world’s religions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 8</td>
<td>Discusses the contributions of organisations from various religions to social development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 9</td>
<td>Reflects on and discusses the contributions of various religions in promoting peace.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 10</td>
<td>Display an understanding of the major religions, ethical traditions and indigenous belief systems in South Africa, and explore how they contribute to a harmonious society.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 11</td>
<td>Reflect on knowledge and insights gained in major religions, ethical traditions and indigenous belief systems, and clarify own values and beliefs with the view to debate and analyse contemporary moral and spiritual issues and dilemmas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 12</td>
<td>Reflect on and explain how to formulate a personal mission statement based on core aspects of personal philosophies, values, beliefs, religions and ideologies, which will inform and direct actions in life and contribute meaningfully to society.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.5.1.3 Policy warrants and backing

140 For an introduction into the issues regarding the notion of age-appropriateness in relation to the inclusion of the study of religion(s) into school curricula, see the discussion on ‘perceptions regarding children’s abilities’, by Roux 1998:165-168. Also see Roux (2005) Ferguson (1998).

141 The Assessment criteria for Grades 10-12 regarding the study of religion are not indicated in the Policy. These assessment criteria are encapsulated in the NCS for Life Orientation (Grades 10-12) (DoE 2003a).
Within this multi-dimensional problem-space, the Policy seems to make the following key assumptions or Policy warrants and Policy backings (Dunn 1996). A Policy warrant according to Dunn is: ‘… an assumption in a policy argument which permits the analyst to move from policy-relevant information to policy claim’ and ‘The role of the warrant is to carry policy-relevant information to a policy claim about which there is disagreement or conflict, thus providing a reason for accepting the claim’ (Dunn 1994:66; italics in the original).

There seems to be four Policy warrants in the Policy, namely:

- Diversity has the ability to separate but also unite
- South Africa is not a secular state
- The multi-religious character of South Africa
- Religion as vehicle for values education

Warrant 1: Diversity has the ability to separate but also unite

In the Foreword to the Policy the Minister states:

As a democratic society with a diverse population of different cultures, languages and religions we are duty bound to ensure that through our diversity we develop a unity of purpose and spirit that recognises and celebrates our diversity. This should be particularly evident in our public schools where no particular religious ethos should be dominant over and suppress others. Just as we must ensure and protect the equal rights of all students to be at school, we must also appreciate their right to have their religious views recognised and respected (2003:6).

Warrant 2: South Africa is not a secular state

‘We do not have a state religion. But our country is not a secular state where there is a very strict separation between religion and the state’ (Foreword to the Policy 2003:6)

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142 I use ‘secular state’ here as the state being totally impartial towards religion. The Policy is the embodiment of the state’s positive impartiality towards religion. Though the state respects and maintains the separation of the two spheres (state and religion), the Policy speaks of a profound and explicit appreciation of the religious character of South Africa.
**Warrant 3: The multi-religious character of South Africa**

South Africa is a multi-religious country. Over 60 per cent of our people claim allegiance to Christianity, but South Africa is home to a wide variety of religious traditions. With a deep and enduring indigenous religious heritage, South Africa is a country that also embraces the major religions of the world. Each of these religions is itself a diverse category, encompassing many different understandings and practices. At the same time, many South Africans draw their understanding of the world, ethical principles, and human values from sources independent of religious institutions. In the most profound matters of life orientation, therefore, diversity is a fact of our national life (paragraph 9; 2003:10).

**Warrant 4: Religion as vehicle for values education**

Religion Education may also be justified by the educational character of the programme, which includes the common values that all religions promote, such as the human search for meaning and the ethic of service to others, and by the desirable social ends, such as expanding understanding, increasing tolerance, and reducing prejudice. Religion Education is justified by its contribution to the promotion of social justice, and respect for the environment, that can be served by this field of study within the school curriculum (paragraph 18; 2003:13).

As systems for the transmission of values, religions are key resources for clarifying morals, ethics, and building regard for others. Religions embody values of justice and mercy, love and care, commitment, compassion, and co-operation. They chart profound ways of being human, and of relating to others and the world. Moral values are not the monopoly of religions, much less the exclusive property of any one religion. However, when Religion Education is given its rightful place in our education system, the important process of imparting moral values can be intensified through teaching and learning about religious and other value systems (paragraph 31; 2003:17).

**A Policy backing according to Dunn is**

...additional assumptions or claims or rebuttals form the substance of policy issues... The consideration of rebuttals helps the analyst anticipate objections and serves as a systematic means for criticising one’s own claims, assumptions, and arguments (Dunn 1994:68).

According to my analysis, there are two backings as well as a Policy rebuttal that acts as a Policy backing. The first backing refers to ‘international developments’ and ‘popularity and relevance throughout Africa’. The second backing refers to research regarding the appropriateness to introduce Religion Education even at an early age. The Policy rebuttal addresses what the Policy does *not* support...
namely religious relativism, religious syncretism or claims that all religions are the same.

Policy backing 1
An open, plural, historically informed, intercultural and interdisciplinary study of religion in public schools is consistent with international developments, and it is also a model gaining popularity and relevance throughout Africa. This approach engages religion as an important human activity, which all pupils should know about if they are to be deemed to be educated (paragraph 24, 2003:15).

Policy backing 2
Research has concluded that Religion Education can be introduced at an early age, in ways that are appropriate to the development of pupils. With an age-appropriate emphasis placed on living together, and without any overt or covert pressures, religion education can start at a very early stage. Pupils in the Foundation Phase could begin a study of religious diversity by exploring the more tangible forms of religion, the observable aspects of religious diversity found in churches, mosques, synagogues, temples, and other places of gathering for religious life (paragraph 50; 2003:23).

Policy rebuttal
Religion can contribute to creating an integrated educational community that affirms unity in diversity. In providing a unified framework for teaching and learning about religion, religions, and religious diversity, this policy on Religion and Education does not suggest that all religions are the same. Nor does it try to select from different religious traditions to try and build a new unified religion. The policy is not a project in social or religious engineering designed to establish a uniformity of religious beliefs and practices.

The policy does not promote religious relativism, religious syncretism, or any other religious position in relation to the many religions in South Africa and the world. By creating a free, open space for exploration, the policy demonstrates respect for the distinctive character of different ways of life (paragraph 68; 2003:28).

Before I continue let us just look at where we are in the analysis of the Policy argument. I have explored the Policy argument so far by looking at the Policy Information and how the Policy described and defined the Policy problem. The Policy also considered several alternatives on three different levels (meta, meso
and micro). The Policy opted for a specific alternative on all three levels and provides certain ‘warrants’ and ‘backings’ for the Policy choices.

If all this is in place, the Policy continues by making certain claims – describing what the effects and impact will be on the alternative the Policy is proposing. Figure 6.3 illustrates where we are in the Policy argument as proposed by Dunn (1994):

![Figure 6.3: The Policy argument according to Dunn (1994)](image)

What I have not discussed yet except for the Policy claim(s), is the ‘Qualifier’ proposed by Dunn (1994:68). The Qualifier (Q) “expresses the degree to which the analyst is certain about a policy claim” – expressed in the ‘language of probability’. My analysis of the Policy has found that the Policy does not explicitly qualify the probability that the Policy will result in the Policy claim(s).

### 6.5.1.4 The Policy claim

The Policy claim refers to the decision of the policy makers on how to react to the Policy problems, considering the Policy warrants and backings as well as after
evaluating the Policy alternatives. The Policy claim refers to the conclusion of a policy argument. The claim follows on the policy information by implying ‘therefore…’ ‘Hence, policy claims are the logical consequence of policy-relevant information’ (Dunn 1994:66).

The Policy claim indicates a ‘solution’ and in this case, the solution is multi-dimensional.

**Claim 1: In service of democracy and nation-building**

‘…we set out the policy on the relationship between religion and education that we believe will best serve the interests of our democratic society’ (paragraph 1: 2003:7). In the light of the diversity, our country’s past as well as several options for imagining a future, the Policy claims that it will serve the interests ‘of our democratic society’.

In serving South Africa’s notion of a ‘democratic society’, the Policy describes its mandate as follows: ‘This policy for the role of religion in education is driven, by the dual mandate of celebrating diversity and building national unity’ (paragraph 7; 2003:9). Therefore, ‘The education process in general, and this policy, must aim at the development of a national democratic culture with respect for the value of all of our people’s diverse cultural, religious and linguistic traditions’ (paragraph 14; 2003:11).

The study of religions as proposed by the Policy therefore is envisaged to ‘contribute to the advancement of interreligious toleration and interpersonal respect among adherents of different religious or secular worldviews in a shared civil society’ (paragraph 14; 2003:11).

The Policy is therefore in service of a specific view of possible futures but within remembering our divisive past:
We must move decisively beyond the barriers erected by apartheid; beyond the shields provided by ignorance of the other, which invariably breeds suspicion, hatred and even violence. It is time for all people of goodwill to know and understand the diversity of religious and other worldviews that are held by their fellow citizens. Every child has the right to quality education in this most important area of human development and social relations. By working together, everyone involved in education – teachers and pupils, principals and administrators, trade unions and professional associations, parents and communities – can benefit from the inter-religious knowledge and understanding cultivated through Religion and Education (paragraph 69; 2003:28).

**Claim 2: Translating the Constitution’s provisions regarding the relationship between state and religion as well as education and religion**

The second claim of the Policy is to translate and embody the principles of the Constitution with regard to the state’s relation to religion as well as how religion will be treated in education. ‘The Policy is necessary and overdue to give full expression to the invocation of religion in our Constitution and the principles governing religious freedom’ (Foreword to the Policy 2003:6).

**Claim 3: Provides and distinguishes between the constitutional roles for state, education, religious organisations and home**

In translating the spirit and principles of the Constitution into praxis, the Policy claims certain roles for different stakeholders:

- **The role of the state**
  Under the constitutional guarantee of freedom of religion, the state, neither advancing nor inhibiting religion, must assume a position of fairness, informed by a parity of esteem for all religions, and worldviews. This positive impartiality carries a profound appreciation of spirituality and religion in its many manifestations, as reflected by the deference to God in
the preamble to our Constitution, but does not impose these (paragraph 5: 2003:9).

- **The role of schools, parents and religious communities**
  The policy is not prescriptive, but provides a framework for schools to determine policies, and for parents and communities to be better informed of their rights and responsibilities in regard to religion and education. The policy genuinely advances the interests of religion, by advocating a broad based range of religious activities in the school (paragraph 2; 2003:7).

  Our policy for religion in education, therefore, is designed to support unity without uniformity and diversity without divisiveness. Our public schools cannot establish the uniformity of religious education in a single faith or the divisiveness of religious education through separate programmes for a prescribed set of faiths. Neither course would advance unity in diversity. In any event, as we have established, our schools are not in the business of privileging, prescribing, or promoting any religion. Schools have a different responsibility in providing opportunities for teaching and learning about our religious diversity and our common humanity (paragraph 70; 2003:28).

- **The role of education institutions**
  ‘...educational institutions have a responsibility for promoting multi-religious knowledge, understanding, and appreciation of religions in South Africa and the world’ (paragraph 14; 2003:11).

**Claim 4: Religion as vehicle**

‘Religion can play a significant role in preserving our heritage, respecting our diversity, and building a future based on progressive values’ (paragraph 7; 2003:9). The fourth claim envisages that the teaching about religions may play a preserving role, encouraging respect and building a future based on ‘progressive values’.
Claim 5: Affirm their own religious affiliation and grow in their own spirituality

Religion Education should enable pupils to engage with a variety of religious traditions in a way that encourages them to grow in their inner spiritual and moral dimensions. It must affirm their own identity, while leading them to an informed understanding of the religious identities of others (paragraph 19; 2003:13).

Claim 6: In service of a common humanity

When we provide our pupils with educationally sound programmes, they will gain a deeper and broader understanding of the life orientations, worldviews, cultural practices, and ethical resources of humanity. As they develop creative and critical abilities for thinking about religion and religions, pupils will also develop the capacities for mutual recognition, respect for diversity, reduced prejudice, and increased civil toleration that are necessary for citizens to live together in a democratic society. Learning about themselves while learning about others, pupils will surely discover their common humanity in diversity, and be both affirmed and challenged to grow in their personal orientation to life (paragraph 21; 2003:14).

‘Schools have a different responsibility in providing opportunities for teaching and learning about our religious diversity and our common humanity’ (paragraph 70; 2003:28).

Claim 7: A unique South African response

Our country has sufficient expertise and energy to meet the challenge of developing a distinctively South African approach to Religion and Education. As a matter of priority, we must deploy our intellect, imagination, talent, and human capacity in the work of creating and sustaining the relationship between Religion and Education (paragraph 67; 2003:27).

An attempt to cluster these seven claims into a main claim may result in the following:

The Policy on Religion and Education is a unique South African response to defining citizenship and education, empowering learners to be established in their own cultures and religions as well as being competent and confident in being critically literate in an increasingly diverse and globalising world. The Policy
provides an enabling environment by establishing and demarcating clear and distinct roles for parents, religious bodies, educators and educational institutions.

I have so far analysed the Policy argument. According to Dunn (1994:75) there are three forms of policy analysis, namely prospective, retrospective and integrated. This analysis is therefore in a certain sense prospective – envisioning how it will be implemented. The Policy itself identifies certain specific roles and actions in order to realise the Policy claims. Figure 6.4 provides an overview of the Policy argument analysed according to Dunn’s (1994) proposal:

**Figure 6.4: The Policy argument**

### 6.6 POLICY IMPLICATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION

The Policy sets out clear envisaged activities, outputs and outcomes to realise its claims. These activities, outputs and outcomes may suggest a linear, chronological development in the process of implementation. This does not
suggest that the different aspects of implementation do not overlap and may even be reiterative. In outlining the implementation of the Policy, the Policy clearly demarcates roles and responsibilities of the main stakeholders in the implementation process, but also highlights a number of possible constraints and challenges.

Looking at the Policy’s envisioning of its implementation, the Policy focuses on two main foci, namely curricular implementation as well as extra-curricular guidelines for implementation. With regard to the *curricular* implementation, the Policy identifies the following aspects:

- Professional educators: their roles, attitude, pedagogy, religious literacy, integration and creativity
- Guest facilitators
- The role of higher education
- The development of resources
- The role of religious and voluntary bodies
- The role of school governing bodies

### 6.6.1 Professional educators

#### 6.6.1.1 Their roles

The Policy is very explicit that Religion Education is the responsibility of the schools and more specifically the role of trained educators. Paragraph 34 states: ‘The teaching of Religion Education in schools is to be done by appropriately trained professional educators registered with the South African Council of Educators (SACS)’ (2003:18). Religion Education in schools is about ‘a civic understanding of religion’ (paragraph 28; 2003:16). Religion Education is aligned with the roles of educators as described by the Norms and Standards for Educators.
The outcomes identified for Religion Education fit with the competences required of all teachers in public schools. The Norms and Standards for Educators (Government Notice #82 published in Government Gazette 20844 of 4 February 2000) require all teachers to have the skills, values and attitudes related to a Community, Citizenship, and Pastoral Role. This includes the responsibility to ‘practice and promote a critical, committed, and ethical attitude towards developing a sense of respect and responsibility towards others’. Religion Education is therefore not the mere technical transmission of factual information; its comprehensive role is demonstrated in the teacher's reflexive, foundational, and practical competency…(paragraph 36; 2003:19).

6.6.1.2  Attitude

The Policy acknowledges that the implementation thereof will require a specific attitude from educators. The Policy states:

The teaching of Religion Education must be sensitive to religious interests by ensuring that individuals and groups are protected from ignorance, stereotypes, caricatures, and denigration. Professional educators will have to develop programmes in Religion Education that serve the educational mission of public schools in a democratic South Africa. Curriculum 2005 and the Revised National Curriculum Statement for Schools (Grades R -9) assumes that any educator, regardless of his or her personal religious orientation, is called upon to teach in a pluralistic public school in which pupils can be expected to belong to different religions. If called upon to do so, professional educators must accommodate this reality, in an impartial manner, regardless of their personal views. However, the utilisation of teachers in a school is managed by the school, and as with any other learning area, should take account of the interests, capabilities and sensitivities of each teacher (Paragraph 35; 2003:18).

6.6.1.3  Pedagogy

Here the Policy refers to ‘International guidelines’ for guiding educators from ‘preaching to teaching’. Although the Policy acknowledges that Religion Education will pose unique challenges to educators, the Policy is clear that the pedagogical standards for Religion Education are the same as for the rest of the school curriculum.

Teachers can be assisted in developing effective teaching methods for Religion Education. International guidelines for meeting the challenges and avoiding the pitfalls of teaching Religion Education are available,
which encourage teachers to adopt as a basic principle the distinction between teaching and preaching. A Religion Education lesson requires the same pedagogical standards of clarity of purpose, communication, interest, and enthusiasm that represent effective teaching in other areas of the school curriculum (paragraph 39; 2003:20).

The Policy also foresees that educators will adopt personalised approaches to pedagogy. The Policy states:

Some teachers will adopt a cognitive approach to the subject, preferring a method of elucidation, designed to clarify the meaning of religious beliefs and practices in their contexts. In this method, pupils not only learn about the variety of religions, but they are enabled to make free and informed choices about religion in their personal lives. Other teachers may emphasise the more affective dimensions of the subject, and adopt an interactive approach to teaching that attempts to involve pupils in an exploration of the meaning and significance of religion (paragraph 40; 2003:20).

### 6.6.1.4 Religious literacy

Interestingly, though the Policy does not explicitly describes what it understands under ‘religious literacy’, the Policy does however express concern about the ‘religious illiteracy’ of educators.

There is legitimate concern about the widespread ‘religion illiteracy’ found among teachers, who call for and deserve the support that will enable them to deal with religion in the classroom. Teachers do need access to textbooks, supplementary materials, handbooks, guidelines for teaching methods and student assessment, and in-service training, that will allow them to build and sustain their professional competence and recognition as teachers in the subject. Guidelines and resources will be made available to assist teachers in dealing with issues of religion in the classroom, and religious organisations will be requested to assist in the training of teachers. In view of the serious backlog of trained religion educators, this aspect is also to be addressed in training serving teachers for the implementation of the Revised National Curriculum Statement (paragraph 37; 2003:20).

The Policy does not dwell on describing either the educators’ religious illiteracy or how it may impact on the teaching of Religion Education. The Policy immediately continues to state how the illiteracy of teachers will be addressed and changed to
a position of ‘professional competence’. The support educators will receive includes

- access to textbooks,
- supplementary materials,
- handbooks,
- guidelines for teaching methods and student assessment, and
- in-service training (paragraph 37; 2003:20).

This support will be supplemented by ‘Guidelines and resources will be made available to assist teachers in dealing with issues of religion in the classroom’ (paragraph 37; 2003:20). The Policy further suggests that religious organisations will be requested to assist in the training of teachers – referring to training of prospective and current teachers.

6.6.1.5 Integration and creativity

Paragraph 38 of the Policy refers to how teachers have already dealt with religion. The emphasis seems to be on the integration of the subject in ‘creative, sensitive and educationally responsible ways’ -

Notwithstanding the difficulties, many teachers have already found creative ways to integrate the study of religion. Some have focused on the term ‘religion’ as an example of how concepts are formed in society more generally. In other cases, teachers have found creative, sensitive, and educationally responsible ways to include religious materials and perspectives in other learning areas, and the value of religion has been recognised for the teaching of themes in history, world history, language and literature, including the teaching of sacred texts as literature, art and art history, music, health education, and even science education (paragraph 38; 2003:20).

6.6.2 Guest facilitators

The Policy is very clear that the main responsibility for teaching Religion Education will be ‘trained professional educators registered with the South African Council of Educators (SACE)’ (paragraph 34; 2003:18). Having made that
clear, the Policy does acknowledge the role guest facilitators can play in Religion Education. The Policy states

Representatives of religious organisations who are registered with SACE could be engaged, and as with other learning areas, occasional guest facilitators from various religions may be utilised, provided that this is done on an equitable basis. Such guest facilitators need not be registered with SACE, since they and the class remain under the authority of the teacher. Religious organisations are therefore encouraged to explore ways in which schools, especially poorly resourced schools and those in remote areas, could also have access to such guest facilitators (paragraph 34; 2003:18).

Guest facilitators do not have to be registered with the SACE. The utilisation of guest facilitators is to be guided by two criteria:

- equity between the different religions
- guest facilitators 'remain under the authority of the teacher'

Religious organisations are foreseen to support teachers in the identification of guest facilitators for occasional use in schools.

### 6.6.3 The role of higher education

The Policy envisages higher education to play a specific role with regard to ensuring effective implementation. Paragraph 41 describes the role of higher education as follows (2003:21):

Since Religion Education must be facilitated by trained and registered teachers, Higher Education Institutions are called upon to provide appropriate training for prospective teachers by introducing suitable courses in the study of religion and religions as part of teacher education programmes. Such teacher education programmes in the study of religion and religions should be of two types:

- General basic training in the study of religion, with attention to both content and teaching methods, applicable to all prospective and serving educators in both the GET and FET bands; and
- Specialised training for Religious Studies teachers in the FET band.

The Policy specifies the recipients as ‘prospective and serving educators' with regard to the GET and FET bands, and specialised training with regard to the
teaching of Religious Studies in the FET band. The ‘content’ of the training is specified to focus on ‘content as well as teaching methods’.

6.6.4 The development of resources

The development of appropriate resources is foreseen to address not only the ‘religious illiteracy’ of educators, but also assist them in building ‘professional competency’. Paragraph 37 states:

Teachers do need access to textbooks, supplementary materials, handbooks, guidelines for teaching methods and student assessment, and in-service training, that will allow them to build and sustain their professional competence and recognition as teachers in the subject. Guidelines and resources will be made available to assist teachers in dealing with issues of religion in the classroom, and religious organisations will be requested to assist in the training of teachers. In view of the serious backlog of trained religion educators, this aspect is also to be addressed in training serving teachers for the implementation of the Revised National Curriculum Statement.

Paragraphs 46 and 47 further emphasise the development of appropriate materials as a matter of urgency as well as stipulate who should be involved in the development:

Teaching materials for Religion Education in the General and Further Education and Training bands shall be developed as a matter of urgency through the collective effort of provincial authorities, learning area committees, tertiary institutions, publishers, materials developers, religious bodies and researchers in religion education.

As a call to action, Tirisano requires the combined efforts of everyone involved in education to work towards preserving our heritage, respecting our diversity, and building our capacity for the future, and to this end we invite representatives of religious organisations to voluntarily contribute to the development and distribution of suitable materials for use at all ages. The Standing Advisory Committee for Religion in Education will advise on the procurement of Learning and Teaching Support materials, to ensure that only credible texts with correct information are used.

The Policy allocates the final responsibility for the procurement of Learning and Teaching Support materials to the Standing Advisory Committee for Religion in Education (SACRED).
6.6.5 The role of religious and voluntary bodies

The Policy is very adamant in locating the teaching of Religion Education within the domain of the formal compulsory curriculum (R-12) as well as being an educational response by trained and registered educators. The Policy is equally clear about the supporting role religious bodies and other voluntary organisations can play in the implementation.

6.6.5.1 Development of the curriculum

Paragraph 49 of the Policy states that religious bodies will be involved in the development of learning programmes.

The Department of Education will establish representative voluntary bodies to develop illustrative learning programmes in Religion Education for different levels. While firm on the principles and parameters of Religion Education; which require attention to the rich variety of religions in South Africa and the world, any learning programme must allow space for dealing with local and regional concerns, and be in accordance with the ethos of the school.

6.6.5.2 Development of support materials

Paragraphs 37, 46 and 47 states the role religious and voluntary bodies play in the development of support materials. For example, paragraph 37 states

...religious organisations will be requested to assist in the training of teachers. In view of the serious backlog of trained religion educators, this aspect is also to be addressed in training serving teachers for the implementation of the Revised National Curriculum Statement (2003:20)

6.6.5.3 Support as guest facilitators

Representatives of religious organisations who are registered with SACE could be engaged, and as with other learning areas, occasional guest facilitators from various religions may be utilised, provided that this is done on an equitable basis. Such guest facilitators need not be registered with SACE, since they and the class remain under the authority of the teacher.
Religious organisations are therefore encouraged to explore ways in which schools, especially poorly resourced schools and those in remote areas, could also have access to such guest facilitators (paragraph 34; 2003:18).

6.6.5.4 Extra-curricular involvement

The Policy also provides for religious bodies to be involved in extra-curricular activities. The Policy encourages:

…the provision of religious instruction by religious bodies and other accredited groups outside the formal school curriculum on school premises, provided that opportunities be afforded in an equitable manner to all religious bodies represented in a school, that no denigration or caricaturing of any other religion take place, and that attendance at such instruction be voluntary. Persons offering Religious Instruction would do so under the authority of the religious body, and would not be required to be registered with the South African Council for Educators (paragraph 57; 2003:25).

6.6.6 The role of School Governing bodies

In the Policy process as discussed in the previous chapter (Chapter 5) the role of School Governing bodies (SGBs) was a major bone of contention. Some stakeholders wanted SGBs to be involved in determining curriculum content as well as determining which alternative (single-faith, multi-faith, or multiple faith approach) to follow. The Policy allocates the determination of the practice of religious observances in schools as the responsibility of SGBs. In paragraph 58 the Policy states

In accordance with the Constitution, the South African Schools Act, and rules made by the appropriate authorities, the Governing Bodies of public schools may make their facilities available for religious observances, in the context of free and voluntary association, and provided that facilities are made available on an equitable basis (2003:25).

The Policy ascribes to the jurisdiction of the SGBs the following:

School Governing Bodies are required to determine the nature and content of religious observances for teachers and pupils, such that coherence and alignment with this policy and applicable legislation is ensured. It may also determine that a policy of no religious observances be followed. Where
religious observances are held, these may be at any time determined by the school, and may be part of a school assembly. However an assembly is not necessarily to be seen as the only occasion for religious observance, which may take place at other times of the day, and in other ways, including specific dress requirements or dietary injunctions. Where a religious observance is organised, as an official part of the school day, it must accommodate and reflect the multi-religious nature of the country in an appropriate manner (paragraph 61; 2003:26).

The Policy therefore demarcates the role and responsibility of SGBs as follows:

- It is clear that SGBs do not have any say in the curriculum content of the teaching of Religion Education and Religion Studies.
- The SGBs determines and oversees religious observances in schools to ensure that these practices are coherent and aligned to the Policy and applicable legislation.
- Religious observances may take place during the school day and may be part of the school assembly.
- The SGBs will also oversee ‘specific dress requirements or dietary injunctions’.

Whenever religious observances are part of the official school day ‘it must accommodate and reflect the multi-religious nature of the country in an appropriate manner’ (paragraph 61; 2003:26) and ‘in the context of free and voluntary association, and provided that facilities are made available on an equitable basis’ (paragraph 58; 2003:25).

### 6.6.7 The role of school management

Paragraph 56 of the Policy states that the school management is responsible to make provision

for important holy days, in regard to the setting of examinations and tests, to ensure that pupils are not prejudiced by their attendance at religious observances. Similarly, the possibility of a ‘release time’ for pupils to attend Religious Observances or Instruction off the school property may be considered by schools, but in each case provision must be made to catch up any loss of teaching and learning time.
Paragraph 59 provides the interpretive framework with regard to religious observances. It states:

There are various types of religious observance implied in this instance:

- voluntary public occasions, which make use of school facilities, for a religious service on a day of worship or rest (Section 15(2) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa);
- voluntary occasions when the school community (teachers and pupils) gather for a religious observance (Section 7 of the Schools Act and Section 15(2) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa);
- observances held in a voluntary gathering of pupils and/or teachers during a school break; and
- an observance which may be ongoing, and entail other dimensions such as dress, prayer times and diets, which must be respected and accommodated in a manner agreed upon by the school and the relevant faith authorities.

All of these fall within the ambit of the school management overseen by the SGB.

The Policy further encourages public participation in religious observances using school property. Paragraph 60 states ‘Voluntary religious observances in which the public participates should be encouraged. Although such religious observances take place on the school property, they are not part of the official educational function of the public school’.

With regard to school assemblies, the Policy is very clear regarding its implementation. Paragraph 62 states:

Appropriate and equitable means of acknowledging the multi-religious nature of a school community may include the following:

- The separation of learners according to religion, where the observance takes place outside of the context of a school assembly, and with equitably supported opportunities for observance by all faiths, and appropriate use of the time for those holding secular or humanist beliefs;
- Rotation of opportunities for observance, in proportion to the representation of different religions in the school;
- Selected readings from various texts emanating from different religions;
• The use of a universal prayer; or
• A period of silence.

Other forms of equitable treatment may be developed which are consistent with this policy and applicable legislation. Where the segregation of pupils is contemplated, a school must consider and mitigate the impact of peer pressure on children, and its negative influence on the willingness of children to be identified as ‘different’.

Paragraph 63 states

A school assembly has the potential for affirming and celebrating unity in diversity, and should be used for this purpose. Public schools may not violate the religious freedom of pupils and teachers by imposing religious uniformity on a religiously diverse school population in school assemblies. Where a religious observance is included in a school assembly, pupils may be excused on grounds of conscience from attending a religious observance component, and equitable arrangements must be made for these pupils (2003:27).

Paragraph 65 further iterates the parameters of the jurisdiction of school management. It states:

This policy provides a framework within which Religious Observances could be organised at public schools. Schools and teachers should take cognisance of the opportunities that the framework offers for the development of ethical, moral, and civic values. The policy does not prescribe specific ways in which religious observances at public schools must be organised, and encourages creative and innovative approaches in this area. It is our hope that schools will make use of these opportunities (2003:27)

The Policy guidelines specific to the religious observances illustrate the Policy’s two main foci, namely

• The parameters of the cooperative model between the state and religion and secondly the specific relationship between education and religion.
• The Policy ‘displays a profound respect towards religious faith and affirms the importance of the study of religion and religious observances’ (Foreword to the Policy, 2003:6).

Weimer and Vining (1999:396) consider three factors that influence policy implementation:
• Logic of the policy
• The nature of the cooperation it requires
• The availability of skilful and committed people to manage its implementation.

6.7 THE LOGIC OF THE POLICY: IS THE THEORY REASONABLE?

Weimer and Vining (1999:396) suggest thinking of a policy ‘as a chain of hypotheses’, the one which builds on the other in order to secure successful implementation. The ‘greater the legal authority the adopted policy gives implementators’ and the ‘stronger the political support for the adopted policy and its putative goals’, the more likely the success of the implementation (Weimer & Vining 1999:397).

Weimer and Vining (1999:397) refer to the work of Bardach (1977) who used the metaphor of an assembly process for policy implementation – ‘… an assembly process involving efforts to secure essential elements from those who control them. His metaphor suggests the generalisation that the more numerous and varied the elements that must be assembled, the greater the potential for implementation problems’ (Weimer & Vining 1999:398). They suggest the following questions to be answered:

• What … elements must be assembled?
• Who controls these elements?
• What are their motivations?
• What resources does the implementor have available to induce them to provide the elements?
• What consequences will result if the elements cannot be obtained either on a timely basis or at all?
Weimer and Vining (1999:399) warn ‘…even when implementors have the legal authority to demand compliance, they will not necessarily get it at levels adequate for successful implementation’.

6.8 CONCLUSION

… a perfumer, however, needs more than a passably fine nose. He needs an incorruptible, hard-working organ that has been trained to smell for many decades, enabling him to decipher even the most complicated odours by composition and proportion, as well as to create new, unknown mixtures of scent (Süskind 1986:77)

I don’t need a formula. I have the recipe in my nose (Süskind 1986:78)

In the Prologue to this chapter, I started with these two quotes and then set out to analyse the different elements of the Policy ‘as perfume’. In starting out I discovered my need for a ‘formula’, and I found the ‘formula’ provided by Dunn (1994) very helpful in identifying the Policy argument and its different elements. Although the ‘formula’ was fairly clear, I discovered that in my identification of the different elements, I relied on my understanding of Dunn, but also an intuition, a tentative ‘knowing’. I am not sure that by the time I reach the end of this thesis that I will be able to boast like Grenouille that I had ‘the recipe in my nose’. I am however sure that in my analysis of the Policy, the ‘formula’ and my intuition allowed me to discover the different elements of the Policy.

My analysis has shown that the Policy reiterated its intention in a number of paragraphs to provide

- ‘a broad framework within which people of goodwill will work out their own approaches’ (Foreword to the Policy, 2003:6).
- ‘a framework for schools to determine policies, and for parents and communities to be better informed of their rights and responsibilities in regard to religion and education’ (paragraph 2; 2003:7)
- a framework for a cooperative model which is ‘best for religion and best for education in a democratic South Africa’ (paragraph 4; 2003:8)
• ‘a framework within which Religious Observances could be organised at public schools’ (paragraph 65; 2003:27);
• ‘a unified framework for teaching and learning about religion, religions, and religious diversity’ (paragraph 68; 2003:28)

This framework the Policy sets out to provide to schools, SGBs, pupils, parents, religious organisations and the communities surrounding schools, is set within the framework provided for in the Constitution of South Africa. As such the Policy interprets and translates the guidelines and provisions in the Constitution regarding
• The relationship between the state and religion
• The relationship between education and religion
• The roles and responsibilities of educators, school management, SGBs
• The relationship between religious instruction, religious observances as well as religion education and its implications for curriculum and schools.

Although the Policy sets out a framework for the above, the Policy is also very clear that its intention is to be implemented. Before learning and teaching, support materials can be developed, and before in-service and pre-service educators trained, clear guidelines regarding the curriculum envisaged by the Policy have to be developed. To a certain extent the success of the implementation ‘depends’ on how successful the NCSs and LPGs ‘translate’ the intentions and guidelines of the Policy into a curriculum.

In the next chapter, Chapter 7, I will analyse the RNCS, NCS and LPGs.

CHAPTER 7
AN ANALYSIS OF THE CURRICULUM\textsuperscript{143} AND LEARNING PROGRAMME GUIDELINES

\textsuperscript{143} This use of the term ‘curriculum’ encompasses Religion Education as part of Life Orientation as well as Religion Studies as separate FET subject.
7.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 6 I analysed the Policy-as-text and explored how the Policy provides a framework to guide schools, SGBs, pupils, parents, religious organisations and the communities surrounding schools regarding the study of religion and religious observances in schools. In the previous chapter (Chapter 6) I also indicated that although the Policy provided a framework for the development of the curriculum, it was left to the various curriculum committees to interpret and to provide content and context elements of the Policy, for example, scoping ‘worldviews’. In this chapter I will analyse aspects of the various curriculum documents and guidelines. Table 7.1 provides an overview of the documents\textsuperscript{144} that will be analysed:

\textbf{Table 7.1: Curriculum documents}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LIFE ORIENTATION</th>
<th>RELIGION STUDIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Revised National Curriculum Statement Grades R-9 (Schools), Overview (DoE, 2002a).</td>
<td>National Curriculum Statement Grades 10-12 (General), Religion Studies (DoE, 2005).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revised National Curriculum Statement Grades 10-12 (General), Life Orientation (DoE, 2002b).</td>
<td>National Curriculum Statement Grades 10-12 (General), Learning Programme Guidelines, Religion Studies (DoE, 2008b)\textsuperscript{145}.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Curriculum Statement Grades 10-12 (General), Life Orientation (DoE 2003a).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Curriculum Statement Grades</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{144} There were several drafts of some of these documents that were available at different times. The different drafts contained the input from different stakeholders. The documents in Table 1 represent the documents available on the official DoE website on 20 May: \url{http://www.education.gov.za/Curriculum/Curriculum.asp} Accessed 20 May 2008.

\textsuperscript{145} Referred to in the text as NCS/LPG (DoE 2008b)
In introducing the scope of this chapter, it is necessary to locate the analysis of the Revised Curriculum Statements (RNCs), National Curriculum Statements (NCSs) and Learning Programme Guidelines (LPGs) within the framework provided by Dunn (1994:17) that I have used in Chapter 6 (Figure 7.1).

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**Figure 7.1: The policy analysis framework (Dunn 1994:17)**

The RNCs, NCSs and LPGs give gestalt to the intentions and guidance of the Policy. The Policy and the RNCS (2002b) were developed simultaneously. The RNCS (DoE 2002a) was adopted in 2002 and the Policy in 2003. The NCS for Religion Studies (DoE 2005) followed the acceptance of the Policy. The LPG for

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146 When the abbreviations RNCS and NCS are used without dates, it refers in general to the RNCS and the NCS as official documentation. In some cases I refer to the RNCSs and NCSs as well as the LPGs collectively as ‘curriculum documents’.
Life Orientation (Grades 10-12) as well as the LPG for Religion Studies (Grades 10-12) were drafted and finally published in 2008. The development of these curriculum documents and guidelines are therefore processes that can be regarded to fall in the phase of 'policy implementation', the fourth phase of Dunn's (1994) framework (Figure 7.1).

The following figure (Figure 7.2) illustrates my understanding of the interrelated nature of the various processes accompanying and following the formulation and acceptance of the Policy:

Figure 7.2: An overview of the interrelated nature of the processes accompanying and following the formulation of the Policy
**Circle 1** illustrates the concurrent development of the Policy with the processes surrounding the revision of Curriculum 2005\(^{147}\). **Circle 2** illustrates the adoption of the RNCS (DoE 2002a) in 2002 and the Policy’s adoption in 2003. After the Policy was adopted, **Circle 3**, the NCS for Life Orientation (Grades 10-12) was published (DoE 2003a), the curriculum for the subject Religion Studies (Grades 10-12) (NCS DoE 2005) was developed and NCS/LPGs formulated (finally published in 2008). **Circle 4** illustrates how the development of the NCS/LPG relates to the development of teaching and learning support materials and the training of pre-service and in-service educators.

**Circle 5** shows that what actually happens in the classroom depend on the successful interrelation and ‘translation’ of the previous processes. Should all the processes successfully translate the intentions and framework of the Policy, the Policy claim (**Circle 6**) should be realised. In Chapter 6 I concluded the Policy claim as follows:

The Policy on Religion and Education is a unique South African response to defining citizenship and education, empowering learners to be established in their own cultures and religions as well as being competent and confident in being critically literate in an increasingly diverse and globalising world. The Policy provides an enabling environment by establishing and demarcating clear and distinct roles for parents, religious bodies, educators and educational institutions.

Paragraph 49 of the Policy states that

The Department of Education will establish representative voluntary bodies to develop illustrative *learning programmes* in Religion Education for different levels. While firm on the principles and parameters of Religion Education; which require attention to the rich variety of religions in South Africa and the world, any learning programme must allow space for dealing with local and regional concerns, and be in accordance with the ethos of the school (2003:23; italics my own).

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\(^{147}\) Curriculum 2005 refers to the official title of the curriculum at that stage. The revision process started already in 2002/2003.
It is important to note that the reference in the Policy to ‘learning programmes’ in paragraph 49 (2003:23) does not refer to the LPGs as they were developed, but is rather a generic reference to the involvement of voluntary bodies in the development of the curriculum. Figure 7.3 illustrates an overview of how I will proceed in this chapter:

**Figure 7.3: Overview of Chapter 7**

I will proceed to analyse the RNCS (DoE 2002a), NCS (DoE 2003a and DoE 2008a) and RNCS/LPG DoE 2003b) applicable to Life Orientation and then continue to analyse the NCS (DoE 2005) and NCS/LPG (DoE 2008b) on Religion Studies as an independent subject in the FET band (Grades 10-12).

### 7.2 THE CURRICULUM AND LEARNING PROGRAMME GUIDELINES FOR LIFE ORIENTATION

The Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS, DoE 2002b) states that the Learning Outcomes for the General Education and Training Band for Grades R-9

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148 It is important to note that the curriculum for Life Orientation is covered by the RNCS (R-9) (2002a) and the NCS (10-12) (2003a). The NCS/LPGs for Life Orientation (Grades 10-12) were finally published in 2008 (DoE 2008a).
are based on critical and developmental outcomes that are inspired by the Constitution. The RNCS (DoE 2002b:1-2) describes the critical and developmental outcomes as follows:

The **critical** outcomes envisage learners who are able to:

1. identify and solve problems and make decisions using critical and creative thinking;
2. work effectively with others as members of a team, group, organisation and community;
3. organise and manage themselves and their activities responsibly and effectively;
4. collect, analyse, organise and critically evaluate information;
5. communicate effectively using visual, symbolic and/or language skills in various modes;
6. use science and technology effectively and critically, showing responsibility towards the environment and the health of others; and
7. demonstrate an understanding of the world as a set of related systems by recognising that problem solving contexts do not exist in isolation (DoE 2002b: 1).

The **developmental** outcomes envisage learners who are also able to:

1. reflect on and explore a variety of strategies to learn more effectively;
2. participate as responsible citizens in the life of local, national, and global communities;
3. be culturally and aesthetically sensitive across a range of social contexts;
4. explore education and career opportunities; and
5. develop entrepreneurial opportunities (DoE 2002b:2).

Religion Education (as part of Life Orientation) and Religion Studies (as subject in the FET band) specifically contribute to critical outcome 7 (‘demonstrate an understanding of the world as a set of related systems by recognising that problem solving contexts do not exist in isolation’) and developmental outcomes 2 (‘participate as responsible citizens in the life of local, national, and global communities’) and 3 (‘be culturally and aesthetically sensitive across a range of social contexts’).

These critical and developmental outcomes are envisaged to be attained in four distinct phases namely
• Foundation Phase (Grades R-3)
• Intermediate Phase (Grades 4-6)
• Senior Phase (Grades 7-9) (RNCS 2002a:13)
• Further education and training (FET) (DoE 2008a)

The RNCS (DoE 2002a:15-16) describes the different Learning Programmes for the first three phases (Foundation, Intermediate and Senior) as follows:

In the Foundation Phase, there are three Learning Programmes: Literacy, Numeracy and Life Skills. In the Intermediate Phase, Languages and Mathematics are distinct Learning Programmes. Learning Programmes must ensure that the prescribed outcomes for each learning area are covered effectively and comprehensively. Schools may decide on the number and nature of other Learning Programmes based on the organisational imperatives of the school, provided that the national priorities and developmental needs of learners in a phase are taken into account. In the Senior Phase, there are eight Learning Programmes based on the Learning Area Statements.

In the first two phases, Religion Education is addressed under the Learning Programme ‘Life Skills’. During the Senior phase, Religion Education is addressed under the Learning Area ‘Life Orientation’. The seven other Learning Areas of the Senior phase are:

• Languages;
• Mathematics;
• Natural Sciences;
• Social Sciences;
• Arts and Culture;
• Economic and Management Sciences; and
• Technology (RNCS DoE, 2002b:2).

Life Orientation as one of the Learning Areas is envisaged as follows: ‘It guides and prepares learners for life and its possibilities. Life Orientation specifically equips learners for meaningful and successful living in a rapidly changing and transforming society’ (RNCS, DoE 2002a:26). Life Orientation as distinct Learning Area is foreseen to fulfil the following purpose (RNCS 2002b:4):
The Life Orientation Learning Area aims to empower learners to use their talents to achieve their full physical, intellectual, personal, emotional and social potential. Learners will develop the skills to relate positively and make a contribution to family, community and society, while practising the values embedded in the Constitution. They will learn to exercise their constitutional rights and responsibilities, to respect the rights of others and to show tolerance for cultural and religious diversity in order to build a democratic society.

The Life Orientation Learning Area will enable learners to make informed, morally responsible and accountable decisions about their health and the environment. Learners will be encouraged to acquire and practise life skills that will assist them to respond to challenges and to play an active and responsible role in the economy and in society.

Life Orientation has the following five outcomes (RNCS 2002a:26)\(^{149}\), but the content and assessment criteria for each outcome differ according to the phase in which learners are (RNCS DoE 2002b:7-71). The Learning Outcomes are as follows:

- **Learning Outcome 1: Health Promotion**
  The learner will be able to make informed decisions regarding personal, community and environmental health.

- **Learning Outcome 2: Social Development**
  The learner will be able to demonstrate an understanding of and commitment to constitutional rights and responsibilities, and to show an understanding of diverse cultures and religions.

- **Learning Outcome 3: Personal Development:**
  The learner will be able to use acquired life skills to achieve and extend personal potential to respond effectively to challenges in his or her world.

- **Learning Outcome 4: Physical Development and Movement**
  The learner will be able to demonstrate an understanding of, and participate in, activities that promote movement and physical development.

- **Learning Outcome 5: Orientation to the World of Work**
  The learner will be able to make informed decisions about further study and career choices (RNCS DoE, 2002a:26).

The following figure (Figure 7.4) illustrates the relation of the RNCS (DoE 2002b) with the eight Learning Areas and how a Learning Area (in this case Life Orientation) expands into Learning Outcomes, core content and concepts.

\(^{149}\) The Foundation and Intermediate Phases cover only the first four Learning Outcomes, while the Senior Phase includes all five Learning Outcomes.
Religion Education falls in the second focus of Life Orientation, called 'Social Development'. Social Development is described as follows (RNCS DoE 2002b:5)\(^{150}\):

In a transforming and democratic society, personal development needs to be placed in a social context so as to encourage the acceptance of diversity and commitment to democratic values. Discrimination on the basis of race, origin and gender remains a challenge for learners in the post-apartheid era. To address these issues, this Learning Area Statement deals with human rights as contained in the South African constitution, social relationships and diverse cultures and religions.

\(^{150}\) Social development is never again described like this in curriculum documents that followed, e.g. the Teacher’s Guide for the development of Learning Programme Guidelines, Life Orientation (DoE 2003a) as well as the Teacher’s Guide, Life Orientation (DoE 2006).
Religion Education within the context of 'Social Development' is described by the RNCS as follows (DoE 2002b:6):

The term 'religion' in this Life Orientation Learning Area Statement is used to include belief systems and worldviews. Religion Education in the Revised National Curriculum Statement for Grades R-9 (Schools) rests on a division of responsibilities between the state on the one hand and religious bodies and parental homes on the other. Religion Education, therefore, has a civic rather than a religious function, and promotes civic rights and responsibilities. In the context of the South African Constitution, Religion Education contributes to the wider framework of education by developing in every learner the knowledge, values, attitudes and skills necessary for diverse religions to co-exist in a multi-religious society. Individuals will realise that they are part of the broader community, and will learn to see their own identities in harmony with those of others.

The Learning outcomes of the Life Orientation Learning Area are foreseen to equip learners to 'live productive and meaningful lives in a transforming society. Their [the outcomes] focus is the development of self-in-society' (RNCS 2002b:5; italics in the original). The RNCS (2002b:5) describes South African society in which learners will play productive and responsible roles as follows:

The features of contemporary South Africa, and the nature of the personal challenges learners encounter in this society, guide the choice of the content of this Learning Area Statement. South African society is characterised by socio-political change. Prejudice, often in the form of racism, is still present in post-apartheid South Africa. These prejudices must be acknowledged and challenged if they are to be overcome. In addition, the country faces the challenges of socio-economic development, which include an increasingly global economy, unemployment and environmental degradation. It is necessary to develop ways of living together in an emerging democracy, and of enjoying hard-won civil, political, social and economic rights.

Learners must find a place for themselves in a world increasingly different from that in which their parents lived. Despite political change, learners live in a complex and challenging environment. Crime and violence affect virtually every school, community and individual learner. Environmental issues affect the health and well-being of many communities. Within this context, learners have to develop a sense of confidence and competence in order to live well and contribute productively to the shaping of a new society.
The RNCS (DoE 2002b:5) therefore states that in the light of socio-political change and the different challenges facing South African society, it is ‘necessary to develop ways of living together in an emerging democracy’. The RNCS (DoE 2002b:6) further considers the integration of the Learning Areas as crucial. Not only is integrated learning ‘central to outcomes-based education’; successful integration is also required due to the ‘historically fragmented nature of knowledge’ (RNCS DoE 2002b:6). Integration celebrates the fact that knowledge construction does not happen in silos or compartments but that learning takes place in a dynamic networking way. Though the Learning Areas each have its unique ‘knowledge domains’, the outcomes and foci of other Learning Areas may be applicable in others. The RNCS (Teacher’s Guide, DoE 2003b:22) also allocates specific weighting to the four focus areas in Life Orientation as follows (Table 7.2):

**Table 7.2: Weighting in the Intermediate phase (DoE 2003b:22)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LO</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Suggested number of clusters for Assessment Standards</th>
<th>Weighting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td><strong>Health Promotion</strong> Safety, nutrition and substance abuse, physical changes and HIV/AIDS</td>
<td>Gr 4: 2, Gr 5: 2, Gr 6: 2</td>
<td>1-2 13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td><strong>Social Development</strong> Discrimination, rights and responsibilities, cultures and religions</td>
<td>Gr 4: 3, Gr 5: 3, Gr 6: 3</td>
<td>2-3 27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td><strong>Personal Development</strong> Accepting and understanding self, personal skills and emotions</td>
<td>Gr 4: 2, Gr 5: 3, Gr 6: 3</td>
<td>2-3 27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td><strong>Physical Development and Movement</strong> Body awareness and control, participation movement skills</td>
<td>Gr 4: 4, Gr 5: 4, Gr 6: 4</td>
<td>3-4 33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is important to remember that there are eight Learning Areas and the total available time to each Learning Area is therefore an eighth. Life Orientation is further composed of four focus areas, and although interlinked, Religion
Education as envisaged by the Policy is specifically allocated within the Focus Area of Social Development.

According to Table 7.2, Social Development is allocated 27% of the eighth allocated to Life Orientation. In the senior phase (grades 7-9) the percentage is 20% (RNCS Teacher’s Guide, DoE 2003b: 23) as illustrated in Table 7.3:

**Table 7.3: Weighting in the Senior phase (DoE 2003b:23)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LO</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Suggested number of clusters for Assessment Standards</th>
<th>Weighting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Health Promotion</td>
<td>Gr 7: 3, Gr 8: 3, Gr 9: 3</td>
<td>1-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Healthy lifestyles, Sexuality, HIV/AIDS and Safety</td>
<td></td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Social Development</td>
<td>Gr 7: 3, Gr 8: 3, Gr 9: 3</td>
<td>2-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Human Rights, cultures and religions</td>
<td></td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Civic activities and relationships</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Personal Development</td>
<td>Gr 7: 3, Gr 8: 3, Gr 9: 3</td>
<td>2-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self-concept formation, emotions, coping skills and relationships</td>
<td></td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Physical Development and Movement</td>
<td>Gr 7: 4, Gr 8: 3, Gr 9: 4</td>
<td>3-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Physical activities, physical fitness, Rights and ethics</td>
<td></td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Orientation to the World of Work</td>
<td>Gr 7: 1, Gr 8: 3, Gr 9: 2</td>
<td>1-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Abilities, interests and aptitudes, career options and further study</td>
<td></td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As part of the focus in Learning Outcome 2 (Social development), Religion Education has its own assessment criteria for each grade (Table 7.4):

**Table 7.4: Assessment criteria**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>We know this when the learner:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grade R</td>
<td>Identifies and names symbols linked to own religion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 1</td>
<td>Matches symbols associated with a range of religions in South Africa.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 2</td>
<td>Describes important days from diverse religions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 3</td>
<td>Discusses diet, clothing and decorations in a variety of religions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 4</td>
<td>Discusses significant places and buildings in a variety of religions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 5</td>
<td>Discusses festivals and customs from a variety of religions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 6</td>
<td>Discusses the dignity of the person in a variety of religions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 7</td>
<td>Explains the role of oral traditions and scriptures in a range of the world's religions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 8</td>
<td>Discusses the contributions of organisations from various religions to social development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 9</td>
<td>Reflects on and discusses the contributions of various religions in promoting peace.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 10(^{151})</td>
<td>Display an understanding of the major religions, ethical traditions and indigenous belief systems in South Africa, and explore how they contribute to a harmonious society.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 11</td>
<td>Reflect on knowledge and insights gained in major religions, ethical traditions and indigenous belief systems, and clarify own values and beliefs with the view to debate and analyse contemporary moral and spiritual issues and dilemmas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 12</td>
<td>Reflect on and explain how to formulate a personal mission statement based on core aspects of personal philosophies, values, beliefs, religions and ideologies, which will inform and direct actions in life and contribute meaningfully to society.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These assessment standards are in line with international curriculum development and research with regard to the age-appropriateness of outcomes (Chidester 2003; also see Ferguson 1998 and Roux 1998). Each outcome allocated against a grade has been done taking into consideration the conceptual, cognitive and emotional development of the child at each age. This analysis of the RNCS (DoE 2002b) and NCS (DoE 2003a) for Life Orientation has highlighted the small percentage of time actually allocated to Religion Education within the focus of Social Development.

The age-appropriateness of the assessment criteria should therefore be compared to the assessment criteria envisaged for particular grades. The

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\(^{151}\) The Assessment criteria for Grades 10-12 regarding the study of religion are not indicated in the Policy. These assessment criteria are capsulated in the NCS for Life Orientation (Grades 10-12) (2003a).
Teacher’s Guide (RNCS DoE 2003b:31) portrays the Intermediate learner (ages 8-14); grades 4-6) as follows:

- Becoming more sensitive to how their actions affect others;
- Beginning to consider the needs, desires and points of view of others;
- Able to function co-operatively in the completion of group tasks with increasing ease;
- Enjoying the challenge of tackling independent tasks;
- Beginning to reveal the desire to take control of their own learning;
- Attempting to satisfy their curiosity about the world around them through active participation and critical enquiry in the learning process;
- Beginning to seek more order; while still manifesting spontaneity and creativity;
- Becoming more deliberate and methodical in their approach;
- Increasingly able to apply acquired methods in new contexts;
- Increasingly able to access, record and manipulate information; and
- Increasingly able to investigate, compare and assess critically.

The assessment criteria envisaged for Grades 4-6 are:

Grade 4 Discusses significant places and buildings in a variety of religions
Grade 5 Discusses festivals and customs from a variety of religions
Grade 6 Discusses the dignity of the person in a variety of religions

Compared to the profile of learners in Grades 4-6, the assessment criteria as envisaged by the Policy will expose learners to the differences between groups as they become more sensitive to the needs of others. Learners at this age are increasingly able and interested to ‘investigate, compare and assess critically’ and the assessment criteria will on the one hand stimulate exploration and also satisfy the curiosity of learners during this phase.

During the FET phase, Life Orientation the following outcomes are envisaged:

*Learning Outcome 1: Personal Well-being*

The learner is able to achieve and maintain personal well-being.

* Learning Outcome 2: Citizenship Education*
The learner is able to demonstrate an understanding and appreciation of the values and rights that underpin the Constitution in order to practise responsible citizenship, and enhance social justice and sustainable living.

- **Learning Outcome 3: Physical Education**
  The learner is able to demonstrate an understanding and appreciation of the values and rights that underpin the Constitution in order to practise responsible citizenship, and enhance social justice and sustainable living.

- **Learning Outcome 4: Careers and Career Choices**
  The learner is able to demonstrate self-knowledge and the ability to make informed decisions regarding further study, career fields and career pathing (NCS DoE 2008a).

During Grades 10-12, Religion Education is foreseen to contribute to the attainment of Learning Outcome 1 (Personal well-being) and Learning Outcome 2 (Citizenship Education). I will now briefly explore some aspects of the NCS for Religion Education as part of Life Orientation (NCS DoE 2008a).

Assessment Criterion 3 (AS3) for Learning Outcome 1 in Grade 11 states that the learner:

  Explores characteristics of a healthy and balanced lifestyle, factors influencing responsible choices and behaviour in the promotion of health, and the impact of unsafe practices on self and others: Concepts: balanced lifestyle, responsible choices and behaviours, unsafe practices and their impact (NCS DoE 2008a:27).

Although AS3 does not mention religion specifically, the NCS indicates that life choices include:

- role of parents and peers;
- personal values and belief system;
- *religion*, media, social and cultural influences;
- economic conditions;
- access to information (NCS DoE 2008a:27; italics added).
Under Learning Outcome 2 (Citizenship Education) for Grade 11, Assessment Criterion 2 (AS2) states that the learner ‘Formulates strategies based on national and international instruments for identifying and intervening in discrimination and violations of human rights: Concepts: strategies and instruments for dealing with human rights violations’. Religion is specifically addressed when learners will ‘Define the discrimination and violation of human rights, including what causes it (e.g. race, class, creed, rural/urban, HIV and AIDS status, religion, ethnicity, xenophobia, gender, language, prejudice)’ (NCS DoE 2008a: 28).

In Learning Outcome 2 (Citizenship Education), the Assessment Criterion 4 (AS4) for Grade 10 states that a learner: ‘Displays an understanding of the major religions, ethical traditions and indigenous belief systems in South Africa, and explores how they contribute to a harmonious society’ and covers the following concepts: major religions; ethical traditions; belief systems; harmonious society and

- Major religions (e.g. Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, African religions)
- Ethical traditions/ religious laws
- Indigenous belief systems
- Religious diversity in South Africa and how each religion contributes to harmonious living (NCS DoE 2008a: 28).

Here it is noteworthy that AS4 focuses on ‘how each religion contributes to harmonious living’ (italics added). The same Assessment Criterion (AS4) for Grade 11 (Learning Outcome 2, NCS DoE 2008a:29) states that a learner: ‘Reflects on knowledge and insights gained in major religions, ethical traditions and indigenous belief systems, and clarifies own values and beliefs with the view to debate and analyse contemporary moral and spiritual issues and dilemmas’. AS4 covers the following concepts: ‘major religions, own values and beliefs, moral and spiritual issues’ and suggest that learners

- Analyse contemporary moral and spiritual issues such as sex, marriage and divorce; abortion; death penalty; crime and punishment; genetic cloning; etc. within the context of at least 2-3 major religions studied in Grade 10
- Analyse and clarify own values and beliefs concerning the above issues
• Prepare for/ engage in debates/ discussions in which own values and beliefs are used to support one’s position on an issue/ dilemma (NCS DoE 2008a:29).

In Grade 11 learners are more critical than when younger and therefore AS4 proposes the analysis of some controversial issues such as abortion and the death penalty. AS4 is furthermore an example of the study of religion by the Policy as critical organic study (as proposed by Wood 2001). Learners are encouraged not only to analyse issues like abortion and the death penalty but also to formulate their own opinions regarding these.

The inclusion of the study of religion in Life Orientation takes a specific ontological and reflexive turn in Assessment Criterion 4 (AS4) for Learning Outcome 2, Grade 12 (NCS DoE 2008a: 29) which stipulates that the learner: ‘Reflects on and explains how to formulate a personal mission statement based on core aspects of personal philosophies, values, beliefs, religion and ideologies, which will inform and direct own actions in life and contribute meaningfully to society’. AS4 covers the following concepts: ‘personal mission statement; life actions; responsible citizenship’ and suggests the following guidelines:

• Awareness of own personal views, values, beliefs, religion, ideology
• Vision – what you want to achieve in life; link to context of South African society explaining how aspirations will impact on society
• Own mission statement for life – philosophies, values, beliefs, religion and ideologies
• How one’s vision impacts on: one’s actions in life and one’s immediate community (NCS DoE 2008a: 29)

The above is an example of how the Policy and NCS move beyond a mere theoretical exploration of religion to explore reflexively personal opinions and mission statements.

Another example of how the NCS (DoE 2008a:29) foresees critical engagement is Assessment Criterion 2 (AS2) for Grade 11. AS2 foresees that the learner:

Formulates strategies based on national and international instruments for identifying and intervening in discrimination and violations of human rights’ and covers the following concepts: strategies and instruments for dealing
with human rights violations; define the discrimination and violation of human rights, including what causes it (e.g. race, class, creed, rural/urban, HIV and AIDS status, religion, ethnicity, xenophobia, gender, language, prejudice) (NCS DoE 2008a: 28).

My initial concerns that the study of religion in Life Orientation will remain on the level of ‘heroes and holidays’ have been found wanting. Even though the time allocated to Life Orientation is very little, the lack of time does not correlate with a lack of critical engagement. The contrary is true – learners will have ample opportunity to interrogate their own beliefs and assumptions as well as the beliefs and assumptions of religions and different worldviews.

I now turn to an analysis of the NCS (DoE 2005) for the subject, Religion Studies (Grades 10-12) as well as the NCS/LPG for Religion Studies (DoE 2008b).

7.3 AN ANALYSIS OF THE CURRICULUM AND LEARNING PROGRAMME GUIDELINES FOR THE SUBJECT – RELIGION STUDIES\textsuperscript{152}

The NCS for Religion Studies (Grades 10-12) (DoE 2005:9) defines the subject of Religion Studies as follows:

Religion Studies is the study of religion as a universal human phenomenon, and of religions found in a variety of cultures. Religion and religions are studied without favouring any or discriminating against any, whether in theory or in practice, and without promoting adherence to any particular religion. Religion Studies leads to the recognition, understanding and appreciation of a variety of religions within a common humanity, in the context of a civic understanding of religion, with a view to developing religious literacy (DoE 2005: 9).

The Policy defined the subject Religious Studies\textsuperscript{153} as follows:

Religious Studies is a subject which is being proposed for the Further Education and Training band (Grades 10-12), in which pupils undertake the study of religion and religions in general, with the possibility of specialisation in one or more in that context (bold in the original).

\textsuperscript{152} The two main documents for this analysis are the NCS for Religion Studies (DoE 2005) and the NCS/LPG for Religion Studies (NCS/LPG DoE 2008b).

\textsuperscript{153} The subject as envisaged by the Policy is called Religious Studies and in the NCS (DoE 2005) the subject is proposed and discussed as Religion Studies.
Religion Studies (NCS DoE 2005: 9-10) is foreseen to have the following purpose:

Religion Studies enhances the constitutional values of citizenship, human rights, equality, freedom from discrimination and freedom of conscience, religion, thought, belief and opinion. Religion Studies contributes to the holistic development of the intellectual, physical, social, emotional and spiritual aspects of the learner. The purpose is to enhance knowledge, skills, values and attitudes necessary to enrich each learner, interpersonal relationships and an open and democratic society.

It is important to notice that Religion Studies is seen to be in service of 'the constitutional values of 'citizenship, human rights, equality, freedom from discrimination and freedom of conscience, religion, thought, belief and opinion'. Religion Studies is further foreseen to contribute to the ‘holistic development’ of learners to enable them to have the necessary competencies required from citizens in ‘an open and democratic society’.

The NCS (DoE 2005:10) foresees that Religion Studies will enrich and empower learners by

- increasing knowledge and understanding about the multiplicity of religions;
- contributing to an understanding of religions as sets of historically interrelated yet unique systems, intertwined with social, economic and political systems;
- encouraging analytical, critical and constructive thinking and debate;
- fostering creative thinking about the perennial religious concerns of humanity;
- stimulating reflection on values, morals and norms; and
- encouraging informed and responsible personal choices.

The NCS (DoE 2005:10) encourages an understanding of the ‘multiplicity’ of religions and worldviews, ‘interrelated yet unique’, and ‘intertwined with social, economic and political systems’. In engaging with religion in its interrelated character, learners will be encouraged to think in analytical, critical, constructive and creative ways about the ‘enduring concerns of humanity’. This will stimulate reflection on values, morals and norms resulting in ‘informed and responsible
personal choices’. The teaching of Religion Studies is therefore responsive to the contexts of religions and learners but also seeking responses from religions and learners.

Religion Studies is further foreseen to enhance interpersonal relationships of the learner by:

- cultivating sensitivity and respect across a range of religions;
- building confidence to deal positively with differing views;
- exploring the range of symbolic, conceptual, linguistic and other means of communication; and
- encouraging the ability of individuals and communities to coexist and collaborate with people of various religious persuasions in a variety of ways (NCS DoE 2005:10).

The NCS (DoE 2005:10) further demarcates the scope of Religion Studies as follows:

- Variety of religions (Learning Outcome 1)
- Universal dimensions of religion as a generic and unique phenomenon (Learning Outcome 2)
- Topical issues in society (Learning Outcome 3)
- Research into religion as a social phenomenon, and across religions (Learning Outcome 4)

The NCS (DoE 2005) foresees on the one hand that learners will be capable of ‘cultivating sensitivity and respect across a range of religions’ as well as the ‘confidence to deal positively with differing views’. ‘Dealing with different views’ is part of the challenges facing humans living together. Often different views based in organised religions can become divisive and confrontational. The claims religions often make to represent the ‘truth’ or ‘the only way’, and that the acceptance or rejection of their claims have eternal consequences, considerably raises the stakes. The study of religion as ‘a human phenomenon’ (the first principle; italics mine) however opens the way for ‘dealing positively with differing views’. At least from an educational perspective, a different viewpoint from my own is ‘just’ another view. This does not imply that the differences are not serious or that ‘all paths lead to Rome’. The contrary is true when learners consider the
claims of a religion for its own sake and deal with the resultant ambiguity and often perplexing complexities\textsuperscript{154}.

Dealing with difference successfully is at the core of peaceful and productive co-existence. A prerequisite for such co-existence is the ability to not only deal with difference but also to be able to communicate across differences using a ‘range of symbolic, conceptual, linguistic and other means of communication’. The ‘beauty’ of the purpose of the Religion Studies as envisaged by the NCS (DoE 2005) is that it does not prescribe ways of co-existence. Rather than prescribing ‘the way’, it encourages individuals and communities to ‘co-exist and collaborate with people of various religious persuasions in a variety of ways’.

Religion Studies also contributes to an open and democratic society by:

- allowing the voices of all religions to be heard in the public domain on the basis of equality and nondiscrimination;
- respecting and promoting the human rights and responsibilities of people of all religions in South Africa, Africa and the world;
- stimulating the positive acceptance and appreciation of religious diversity in South African society;
- developing the skills to communicate meaningfully and constructively across religions in a diverse society; and
- reflecting on and critiquing the contributions of religions to the moral, social, economic and political regeneration of society (DoE 2005:10).

The NCS (DoE 2005) for Religion Studies is clear about its intention to break from past practices and create new possibilities for understanding and co-existence. The NCS (DoE 2005) posits ‘all religions to be heard in the public domain on the basis of equality and non-discrimination’. As such the NCS (DoE 2005) and the Policy charter a total new dispensation from the pre-1994 dispensation where only one religion was heard (literally in the domain of education and public broadcasting). The teaching of Religion Studies presents therefore a clear break not only from the past but also from continued pressure

\textsuperscript{154} See Chapter 1 for a discussion of dealing with different claims to ‘truth’ in a postmodern context (Biesta 1995, 2004).
from different bodies for single-faith education. The Policy and the NCS (DoE 2005) not only celebrate the fact that all religions will be awarded the space to be heard, but also that the voices of all religions will be heard.

These voices will be heard in the context of respect and the promotion of ‘human rights and responsibilities of people of all religions in South Africa, Africa and the world’. Again the NCS (DoE 2005) moves beyond ‘tolerance’ to ‘positive acceptance and appreciation of religious diversity’. This move beyond tolerance is an interesting notion. The NCS (DoE 2005) describes its understanding of tolerance in the assessment criteria for Learning Outcome 1 – The learner is able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of a variety of religions and how they relate to one another. The assessment criteria include the following – ‘Analyse the notions of tolerance, respect, dialogue, conflict, fundamentalism, pluralism, propaganda, indoctrination and syncretism with reference to religious interaction’ (NCS DoE 2005:16).

The last way in which the teaching of Religion Studies will contribute to an open and democratic society will be by encouraging learners to reflect on and critique the contributions of religions to ‘the moral, social, economic and political aspects of society’. Interestingly (and importantly) in line with the ninth principle of ‘criticality’ learners will not only reflect on the contributions of religions to the moral, social, economic and political aspects of society, but will also be encouraged to critique these contributions. The notion of critique is also encouraged in critical outcome 4 as envisaged by the RNCS (DoE 2002b:2). I will return to the critical nature of Religion Studies throughout this analysis as well as in the next chapter.

The outcomes as envisaged by the NCS (DoE 2005:14) for Religion Studies are as follows:

1. The learner is able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of a variety of religions.
2. The learner is able to analyse, relate and systematise universal dimensions of religion.
3. The learner is able to reflect critically and constructively on topical issues in society.
4. The learner is able to apply skills of research into religion as a social phenomenon and across religions.

The NCS (DoE 2005) therefore envisages that should learners attain these outcomes, they would have developed a ‘religious literacy’ as foreseen in the NCS (DoE NCS 2005:9). It is important to note that according to the definition of Religion Studies (DoE NCS 2005:9) the purpose of the subject is ‘the recognition, understanding and appreciation of a variety of religions within a common humanity, in a civic understanding of religion’ (DoE NCS 2005:9).

The NCS for Religion Studies (DoE NCS 2005: 12) continues to outline ten principles that ‘are activated, even if they function in various ways in the different Learning Outcomes’. These ten principles are important in providing information about the details of the understanding of the Policy and the NCS (DoE 2005) regarding Religion Studies.

According to the NCS, Religion Studies:

1. studies religion as part of culture and civic life;
2. is constructed;
3. educates learners as members of the human family and citizens of the world;
4. is situated in the South African and African context;
5. affirms the learners’ own religions, as well as those to which they do not belong;
6. facilitates inclusive historical understanding;
7. develops high order skills of discovering relationships and dealing with complexity;
8. is socially relevant and transformative;
9. is critical;
10. is creative (DoE 2005:12).

The NCS (DoE 2005: 13) illustrates these ten principles as follows (Figure 7.5):
Figure 7.5: Principles structuring the attainment of understanding in Religion Studies

While the NCS (DoE 2005) lists these principles, the NCS/LPG for Religion Studies (DoE 2008b) provides a description of each of these principles. These descriptions provide a rich framework for the interpretation of the Policy and the implementation thereof. The description of the ten principles in the NCS/LPG (NCS DoE 2008b) provides a window on how the compilers of the Policy saw Religion Education in its ultimate gestalt.

I will therefore continue with analysing each of these ten principles. The principle as described by the NCS/LPG (DoE 2008b) is bordered and indented, followed by my analysis and comments.
The subject deals strictly with religion as a human phenomenon. Religion is therefore studied as constructed and experienced by humans. The subject is about humans and how they construct the world. Religion Studies is situated in the civic context: it is about how humans live together, and the role that religion plays in that context (NCS/LPG DoE 2008b:8).

This first principle states explicitly what the Policy intended the study of religion as a ‘human phenomenon’ and not as a revelation. The NCS/LPG (DoE 2008b) clearly opts for the study of religion as part of the way humans construct the world and respond to challenges, phenomena and the unknown. Although different religious groups consider their religion as based on revelation, the study of their beliefs and experiences proceeds from the basis that religion is a human response and construction.

Religion Studies is a member of the family of subjects making up the Learning Field of Human and Social Sciences, and is conducted according to the same general rules of scholarship. Its knowledge is therefore constructed in accordance with accepted academic procedures. It does not present final, unchallengeable truth, nor expect the mere reception of established opinion, or subscription to any academic or religious dogma. At every stage each Learning Outcome is to be achieved by way of drawing learners into, and empowering them to participate with confidence in active investigation and discovery (NCS/LPG DoE 2008b:8).

The NCS/LPG (DoE 2008b) continues by locating the study of religion(s) as an ‘academic procedure’ – implying that the result of the educational study of religion is not ‘faith’ but knowledge and understanding. This principle states that the study of religion(s) has as purpose not the establishing of ‘final, unchallengeable truth’. The teaching of the subject also does not involve ‘the mere reception of established opinion, or the subscription to any academic or religious dogma’. This principle makes it very clear that the purpose of the subject is not to produce followers or ‘better’ followers of any specific religion. Learners will not be required to subscribe to any dogma or belief. This stands in stark contrast to the previous dispensation prior to 1994 where only one religion
was taught and learners were often prompted to subscribe to the dogmas and beliefs of Christianity.

This principle further states that the teaching of the subject will draw learners into, and empower them to participate in active investigation and discovery'. This principle gives gestalt to the OBE principle of active participation in the construction of knowledge and understanding. A critical and transformative pedagogy differs dramatically from traditional teaching practice, which resembles what Freire called ‘banking education’ (in Giroux 1983:284). Freire compared traditional education to a banking process – the teacher ‘deposits' the knowledge in the learners. ‘Instead of communicating, the teacher issues communiqués and makes deposits which the students patiently receive, memorize and repeat. This is the “banking” concept of education, in which the scope of action allowed to the students extends only as far as receiving, filing, and storing deposits’ (Freire in Giroux 1983:284)155.

c) Educates learners as members of the human family and citizens of the world

All four Learning Outcomes presuppose and promote the understanding that South African learners live in a wide human context. The Learning Outcomes are achieved by educating the learners to exist in that large human horizon with confidence and sophistication. They are educated to develop a mental map of the entire world of religions, to discern features common to all religions and to investigate and communicate across religions (NCS/LPG DoE 2008b:8).

The third principle allows learners to locate themselves in the ‘wide human context’. It is as if this principle gestures that the teaching of the subject will open the window for learners to get a sense of how different peoples throughout the ages made sense and constructed meaning. Freire (1976, 1987) claimed that the best way for learners to learn is by allowing them to ‘name’ and classify experiences and constructs. The subject of Religion Studies will therefore allow learners to look through the window at the whole plethora of human meaning-making and name these experiences and their own, for themselves in an

155 Also see the discussion on critical pedagogy in Chapter 3.
academically responsible way. As such the principle envisages that the subject will allow learners to participate in the human quest for meaning with ‘confidence and sophistication’. This principle further foresees that the subject will allow learners to develop ‘a mental map of the entire world of religions’. It is important to notice that the map will not be provided but learners will develop their own map. Learners will further ‘discern features common to all religions’ and ‘investigate and communicate across religions’.

**d) Is situated in the South African and African context** All four Learning Outcomes are achieved to the extent that Religion Studies is rooted in South Africa and Africa, in which African religion and tradition is affirmed. When studying the variety of religions, the unique position of African religions will receive attention. Features common to all religions will include manifestations in Africa. Topics of social concern and research focus on South Africa (NCS/LPG DoE 2008b:8).

Throughout the Policy and the NCS (DoE 2005) there is a clear sense that the Policy and NCS (DoE 2005) locate the subject, the teachers and its learners within the context of Africa and South Africa. Although the subject will open the window for learners to see the wider range of human sense-making, the subject will allow learners to firstly make sense of the uniqueness of African religions but also allow learners to find ‘features common to all religions’ as manifested in African responses.

This principle further establishes that the study of religion(s) is embedded in broader social issues and research into these issues. Learning outcome 3.1 for Grade 10 (NCS/LPG 2008b:39) for example foresees that learners will explore ‘abortion, euthanasia, crime and punishment, genetic cloning, suicide, capital punishment, gender relations and equality, poverty, etc.’ Learning outcome 3.2 for Grade 12 (NCS/LPG 2008b:39) encourages learners to seek solutions for inter alia HIV/AIDS, substance abuse and poverty.
e) **Affirms the learners’ own religions, as well as those to which they do not belong** This implies that learners appreciate and respect their own traditions and the traditions of their fellow citizens. One imperative cannot be achieved without the other. Self-respect demands respect for others. This principle requires that Religion Studies educate learners to communicate meaningfully, constructively and effectively across religions (NCS/LPG DoE 2008b:9).

The Policy foresees that learners are firstly located and affirmed in their own religious traditions. From this secure position learners will also learn to appreciate and respect other religious traditions. The principle is clear that ‘One imperative cannot be achieved without the other’. This implies that learners will while being affirmed in their own religious traditions also learn to appreciate and respect other traditions. This principle clears any possible misunderstanding that Religion Studies may turn into a one-faith only experience. Although learners may specialise in a specific religious tradition (as envisaged for Grades12), this principle ‘requires that Religion Studies educate learners to communicate meaningfully, constructively and effectively across religions’.

f) **Facilitates inclusive historical understanding** Religion Studies develops the ability to locate religious phenomena in the field of human development. Training to discern, understand and use the concepts of change and continuity is central. This orientation in time concerns the past, present and future. It also relates to different religions existing at the same time. The Learning Outcomes will be achieved to the extent that learners are encouraged and empowered to interrogate religions across the barriers of time (NCS/LPG DoE 2008b:9).

This principle establishes again the phenomena of religion as human response. As such humans and groups of humans responded differently throughout the ages and continue to develop and change. Although religions are examples of some unique continuity throughout the ages, the academic study of religion also explores the changes that took place among traditions and within traditions. Therefore learners will not only be exposed to the whole range of religions across the world, but also be given a historical understanding of these traditions in their historical developments.
Continuity of religious traditions plays a very important role in religion, and although some religions have changed more than others through time, it is important for learners to discover a historical understanding in religion as human phenomena.

| g) Develops high order skills of discovering relationships and dealing with complexity | Religion Studies promotes the ability to discover relationships in a variety of ways, with respect to a variety of phenomena. The subject is about discovering correlations, analysing complex configurations, systematising seemingly unrelated things, organising information and constructing coherent arguments (NCS/LPG DoE 2008b:9). |

One of the central claims of OBE is the fact that it encourages knowledge to be constructed by and in the dynamic interrelationship between learners, educators, and context. As such OBE celebrates non-reductionism in education and rather opts to introduce learners to the complexities of phenomena without trying to reduce these phenomena to understandable ‘chunks’. This principle further embodies a system-thinking approach to education where phenomena are studied as part of the bigger whole and as part of often complex relationships.

Religion may be viewed (and taught) as ways in which humans throughout the ages have tried to reduce complexities and the unknown to some central beliefs. The teaching of Religion Studies according to this principle will attempt to discover religion(s) as ‘complex figurations’ opposed to systems of meaning-making that ‘simplify’ life\(^{156}\). Geertz (1973) explored the complexities of cultures and stated ‘Cultural analysis is intrinsically incomplete. And worse than that, the more deeply it goes the less complete it is’ (1973:29). He continues by referring to the work of Lévi-Strauss who said ‘scientific explanation does not exist, as we have been led to imagine, in the reduction of the complex to the simple. Rather, it consists, he says, in a substitution of a complexity more intelligible for one which

\(^{156}\) Also see my discussion of Goodenough’s (1959) proposals for Religionwissenschaft in Chapter 3.
is less’ (1973:33). Geertz also refers to the statement by Whitehead who said, ‘Seek simplicity and distrust it’ (Geertz 1973:34). Geertz therefore proposes:

We must, in short, descend into detail, past the misleading tags, past the metaphysical types, past the empty similarities to grasp firmly the essential character of not only the various cultures but the various sorts of individuals within each culture, if we wish to encounter humanity face to face (1973:53).

This principle’s dedication to introduce learners to the complexities of religions, counters what Lange (quoted by Geertz 1973:99) said that humans ‘cannot deal with Chaos’ and that humans’ ‘greatest fright is to meet what he (sic) cannot construe…’.

**h) Is socially relevant and transformative** Religion Studies is designed to improve the quality of life of people as individuals, members of the human family and the family of all living beings. It has a practical orientation, aiming at empowering learners to apply their insights to changing and problematic conditions in life (NCS/LPG DoE 2008b:9).

This eighth principle claims a particular intention in the teaching of Religion Studies. The intention is not for learners to only ‘know more’, but to live differently. The principle states that it intends to ‘improve the quality of life’ of three groups of people, namely individual learners, these learners as ‘members of the human family’ and thirdly improve the lives of its learners as ‘members of all living beings’.

There are two striking elements to this principle. The first striking element is the fact that the teaching of Religion Studies intends to locate learners also as part of the broader non-human family of living beings. This is a continuation of the previous principle in that it locates learners as part of a bigger and complex system. What is unique in this principle is its relativisation of human life in the context of other living beings. Where education in general takes place from an anthropocentric perspective, Religion Studies attempts to move humans from

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being in the *centre* of the universe to *being* one of the living beings in the universe.

The second striking element of this principle is that there is not only the intention to improve the quality of lives of learners and the broader family of living beings, but also a dedicated ‘practical orientation, aiming at empowering learners to apply their insights to changing and problematic conditions of life’.

While this principle’s dedication to transformation is aligned with the principles of transformative OBE, the explicitness of its dedication is heart-warming.

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### i) Is critical

Religion Studies is question rather than answer oriented. Learning Outcomes are achieved when learners ask critical questions rather than repeat prescribed answers. All conclusions are treated as provisional and questionable. In addition to social relevance and transformation, the critical dimension extends to the practical side of life, including the questioning of behaviour and social structures. The subject therefore develops the learners’ confidence in raising questions (NCS/LPG DoE 2008b:9).

The ninth principle is on the one hand a perfect fit for the study of religion(s) and on the other hand the most awkward fit. This tension is to some extent resolved by emphasising that religion is studied as a ‘human phenomenon’ (the first principle), it is further not presented as ‘final, unchallenged truth’ (the second principle) and studied according to accepted academic procedures (second principle).

Religion from a *confessional* perspective may emphasise final, eternal truths and final answers to life questions. Teaching religion with the aim of increasing *faith* sometimes requires the rejection of questioning and ‘child-like’ acceptance of the ‘final’ answers of religion.

In stark contrast to such a confessional approach is this principle, which treats conclusions as ‘provisional and questionable’ and encourages learners to question. Learners are encouraged to ask questions, not only to ‘know more’, but
to ‘know and live differently’. This principle seems to imply that learners will be encouraged to question ‘behaviour and social structure’ and to increase in confidence in doing so.

As will be discussed in Chapter 8 when I critically evaluate the Policy and the curriculum documents, this element of the subject of Religion Studies embedded in the whole Policy, is the feasibility and appropriateness of critical thinking as part of a broader pedagogical framework for the inclusion of the study of religion(s).

Though the Policy and the curriculum documents make it clear that learners will be introduced to religion as an educational enterprise, religion and critical thinking (at least on school level) do not necessarily go well together. Though religion will be studied as ‘human constructs’ (first principle), there are enough examples of how irrational elements in the public discourse can be and become when they deal with interpreting statements or comments about religion. The cartoon debacle of 2005 (Bonde 2007; Running & Schmidt 2006), and the naming of a teddy bear ‘Mohammed’ in Sudan are examples (Crilly 2007; Weaver 2007)\(^\text{158}\) of how innocent comments can be interpreted by religious communities. The NCS/LPG (DoE 2008b) suggests ‘content guidelines’ and learners are given ample freedom to choose topics for investigation. Advice from teachers and possible involvement with the religious communities in question may prevent an ‘innocent’ but critical educational project exploding for the learner, the teacher, the school and immediate communities.

Jensen (2002:84), currently General Secretary of the International Association for the History of Religions (IAHR), asks a number of questions about the role of Religion Education in a secular context. Some of his questions are:

- Is RE not meant for liberation rather than domestication?

\(^\text{158}\) In 2007 a newly arrived English teacher, Gillian Gibbons caused an international diplomatic incident by allowing six and seven year olds in her class in Khartoum to call a teddy Mohammed.
If families and the religious institutions take care of familiarising their sons and daughters with their religious traditions, then may we take it that the aim of the school subject RE must be to de-familiarise the inherited, normative notions of religions?...

Are RE-teachers put on this earth to help pupils and students find answers to “existential questions” and develop their “spiritualities”? Or should they leave that to the pupils themselves and instead help them develop to deconstruct past and present discourses on religion and personal and cultural identity?

The defamiliarising character of education is seen as an integral and essential part of effective teaching (e.g. Doll 1986) and a critical approach to the study of religion, appropriate to the level and context may present unique challenges to teachers, schools and religious communities.

**j) Is creative** Religion Studies is an open-ended journey in which the powers of imagination and creative thinking are encouraged to emerge. This includes the ability to elicit new information from written or oral sources and to interpret material in new ways (NCS/LPG DoE 2008b:9).

Together with the previous ninth principle, the tenth principle celebrates ‘not-knowing’ and not accepting traditional answers on the basis of traditional authority. This principle encourages learners to ‘elicit new information from written or oral sources and to interpret material in new ways’. This results in the study of religion as educational project to continually be renewed and rejuvenated as new insights and positions are generated by an ever-increasing religion literate citizenry.

### 7.3.1 The profile of the Religion Studies learners

The NCS/LPG (DoE 2008b:13) continues to outline the profile of the learner who registers for Religion Studies. The NCS (DoE 2005) firstly addresses the 'learning assumed to be in place' as well as which skills are assumed the learner
has after successfully reaching this stage. It is important for the NCS (DoE 2005) to clarify this – it may assist learners who contemplate whether or not they have the foundational competencies in order to be successful in this subject. These 'assumptions' are also very important markers for teachers and assessors.

The NCS/LPG (DoE 2008b:13) describes the learners as having proven themselves in the following outcomes in Grades R-9. Each learner

- identifies and names symbols linked to own religion
- matches symbols associated with a range of religions in South Africa
- describes important days from diverse religions
- discusses diet, clothing and decorations in a variety of religions in South Africa
- discusses significant places and buildings in a variety of religions
- discusses festivals and customs from a variety of religions in South Africa
- discusses the dignity of the person in a variety of religions in South Africa
- explains the role of oral traditions and scriptures in a range of the world's religions
- discusses the contributions of organisations from various religions to social development
- reflects on and discusses the contributions of various religions in promoting peace.

Except for being a very useful point of reference to teachers, assessors and learners alike, the reiteration of the outcomes as envisaged for R-9 as part of Life Orientation emphasises the importance of the successful teaching of the study of religions as part of Life Orientation. Learners are assumed to have a basic understanding of the following concepts by the time they register for Religion Studies:

- religion
- similarity, identity and difference
- self and other
- individual, community and society
- justice, peace and conflict
- democracy and social transformation
- human rights and responsibility
- gender and race (NCS/LPG DoE 2008b:14)
‘Competencies’ as they are understood within the OBE framework consist of knowledge, skills, values and attitudes. After describing specific knowledge and skills that learners enrolling for Religion Studies should have, the NCS/LPG (DoE 2008b:14) also makes it clear what values are considered to be in place by stating ‘By the end of Grade 9 the values of civic acceptance and appreciation, and the social skills of communication across religions will have been developed to an appropriate degree’.

‘Acceptance’ and ‘appreciation’ (NCS/LPG DoE 2008b:14) seem to imply that learners will move ‘beyond tolerance’. The values that learners will be assumed to have by the time they reach Grade 9 are ‘civic acceptance and appreciation’ (italics my own). Civic acceptance encompasses tolerance, but ‘appreciation’ goes further than acceptance. Acceptance and appreciation are further strengthened by ‘social skills of communication across religions’. The NCS/LPG (DoE 2008b:14) acknowledges that although these competencies are envisaged for every learner to have been attained, the NCS (DoE 2008b) acknowledges ‘there is no uniformly typical learner entering Religion Studies in Grade 10. Learners come from a variety of linguistic, social, cultural and religious environments’ (NCS/LPG DoE 2008b:14).

Learners do not only come from different environments, but are confronted with different contexts. The NCS/LPG (DoE 2008b:14) describes the contexts learners will face as follows:

The learner is part of at least four concentric contexts: local, national, continental and world wide. The local environment may be quite homogeneous, but is surrounded by a heterogeneous national and international environment, which applies also to religion. In many ways (for example, the media) the complexities of contemporary life will have impacted on the learner in rural areas, and to a larger extent in urban and peri-urban areas. The Grade 10 learner in Religion Studies is a young person on the threshold of a complex, challenging world, confronted by a host of difficult questions, in need of reliable information and the skills and values to exist in and make a contribution to a pluralistic world.
Although learners’ local context/environment may be homogenous, learners are and will be confronted ‘by a heterogeneous national and international environment, which applies also to religion’. Learners in urban, rural and peri-urban environments will also face different challenges. In these communities religion may play ‘harmonizing, integrating, and psychologically supportive’ roles, or ‘disruptive, disintegrative, and psychologically disturbing roles’ (Geertz 1973:143). In these societies religion may ‘somehow [be] the center and source of stress, not merely the reflection of stress elsewhere in the society’ (Geertz 1973:164).

Geertz gives an interesting analysis of the challenges inhabitants in a Javanese ‘kampong’ faced during a burial rite (1973:153-169). Inhabitants as well as observers were confronted by the fact that traditional symbols and rituals had now ‘both religious and political significance’, which ‘were charged with both sacred and profane import’ (Geertz 1973:165). The reason I find the analysis of Geertz appropriate in this specific context, is his analysis of how (in the Javanese context) ‘economic reconstruction, religious reform, artistic renaissance’ became ‘submerged in a diffuse political ideology’ (Geertz 1973:166). During the revolution to obtain freedom starting in 1945 ‘most aspects of life had become intensely ideologised’ (Geertz 1973:166). In the Javanese society, the ‘effect of this development has been to cause political debate and religious propitiation to be carried out in the same vocabulary’ (Geertz 1973:167).

Religion Education as part of Life Orientation (R-12) and Religion Studies as subject in the FET phase are foreseen to give learners the necessary competencies to not only know about these symbols and cultural markers, but also be aware of their changing uses and influence.

### 7.3.2 Ways to attain the outcomes
In the NCS/LPG (DoE 2008b: 16-17) for Religion Studies there are also ten suggestions to teachers on ‘how to’ attain the outcomes envisaged for the subject. While the NCS/LPG (DoE 2008b) hints that what it suggests are practical ways of reaching the outcomes, the suggestions are actually *principles* – ‘Religion Studies Learning Outcomes are achieved by following a number of principles informing the teaching practice in the classroom’ (DoE 2008b:16). It is not clear from the document how the principles at the beginning of the document (‘Principles structuring the attainment of understanding in Religion Studies’, NCS/LPG DoE 2008b:7-9) relate to the principles ‘informing the teaching practice in the classroom’ (NCS/LPG DoE 2008b:16). It does seem that the first set of principles inform the rationale and curriculum while the second set of principles are provided to inform classroom practice.

The two sets of principles in table format look as follows (Table 7.5)\(^{159}\):

| **Table 7.5: The two sets of principles proposed by the NCS/LPG (DoE 2008b)** |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| **Principles structuring the attainment of understanding in Religion Studies** | **Principles informing teaching practice** |
| 1 - studies religion as part of culture and civic life | Neither promote nor undermine any religion |
| 2 - is constructed | Do not confuse Religion Studies with Religious Instruction |
| 3 - educates learners as members of the human family and citizens of the world | Know and accept the learners |
| 4 - is situated in the South African and African context | Take into account the level of emotional and intellectual maturity of learners taking Religion Studies at a certain stage of their lives |
| 5 - affirms the learners’ own religions, as well as those to which they do not belong | Neither hide nor flaunt own religious views |

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\(^{159}\) Presenting these principles in a tabular format may create an impression that the principles in each row directly correlates with one another. This is not the case. The tabular form does provide an overview of both sets of principles at a glance.
Table 7.5 allows us to look at both sets of principles at a glance. Unfortunately the ‘table format’ also gives the impression that the intention is to ‘compare’. The second list (in the right hand column) seems to be more practical and concerned with pedagogy while the first set of principles (in the left hand column) seems to be on a ‘meta’ level and refers to curriculum-level analysis. I am however not sure that this possible rationale for two sets of principles hold for all ten of them in each of these sets. Maybe one list of principles with implications for both the curriculum and pedagogy (classroom praxis) may have been clearer? At the moment these twenty principles may be ‘too much’. This does not take away that these principles are very helpful and provide critical insight into the intentions of the Policy and the NCS/LPG (DoE 2008b) for Religion Studies.

I will now turn to analyse the second set of principles – ‘Principles informing the teaching practice in the classroom’. These principles are foreseen to inform ‘teaching, learning and assessment’.

(a) Neither promote nor undermine any religion
Religion Studies is religiously non-aligned. Teachers may not use the subject to further the cause of or to discredit any particular religion. This also applies to Grade 12, Learning Outcome 2, where the learner specialises in one religion and one worldview (NCS/LPG DoE 2008b:16).

An important aspect of the implementation of the Policy is the training of pre-service and in-service teachers. The personal beliefs of the teachers do not have
to impede his or her ability to teach the study of religions without promoting his or her own or undermining any other religion. This has however, as seen in Chapter 5, been a very emotional aspect of the public discourse in the Policy process. The second part of the argument surrounding the role of the personal beliefs of teachers – has been the claim that one cannot ‘teach’ about another religion if you are not a follower of or adherent to that particular religion.

Jensen (2002:86) discounts these claims as follows:

Veterinarians do not have to be cows to attain knowledge about cows. Knowledge making it possible, say, to diagnose a cow-disease and to prescribe the medicine for a cure does not require experiencing life as a cow. Likewise, psychoanalysts do not have to share the idiosyncrasies of their patients, gynaecologists do not have to be women, and political scientists do not have to be members of a party and supportive of the political ideology in question to analyse and understand a political party or ideology, nor politics in general.

This principle is not firstly about the personal beliefs or preferences of teachers. It is, however, about professional conduct as an educator. Jensen therefore states (2002:87):

All we can do, however, is to trust that he or she has received an education that complies to the rules and regulations of the academic study of religions and does his/her best to inform about religions in an ‘objective, critical and pluralistic’ manner in line with this and with the executive orders and guidelines for RE modelled upon such academic studies.

If I understand Jensen correctly, it would seem as if his assurance against the partisan teaching of religion is that teachers are academically trained in the subject and furthermore ascribes to the general rules and regulations of professionalism.

As the incident in Khartoum has shown (see the earlier of the ninth principle) parents and religious communities may not be present in the classroom, but the stories children tell about class often provide a necessary check-and-balance.
(b) Do not confuse Religion Studies with Religious Instruction
The Religion Studies class is not the occasion for religious nurturing, religious confession or religious conversion of learners. This is also the case where there is a degree of specialisation in one religion and one worldview in Grade 12. Yet teachers should realise that through this subject the lives of learners as human beings and citizens are enriched, and that it contributes to the maturity of learners’ personal views of life (NCS/LPG DoE 2008b:16).

Religion Studies and the study of religion(s) as part of Life Orientation do not have as outcome an increased spirituality of learners in the religion of their choice. The spiritual growth of learners in specific religious traditions falls within the domain of Religious Instruction and not Religion Studies. As part of the general educational project specifically as envisaged by the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and Outcomes-based education (OBE), Religion Studies will enrich the lives of learners as human beings and as citizens and contribute to ‘the maturity of learners’ personal views of life’.

(c) Know and accept the learners
Religion Studies is about the religions of people. Learners of whatever religious or non-religious background should be accepted in the classroom on an equal footing, without any discrimination, and treated with kindness and empathetic understanding (NCS/LPG DoE 2008b:16).

Though this principle embodies and translates various aspects of the Constitution and the Policy, it further reiterates that in this education project of the study of religion(s), the focus is not on religion as revelation, but as human experience (aligned to the first two principles of NCS/LPG DoE 2008b:8).

(d) Take into account the level of emotional and intellectual maturity of learners taking Religion Studies at a certain stage of their lives
Teachers should be led by the needs and abilities of the learners. Teaching must be age appropriate. By Grade 10 learners can relate to sophisticated ideas critically and creatively. However, they are typically not able to construct their own independent, integrated system of beliefs and values. Teachers of Religion Studies should take into account that learners at this stage may be rebellious and conformist, confused and doctrinaire at the same time (NCS/LPG DoE 2008b:16).

(e) Neither hide nor flaunt own religious views
This principle does not mean that teachers should secretly hide their own views. They are also expected not to promote their own views. It is possible to declare one's own religious position wisely, honestly and sincerely, as a situation may demand, in a manner making it clear that such a position does not amount to prejudice, and does not interfere with the rules of the academic enterprise of Religion Studies (NCS/LPG DoE 2008b:16).

(f) Explain all religions in such a way that their adherents are happy with the way it is done
For the purposes of this subject, not only adherents of a certain religion have the right or the ability to explain it adequately. Religion Studies teachers need to explain a religion to which they do not belong, in such a manner that its adherents will be satisfied with the factual information, the empathy and the level of understanding with which it has been presented (NCS/LPG DoE 2008b:16).

One of the Policy warrants (as discussed in Chapter 6) of the Policy is that the study of religion(s) is not only in line with many international and African examples but also in line with research findings. The outcomes as envisaged by the Policy and the NCS/LPG (DoE 2008b) have taken into account these international practices as well as research findings to demarcate specific outcomes appropriate to specific age groups.

(g) Use the learners’ backgrounds as a resource
Learners bring a wealth of information and perspectives into the classroom and these should enrich the teaching process. Teachers should not think of themselves as the sole source of information. Teachers and learners can learn much from such divergent backgrounds represented by the learners in the classroom (NCS/LPG DoE 2008b:17).

(h) Encourage learners to speak freely and confidently about their own views and about issues
Religion Studies represents a definitive step away from authoritarian teaching, towards a co-operative style of teaching and learning and the free exchange of ideas. Teachers therefore need to create the atmosphere and opportunity for dialogue and discussion, both between themselves and learners, and among the learners (NCS/LPG DoE 2008b:17).

(i) Encourage and organise firsthand experience of various religions
Apart from the research assignments connected to Learning Outcome 4, teachers should make sure that learners do not only learn from books, but
gain direct knowledge of a range of religions. Learners will need to be encouraged and helped to discover things for themselves. This should not only happen in the Assessment Standards dealing with research. Firsthand experience can be obtained in various ways, such as taking learners to religious places, and by introducing them to responsible representatives of different religions, either at venues outside the classroom, or by inviting the representatives to the school as occasional guest facilitators. Let religions speak for themselves (NCS/LPG DoE 2008b:17).

These principles are in line with the work of Freire (1976, 1987; Giroux 1983) and the principles of constructivism as embodied in OBE. In his work on management education, Watson (2001) speaks of ‘negotiated narratives’ as principle for managers learning together. He proposes that students and lecturers share ‘manager stories’ and negotiate a shared understanding of the story by also tapping into theory and research.

(j) Use a large range of support materials
The subject Religion Studies affords the learner the opportunity to understand religions. A variety of learning and teaching support materials can be used including posters, audio-visuals, newspapers, maps and photographs. A teacher should allow space for learners to be aware of learning through all the senses, in terms of understanding religion (NCS/LPG DoE 2008b:17).

7.4.3 Challenges to meaningful Religion Studies teaching and learning

The NCS/LPG for Religion Studies (DoE 2008b:28) shares the following challenges regarding teaching and learning Religion Studies in the FET phase:

- Classes may include learners from a variety of religions, which poses unique challenges. Educators should ensure that they are informed about the religious profiles of each class and plan accordingly.
- When classes consist of learners from one religion only learners must be stimulated to take an interest in people and cultural expressions in the wider context.

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160 Also see the discussion of critical pedagogy in Chapter 3.
• Assessment Standards in all grades require visits to religious places and persons outside the school, and financial implications should be factored.
• Site visits should take into account the needs of all learners.
• Resources and curriculum materials should be expanded to cater for all learners.
• Review the perception of the subject by the school and the wider community. How best can the policy on Religion Studies be promoted?
• In Religion Studies, the policy of multilingualism / multiculturalism must be adhered to.

These challenges seem to address mainly three issues. Firstly, knowing the learner profile of the class will assist the teacher to adapt lesson plans and teaching strategies as well as be sensitive for minorities or even majority issues. The second ‘cluster’ of challenges refers to resources and site visits which should include all learners. The third group of challenges include advocacy for the field of Religion Studies as well as the broader policy framework.

The next part of the NCS/LPG (DoE 2008b) that allows us some insight into the Policy is Annexure 2, which contains a ‘Content framework for Religion Studies’ (NCS/LPG DoE 2008b:32-39). It is from this ‘content framework’ that the parameters of the Policy become visible.

7.4.4 Content guidelines for Religion Studies

The four outcomes for Religion Studies are as follows:

Learning Outcome 1:
The learner is able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of a variety of religions and how they relate to one another.

Learning Outcome 2:
The learner is able to analyse, relate and systematise universal dimensions of religion.

Learning Outcome 3:
The learner is able to reflect critically and constructively on topical issues in society from a Religion Studies perspective and apply such insights.

**Learning Outcome 4:**
The learner is able to apply skills of research into religion as a social phenomenon, and across religions.

The content framework (NCS/LPG 2008b: 32-42) is organised around these four outcomes envisaged for the subject of Religion Studies and around the three years of the FET phase. In this framework specific content and guidance are prescribed for each year of the FET phase. I will now attempt to analyse the content framework without going into the finer detail of the content guidelines. I will not discuss all the outcomes and content guidelines but will attempt to point to or highlight where the content framework provides significant insight into the intentions of the Policy or where there seems to be a disjuncture between the Policy and the content framework.

In Grade 10, the first outcome reads as follows: *The learner is able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of a variety of religions and how they relate to one another.* This outcome unfolds in four distinct but interrelated ‘content’ parts (LO1.1-1.4).

In **LO1.1 Various clusters of religions**, learners are introduced to the religions using the world map as *geographical* point of departure. Learners are therefore introduced to religions in Africa, Europe, Asia, the Americas and Australasia and the Pacific. Different points of departure could have been a historical timeline or clustering religions according to the mono or plural character of the religion in focus. A geographical starting point may provide learners with a ‘safe’ and known starting point from where to start to explore the ‘world’ of religions. As a result of globalisation the traditional geographical distribution of religions has changed immensely. Such a ‘map’ may provide the opportunity to not only discuss the spread of the religion from the countries of ‘origin’ to it being represented
worldwide. This provides learners the necessary background for **LO1.2** which entails a **Historical overview of origins of a number of religions.**

- Distinction between BCE (Before Common Era) and CE (Common Era)
- Calendars of various religions
- First signs of religion
- Early archaeological findings about religion in Africa and other continents
- When and where the clusters of religion developed
- Origins of religions in South Africa (DoE 2008b:32)

The first issue that is noteworthy is the fact that learners will be defamiliarised (Jensen 2002) by introducing them to use a different time categorisation than they may have been used to. Many teachers have grown up using the designation of Before Christ (BC) and After Christ (AD). Many parents have been taught that way. The move towards using the terminology of Before the Common Era (BCE) and the Common Era (CE) may disrupt, but it is a necessary disruption. Education is not only about learning but also about un-learning\(^\text{161}\). This Learning outcome with its historical and anthropological approach to the study of religions immediately locates the study of religion as an educational project and religion as a *human* phenomenon. Learning Outcome 1 further expands (to LO1.3) to explore the ‘statistical situation concerning various religions’ which explores not only religious categorisation and how statistics are obtained, but also the reliability of statistics, problem areas in using statistics, and finding solutions. The statistics are contextualized as well as interrogated to illustrate the geographical location and spread of clusters of religions (DoE 2008b:33). The spread of religions resulted in contact between religions and the formation of various (sometimes dynamic) interrelationships. In LO1.4 learners are introduced to ‘analysis of religious interaction’ and the following notions are of importance in the interaction between religions and need to be clearly understood, namely tolerance, respect, dialogue, conflict, fundamentalism, pluralism, propaganda, indoctrination, and syncretism (NCS/LPG DoE 2008b:33).

\(^{161}\) See Doll (1986) as well as Edwards and Usher (2000) for discussions on education as causing disequilibrium and (dis)location.
One of my initial concerns in engaging with the Policy, due to the intense reactions that accompanied the debate surrounding the Policy, was that the content of the study of religion(s) would be a sanitised version and that only the positives regarding religion would be discussed. Learning Outcome 1 for Grade 10 already indicates that the study of religion(s) as envisaged by the Policy is anything but a sanitised version. The content immediately challenges accepted notions and introduces learners to the academic discourse of the study of religion appropriate to their context and age.

Another example is how the same outcome (LO1) unfolds in the next year, Grade 11. Here the Content guidelines ask, ‘What are the distinctions between important concepts such as mission, evangelism, proselytisation, revitalisation, ecumenism, syncretism and religious colonialism or imperialism?’ (DoE 2008b:33). Learners are furthermore introduced to what religions claim to be unique about themselves and their attitudes and interpretations of other religions (LO1.3 Grade 12 and LO1.4 Grade 11).

Learning Outcome 2 has as focus: The learner is able to analyse, relate and systematize universal dimensions of religion (NCS/LPG DoE 2008b:34). This outcome unfolds over the three years of the FET phase into six parts (for Grade 11 in five parts). In this outcome learners are introduced to the purpose (and history) of defining religion(s) and how it relates to other concepts such as: worldview, ethical system, indigenous knowledge system and belief system. In Grade 12 learners explore how the term ‘teaching’ differs from belief, doctrine, dogma, parable, myth, ideology. This will allow learners to engage in the discourses of a particular religion and really critically explore fundamental beliefs and concepts.

In Grade 12 learners can choose one religion and study different components of their choice of religion. These components include:

- The nature of divinity
- The nature of the world
- The nature of humanity, with reference to community and the individual
- The place and responsibility of humanity in the world
- The origin and the role of evil
- The overcoming of evil

This will provide a huge challenge to teachers whether teachers are adherents of the particular religion or belief or not. For teachers who are adherents in the learner’s choice of religion, the challenge would be to continuously shy away from religious instruction but to remain within the study of religions as an educational project. Whether teachers who are adherents of the faith of choice will be willing and able to give guidance to learners to engage with religion as a human construct will have to be seen\textsuperscript{162}. The other challenge would be for teachers who are not versed in the learner’s choice of religion. The Policy provides for well-developed learning support and teaching materials to assist teachers. Teachers are also allowed to arrange with the particular faith community for assistance and guidance. In these circumstances the demarcation between religious instruction or theology and the study of religion may become difficult.

One of the main characteristics of the Policy is to provide guidelines for the educational study of religion(s). In this educational project the Policy and the NCS/LPG Content Guidelines (2008b:35) are very clear that the subject is not looking for truth and judging whether someone’s beliefs are ‘real’. The Content Guidelines are very clear that the subject encourages an understanding of religions ‘from the point of view of the adherents’ (Learning Outcome 2.3 in Grade 10; NCS/LPG DoE 2008b:35). This is furthermore entrenched in LO2.5 in Grade 10 where learners are exploring ‘How various religions began’ – the roles of the founders, prophets and reformers. LO2.6 (Grade 10) provides for an

\textsuperscript{162} In this regard the guidance in the teaching and learning support materials will provide crucial information and security for teachers. See the discussion of Ferguson and Roux (2003) on the role of teachers in ‘facilitating beliefs and values in life orientation programmes’.
engagement on the ‘role of social forms, institutions and roles in religions’. The social forms that will be discussed are monarchies, oligarchies, democracies and the division of power between central and local organisations.

One of the aspects that I personally felt was left in the air in the Policy is some clarity on what the Policy meant by ‘secular worldviews’. In the Content Guidelines for LO2.6 (Grade 12; NCS/LPG DoE 2008b:36) the Guidelines state

- Any secular worldview with reference to the definition of religion and universal dimensions of religion, for example: atheism, agnosticism, humanism, materialism, etc.
- The origin, purpose and influencing factors behind the worldview (e.g. founder, world events, etc.) (NCS/LPG DoE 2008b:36).

This would allow learners to engage with often ‘excluded’ concepts in a very broad definition of ‘religion’. Should learners choose for example atheism or capitalism, the challenge would be firstly, for the teacher to provide support and where possible guidance, but secondly, to find an ‘expert’ to assist the child or even be a guest facilitator as allowed for in the Policy. While calling on expertise when dealing with organised religions is fairly straightforward, finding ‘experts’ to guide and assist would be far more difficult (if not tricky) in the case of ‘difficult’ student choices. When learners elect to focus on ‘sensitive’ examples of worldviews for example atheism or Satanism and they have not clarified it with their parents and respective religious communities, public perception regarding such a study of atheism may prove difficult to foresee and manage.

The Policy itself refers to ‘secular worldviews’ (in the context of the principle of tolerance), ‘secular world-view’ (in the social honour context of respect for other views), ‘secular belief systems’ (in the context of exposing learners to the rich diversity of beliefs) and ‘secular values’ (which learners will be taught). In Grade 163 The NCS/LPG (2008b) is not clear to what extent students will have freedom of choice regardless of the specific character of the school and/or surrounding community as well as the level of expertise of the teacher to effectively accompany learners. 164 The role teaching and learning support materials will play not only to provide guidance to teachers cannot be underestimated.
11 ‘secularism’ is discussed in **LO3.1 Relationships between religion and the state at various times.**

The *critical* nature of the Policy and the LPG becomes even more visible when learners in Grade 10 (LO3.1) are encouraged to explore how specific topics manifest themselves in religions. These topics can include euthanasia, crime and punishment, genetic cloning, suicide, capital punishment, etc. It is often in exploring a specific belief system’s views on such topics that learners, teachers and the communities surrounding the learner are ‘defamiliarised’ (Jensen 2002) to what they thought they knew or expected. Learners at this age (Grade 10) are very critical of traditional role models and institutions (like their parents) and discovering what their particular belief system or religion states about, for example, abortion, may cause considerable disequilibrium for learners, teachers and their communities. The educational study of religion may then lead to a confessional crisis for the learner or even his or her families and/or teachers.

Wardekker and Miedema (2001) differentiate between religious education as *transmission* and as *transformation*. Their differentiation between these two concepts is not new to the educational discourse. Transformative education has a long and layered history ranging from the work of Mezirow (1991, 1995, 2000), education as liberation (Freire 1976), education as transgression (hooks 1994) and education as (dis)location (Edwards & Usher 2000). What may be novel is the way Wardekker and Miedema apply the distinction to religious education. Their use of transformative religious education may sound as if they have in mind a confessional type of religious education aiming to convert or deepen belief. This is however not the case. They state:

> In the transformative view of education, the acquisition of knowledge and skills, and of norms and values as modes of being, knowing, feeling and acting is not taken in the dualistic subject-object way but in a holistic and transactional way. In such a transformation conception of education, learning is defined as the growing capacity of students to participate in culturally structured practices (Wardekker & Miedema 2001:27).
Outcomes-based education is philosophically founded in and on education as transformation. Transformation happens when perspectives change (Mezirow 1991), when learners experience moving from stable beliefs and assumptions to disequilibrium where they are encouraged to question their assumptions and knowledge and return to a state of (temporary) equilibrium but to a different place, different beliefs or also, reconfirmed beliefs.

Therefore criticality is embedded in South African education since 1994 as a critical component of the educational project. Education in South Africa is transformative within the broader framework of the Constitution. Criticality as integral element of transformative education does, however, not mean to disrupt learners’ beliefs and assumptions in a careless manner. While life has as character these unexpected and many times unwanted ‘disruptions’ education is a carefully planned and executed project in the service of a more compassionate and just society as envisaged by the Constitution.

Teachers, but also parents and religious communities should therefore provide safe environments where learners may explore and experience disequilibrium and transformation. The Policy and the curriculum documents provide a framework for teachers and learners. How students’ critical investigation and experiences of (dis)location may be viewed by parents and/or religious communities fall outside the jurisdiction or control of the Policy and the curriculum documents. This however does challenge the pre-service and in-service training of educators to prepare teachers also to become more at ease with the ambiguities and (dis)location that they may also experience\(^{165}\).

A further aspect that was not clear from the Policy was how socially relevant or sanitised the teaching of the study of religion would unfold. Although the Policy is

\(^{165}\) Teachers may often experience something of a ‘permanent’ (dis)location regarding their own belief systems and those of learners – which reminds of the article by Boellstorff (2005) on how gay, male, Muslim men cope with the permanent incommensurability of the aspects living in Indonesia.
very clear about the expectations that the inclusion of the study of religion would contribute to nation well-being, it is only in the NCS/LPG (DoE 2008b) and specifically the Content Guidelines for the FET band (NCS/LPG DoE 2008b) that it becomes very obvious that the study of religion is envisaged as a multi-layered and facetted human construct\textsuperscript{166}. In Grade 10 for example, LO3.2 deals with how religions ‘come to decisions regarding social ethics’ (NCS/LPG DoE 2008b:37), and in Grade 11 (LO3.2) the relationship between religion and politics are explored. In Grade 12 this ‘hands-on approach’ to the study of religion unfolds when learners are required to develop a strategy ‘seeking a solution for a major social problem’ (LO3.2, NCS/LPG DoE 2008b:37). The social embeddedness of the study of religion(s) (and illustrated in Diagram 6) as envisaged by the Policy further becomes visible when the relationship between religions and economics at various times is explored (Grade 10, LO3.3); religions in their relation to the natural environment (Grade 11, LO3.3), ‘co-responsibility and cooperation of religions in the improvement of the quality of life’ (Grade 11, LO3.4, DoE 2008b:38) and the ‘role of the media in presenting and influencing public opinion and attitudes with respect to religion’ (Grade 12, LO3.3, NCS/LPG DoE 2008b:38).

The ‘range’ of the study of religion(s) also prepares learners to evaluate research into religion(s) already in Grade 10 and prepares them for critical engagement with concepts like objectivity, neutrality, insider and outsider perspectives, etc. (LO4.1, NCS/LPG DoE 2008b:39). The attainment of this Learning Outcome will prepare them for LO4.1 in which learners will design structured interviews regarding the relationships between religion and gender (LO4.1) and explore ‘relaxation and leisure from an ethical point of view’ (LO4.2, NCS/LPG DoE 2008b:39). In Grade 12, the final year of the FET phase, learners explore the relationships between religion and peace initiatives and explore ways in which

\textsuperscript{166} This raises an interesting question about the extent to which a Policy provides only a framework and other documents interpret the Policy in its finer details. The important issue is that the documents accompanying the Policy (in this case the NCS and LPGs) cannot move outside of the intentions and principles embodied in the Policy.
religion is part of the problem (LO4.1). Learners also explore the relationship between religion and the natural sciences (LO4.2) with reference to views of creation and evolution.

From these Content Guidelines (NCS/LPG DoE 2008b) the intentions and vision of the drafters of the Policy became clearer. In Outcomes-based education one of the principles is to ‘design down’ – meaning that one should plan the educational journey with the end in mind. This principle is also inherent in various planning strategies and cycles. Once the end goals are clear, the steps leading to the attainment of these goals become clearer. In looking at the curriculum of Religion Studies as it unfolds in Grades 10-12, there is a clear correlation between the ‘end’ and the beginnings in the Policy. Planning and evaluation cycles like the Kellogg’s Logic Development Model (W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 2001) postulate that the eventual impact of a programme or action plan depends on how clear the envisaged impact and outcomes are167. The clearer the picture of the end-result, the easier it is to plan the different steps and progressions. It would seem as if this principle can mean that teachers across the spectrum, especially in Life Orientation, should be exposed to where Religion Studies is headed. The purpose should be twofold. Firstly, once teachers have a clear picture of where the study of religion(s) is headed, then they may have a better grasp of how the different outcomes in the Life Orientation phase (especially R-9) can prepare learners accordingly. Secondly, having an understanding of the end-results of Religion Studies may enthuse teachers with creative ideas and resources in empowering learners attaining the ‘earlier’ outcomes. The outcomes for Grades R-9 of the aspect of the study of religion(s) as part of ‘Social development’ are stepping stones towards religious literacy, Once teachers and learners have a clear picture of what and how the Policy sees religious literacy as end result, they may have a better understanding of the rationale for and purpose of the inclusion

167 Also refer to Chapter 2 where the implications of the implied linearity of the Kellogg’s Logic Development Model (2001) were discussed.
of the study of religion from Grades R-12, whether as part of Life Orientation or as a specific subject in Grades 10-12.

7.5 CONCLUSION

The Policy reiterates in a number of paragraphs that it sets out to provide

- ‘a broad framework within which people of goodwill will work out their own approaches’ (Foreword to the Policy, 2003:6).
- ‘a framework for schools to determine policies, and for parents and communities to be better informed of their rights and responsibilities in regard to religion and education’ (paragraph 2; 2003:7)
- A framework for a cooperative model which is ‘best for religion and best for education in a democratic South Africa’ (paragraph 4; 2003:8)
- ‘a framework within which Religious Observances could be organised at public schools’ (paragraph 65; 2003:27);
- ‘a unified framework for teaching and learning about religion, religions, and religious diversity’ (paragraph 68; 2003:28)

In this chapter, I analysed the RNCS (2002b), NCS (2003a) and NCS/LPGs (2003b, 2008a) for Life Orientation and the NCS (2005) and NCS/LPG (2008b) for Religion Studies. I also explored how these documents, and especially the Content Guidelines (NCS/LPG DoE 2008b) translate the intentions of the Policy into clear Learning Outcomes and Assessment Criteria.

At the start of this chapter I explored the interrelatedness and interdependency of various processes preceding and following the acceptance of the Policy. In the beginning of this chapter, Diagram 2 illustrated the place of the different documents and processes in relation to the Policy. At the start of this chapter I stated that the different curriculum documents ‘translate’ the Policy. Now that I have analysed the Policy as well as the various curriculum documents I propose that these different curriculum documents do more than ‘translate’. The different
curriculum documents and guidelines interpret the Policy and provide context, content and guidelines for application/implementation.

In the next chapter, Chapter 8, I will critically evaluate the Policy. If I had to critically evaluate the Policy without looking at the curriculum documents, I would have had much more questions and concerns. Concerns, not because I doubted the intentions of the Policy, but concerns because the Policy is not specific enough on how it envisages religious literacy.

After analysing the curriculum documents and guidelines, the intentions of the Policy are much clearer, especially for the subject Religion Studies. With regard to the NCS/LPG’s for Life Orientation and specifically Religion Education as part of Social Development, I am at this stage not clear or sure whether teachers in Life Orientation will grasp the ‘bigger picture’ of what religious literacy entails and can be\textsuperscript{168}.

\textsuperscript{168} The amount of time allowed for Religion Education in the Social Development phase of Life Orientation would maybe not have allowed a deeper exploration of religion than for example encountered in Religion Studies. It is also a question of how appropriate a deeper exploration of religion would have been taking into account the critical relationship between content and the learners’ age.
CHAPTER 8
A CRITICAL EVALUATION OF THE POLICY

8.1 INTRODUCTION

At the start of this journey I specifically located this study in the discipline of Religionswissenschaft or the study of religion. This critical evaluation of the Policy is firstly grounded in an intellectual understanding of the scope and content of the study of religions, but also embedded in a personal understanding of criticality. Critical theory and critical pedagogy profoundly shaped my understanding of the role of education in envisioning new possibilities for co-existence in a society dreaming of justice and compassion.

This thesis’ central concern and focus is the question – How does the Policy contribute to the shaping of a critical and autonomous citizenry? I proposed that a critical and autonomous citizenry means a citizenry who has a certain Mündigkeit in understanding their own religiosity and those of others. This Mündigkeit also assumes that religion as phenomenon is the result of a dynamic and complex interplay of various societal factors (religion as a social construct) and was and is constructed as responses to socioeconomic, political, cultural and historical developments. The sedimentation of these developments in a specific religious phenomenon results from and perpetuates power- and meaning-making systems and structures that impact and shape citizens’ beliefs and engagements in the public sphere.

The following sub-questions guided my exploration of the Policy:

- What were the context-specific socioeconomic, educational and political histories and processes shaping our new democracy and its educational policy framework?
• What are the theoretical and philosophical underpinnings and assumptions of the Policy argument?
• How does the Policy understand religion and the study of religion?
• How does the Policy understand the study of religion as a compulsory part of the curriculum in preparing learners for citizenship? In other words, how will the study of religion prepare learners not only for citizenship in the national sense but also for an increasingly cosmopolitan citizenry?

The interesting assumption of the research question is not whether the Policy intends to shape prospective citizens, but how the Policy intends to contribute to the shaping of a critical and autonomous citizenry. The historical development of education has shown that education is embedded in ideology and shapes society according to dominant beliefs and assumptions. No education is neutral. Within this context it is therefore taken for granted that the Policy will shape and impact on learners. It is important to notice that the Policy also is embedded in the broader context of OBE and NCS which explicitly intends to contribute to the shaping of learners through the curriculum and specifically in the attainment of the critical cross-field outcomes. The Critical Cross-field outcomes embody the South African vision for a competent and compassionate citizenry who will shape society according to the values contained in the Constitution.

The Policy assumes and proposes religious literacy as a crucial ingredient in the broader curriculum mix towards attainment of the critical cross-field outcomes. In this critical evaluation I will evaluate the rationale for the inclusion of religious literacy in the curriculum ‘mix’, as well evaluate whether the content of the curriculum as embodied in the outcomes, assessment criteria and LPGs will result in a religious literacy (as envisaged in the Policy). I will also interrogate what type of religious literacy will result in an important ingredient for Mündigkeit.

169 In Chapter 7 the relations of Religion Education (as part of Life Orientation) as well as of Religion Studies to the critical cross-field outcomes and developmental outcomes were discussed.
This critical evaluation will proceed in the following sequence:

1. I will postulate a description of what I consider to be characteristics of a critical citizenry – with a specific understanding of Mündigkeit as foundation. How does the Policy understand the study of religion as a compulsory part of the curriculum in preparing learners for citizenship? In other words, how will the study of religion prepare learners not only for citizenship in the national sense but also for an increasingly complex postmodern, postsecular and globalised world?

2. I will then continue to briefly reflect on the context-specific socioeconomic, educational and political histories and processes shaping our new democracy and its educational policy framework as discussed in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5.

3. I will also briefly reiterate the theoretical and philosophical underpinnings and assumptions of the Policy argument. It is crucial that we examine the Policy’s understanding of religion and the study of religion.

I will then propose my final arguments regarding the research question, namely ‘How does the Policy contribute to the shaping of a critical and autonomous citizenry?’

8.2 MÜNDIGKEIT AS CRITICAL CRITERION

In Chapter 3 I have explored Mündigkeit within the context of critical theory’s appropriation of the term. I acknowledged Mündigkeit’s historical roots in the discourses in and surrounding the Enlightenment\(^{170}\). In this section I set out to formulate a personal understanding of Mündigkeit as well as locate Mündigkeit within the broader discourses of postmodernity, postsecularism and the study of religion(s).

\(^{170}\) Also see French and Thomas (1999) and Uljens (2006).
Mündigkeit can be translated as ‘autonomy’, ‘adulthood’ and ‘self-sufficiency’\textsuperscript{171}. Various cultures have different ways to describe the processes and moments when a young adult is considered to be an adult. In the account by French and Thomas (1999) of an interview between Adorno and Becker in 1969, Adorno referred to Kant’s use of the opposite of Mündigkeit, namely Unmündigkeit. Unmündigkeit was seen to be synonymous to subordination, tutelage, being a child and being like a ‘beast of burden’ (French & Thomas 1999: 12).

Becoming an adult or mündig are culture or context-specific and change the person’s standing in the community as response to the community’s change in understanding of who the individual is. Becoming ‘autonomous’ in general means having increased rights and privileges, but also an increase in responsibilities. ‘Autonomous’ literally means to be allowed the right to self-government and is often used as opposite to heteronomy\textsuperscript{172}. The person to whom autonomy is conveyed is considered by his or her immediate community to have ‘grown up’ and that she or he can be ‘trusted’ with having a sound enough foundation and critical abilities to be entrusted with the freedom to make his or her own choices, but also to accept responsibility for these choices. It is important to note that ‘autonomy’ without a surrounding and responsible community is unimaginable. Without a community and other people surrounding an individual, the notion of ‘self-government’ is a non-issue. It is only within the realm of inter-personal relations and communities that the right to govern one-self becomes a possibility. The right to ‘self-govern’ is embedded in inter-personal trust of one another that the good and benefit of the community is linked to the individual’s self-governance\textsuperscript{173}.

\textsuperscript{171} An example of the exploration of ‘autonomy’ outside the debates surrounding Mündigkeit, see Winch (2006) who discusses autonomy as an outcome for education from and within the specific context of critical rationality.

\textsuperscript{172} See Child, Williams and Birch (1995).

\textsuperscript{173} For an interesting discussion on Levinas’ exploration of ‘autonomy’ and ‘heteronomy’ see Child, Williams and Birch (1995).
Autonomy as notion describing a certain status with rights and responsibilities within a specific community is therefore neither an alienable nor eternal right. Autonomy can be withdrawn or lost under certain conditions. Privileges can normally be withdrawn in cases where either the freedom of choice is misused or abused, or where the person has shown not to be trustworthy or/and competent in fulfilling the role autonomous persons in his or her context can be expected to fulfil. Awarding autonomy to a person normally means putting on hold concerns that the person will or can abuse the awarded freedoms and rights. Autonomy is to a certain extent always provisional.

Education plays a crucial role in preparing children and young adults for autonomy and adulthood. The responsibility to prepare children for autonomy is shared by the state, parents and immediate surrounding communities. Education does not only prepare children to be able to contribute to their own fulfilment and the economy of their country but also to fulfil a variety of roles in the public sphere. Autonomy is ‘awarded’ to young adults, depending on the context, when the child has either reached a certain age, or has proven him- or herself to be competent and trustworthy. The readiness for autonomy therefore refers to the readiness of the individual incumbent and the community. Though the focus on the readiness of accepting autonomy is often on the individual’s capacities and values, the community accepting this autonomous individual must also be ‘ready’ for his or her new status.

In preparing children and young adults for autonomy, society has a specific idea of what the characteristics for and content of autonomy are. Curriculum is therefore the sedimentation of a specific community’s beliefs, hopes, dreams and fears. The community assumes that once a child or young adult has been exposed to a certain curriculum for a number of years it is very likely that the individual would have attained the minimum requirements to be considered

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174 In the South African context, the critical cross-field outcomes provide a particular picture of adulthood, maturity or Mündigkeit.
Mündigkeit. Mündigkeit often encompasses struggles and upheavals as many a parental home would testify. In these struggles it is not only the readiness for autonomy that is often contested, but also the parameters and phases of autonomy. Mündigkeit is a readiness to accept responsibility for oneself, others as well as one’s temporary citizenship of the planetary constellation. Mündigkeit is at the same time a claim by an individual and an award and recognition by a community.

Personally, even after describing my understanding of autonomy, I still feel that Mündigkeit and autonomy do not quite refer to the same concept. Autonomy, for me, can result in abuse and misuse. The concept reminds of communities and individuals who acted autonomously, as ‘laws unto themselves’. Autonomy also loses something of being accountable in a certain context or community. There are many examples of autonomous acts, by individuals and groups which have impacted negatively on others. The self-sufficiency and arrogance of the human race using and abusing the environment in a celebration of autonomy, is a case in point. Despite international concerns about climate change some governments, organisations and individuals continue to act autonomously. Autonomy as concept speaks of the self without the other, an anthropocentric celebration of subjectivity.

Mündigkeit on the other hand ‘feels’ different. Mündigkeit implies something of an individual’s status in a community. I realise Mündigkeit can also be misused. Mündigkeit can also describe a process where individuals become a law onto themselves. The word however does describe a competency and literacy on the side of the individual, as well as the acknowledgement of a person’s Mündigkeit by his or her immediate community. Mündigkeit, as I understand it, also contains an acknowledgement of our ‘planetary citizenship’. Planetary citizenship describes a citizenship based on the premise that the Earth and the constellation of planets around us will continue regardless whether and/or how humans

175 See also Child, Williams and Birch (1995).
survive. Planetary citizenship states something of the awe, tremendum and respect for our temporarily being part of this larger constellation. Planetary citizenship acknowledges being a steward or custodian of the Earth knowing that our stewardship is temporary; knowing that the Earth and the constellations around us have been here before humankind developed and will be there even when humanity has stopped existing or has evolved further. Adorno (French & Thomas 1999) titled the topic of the interview with Becker as ‘Education for maturity and responsibility’. I am quite comfortable in using Mündigkeit as implying both maturity and responsibility. For the sake of situating Mündigkeit in the contexts dealt with in the previous chapters, let us briefly look at the gestalt of Mündigkeit in a postmodern, postsecular and globalised world. Then I will postulate certain ‘requirements’ of Mündigkeit in preparation for my critical evaluation of the Policy.

Mündigkeit in a postmodern context implies the ability of a person to deal with the ambiguities, uncertainties and the dynamic interaction between personal identity, community and cultural identities and the surrounding contexts. Individuals and communities need to make sense in a world where many of the traditional signposts and markers have been discarded or covered with graffiti. Mündigkeit implies a being at home in a world where permanence is temporary and feelings of (dis)location reign. In these spaces Mündigkeit requires the ability to negotiate with and accept the permanence of the incommensurability of different aspects of personal and community lives. Risk and the dealing with risk has become the signature of our times. Personal religious beliefs, worldviews and assumptions can therefore assist individuals and communities to construct meaning not only in the liquidity of these times, but also in being confronted with the tremendum in its various guises. Mündigkeit however also implies critically interrogating authority and claims to truth in a hermeneutics of suspicion. Though it was presumed that the disillusionment and critique of the grand narratives of our time would have resulted in the demise of religion, the secular thesis has been discounted by many.
Mündigkeit in a postsecular society implies the ability of a person to navigate and make personal choices in response to an increasingly diverse menu of ways-of-making-meaning. These ways- and structures-of-making-meaning include traditional religions but also a range of eclectic non-permanent and often-changing mixes. As various authors (Chapter 1) have postulated, personal identity and beliefs in these postmodern times have become a celebration of choice and a reenchantment of the world.

Mündigkeit in an increasingly globalised world will require of individuals and communities the capacity to engage with cultures, beliefs and assumptions totally different from their own. Globalisation will also mean an increased competition for vital resources and markets. The cost of and waste implied by the various processes of globalisation will require a Mündigkeit of individuals, communities and governments. In a world where the global has become local, and the local has become global, individuals and communities will face opportunities and challenges unthinkable of twenty years ago. As immigration and emigration have become part of the lives of individuals, workers, families and communities, nation-states also rethink citizenship and patriotism. Citizens will need the critical ability to recognise and uncover ideologies that claim universal or particular validity. Individuals will increasingly need to critically evaluate different claims on their identity, cultures, assumptions and beliefs. Mündigkeit is therefore a critical ingredient for citizenship in the 21st century.

Mündigkeit within the context of the above descriptions of Mündigkeit requires a vocabulary to engage with and critically interrogate different ways and systems of meaning-making. Mündigkeit implies accepting responsibility for my own choices and respecting different choices from other peoples and communities. Mündigkeit requires the ability to fulfil my epistemic duties to translate what I personally believe and to encourage the Other to assume their epistemic duties towards me and those outside their specific communities and belief-structures. Humans
throughout the ages have mapped their ways of making meaning. These maps are embedded in vocabularies waiting for translation, not defending.

*Mündigkeit* also requires a critical self-reflexivity. This reflexivity does not only entail thinking *about* my own beliefs and assumptions but also to critically interrogate these beliefs and assumptions and their impact on my life and the lives of others. Reflexivity as a key characteristic of *Mündigkeit* requires living mindfully engaged in a permanent hermeneutics of suspicion and appreciation, righteous anger and hope. Such a critical citizenry has the willingness to engage and not look or shy away from difficult and often ambiguous spaces and conditions.

*Mündigkeit* necessitates the acknowledgement that power is always present in different gestalts fulfilling different functions. No-one and no meaning-making system are exempt from the tentacles of power. This is not necessarily a negative. Confronting and changing unjust and unequal distributions of power *requires* the use of power. Accepting responsibility to engage with and in a world where inequality is consciously sustained by different role players and stakeholders requires not looking away and a willingness to dirty one’s own hands.

*Mündigkeit* requires different knowledges, from technical know-how, practical application of knowledge as well as emancipatory knowledge that will allow individuals to act rationally and to be self-determining and self-reflective. This requires a strategic combination of knowledge, attitudes, values and skills in the process of being consistently aware of the subjective conditions that make these different knowledges possible and to engage with overt and covert constraints in structures of social action, meaning-making and speech.
8.3 THE POLICY AS CONTEXT-SPECIFIC RESPONSE

A critical policy analysis as proposed in Chapter 2 necessitated a careful examination of the Policy as a context-specific response. The following five pointers summarise and evaluate the Policy-as-response.

8.3.1 South Africa as pluralistic society

The Policy makes it very clear in its Foreword as well as throughout the Policy that it firstly responds to the reality of religious plurality in South Africa, and secondly, to the reality of religious adherence in South Africa. The majority of South Africans consider themselves to be religious. The Policy translates the principles and values as embodied in the Constitution with specific reference to on the one hand guaranteeing freedom for religion and on the other hand prevention from coercion or compromise. Especially in the light of the protection and advancement of a specific religion by the previous dispensation, the new democracy required a response that would take seriously the role religion plays in South African society without privileging one religion above others.

I would further speculate that even if religious plurality was not a characteristic of South Africa or even if South Africa was totally secular, then the increasing role and visibility of religion in the international public sphere have required a specific educational response in South Africa.

As such the Policy is an appropriate and much needed response to national and international developments.

8.3.2 The impact of globalisation

Globalisation, whether in its geopolitical, socioeconomic or cultural gestalts is a reality. The dictum that local has become global and the global has become local
necessitates an educational response where learners are prepared for dealing with diversity. Learners in their life-time will more than ever before encounter people from totally different backgrounds and religious and cultural foundations. Not only will they be required and have the opportunity to translate their own beliefs and assumptions to others, they should also encourage others to fulfil their epistemic duties by translating their beliefs and assumptions.

8.3.3 Postsecularism and religion in the public sphere

Although religion played a significant role in the international public sphere before 9/11, since the attack on the World Trade Centre and the ‘war on terror’, the visibility of religion in the public sphere has increased immensely. In this context forming an opinion comes ‘natural’ and people take sides. How closely these opinions and perceptions concur with the facts about the context is open to doubt. The Policy prescribes a Religion Education curriculum that will at least give a minimum religious literacy to all learners completing Grades R-12.

As indicated in my analysis of the curriculum and LPGs in Chapter 7, the curriculum proposes more than a minimum literacy, and also encourages a critical interrogation of religion in the reality of learners’ daily lives.

8.3.4 The function of religion in the lives of individuals and communities

The Policy recognises that religion in its various formats does play an important role in the lives of South Africans – whether in the lives of individuals or/and in the communal lives of communities. Throughout the previous regime where apartheid impacted adversely on millions of people, religion has played an enormous role in supporting these communities in very difficult and tiring times. Various churches and religious groups supported the struggle against apartheid. These religious groups rallied opposition on various international forums against the previous regime. Religion gave them voice but also a vocabulary. The
struggle was often phrased in terms of the vocabulary of God’s people’s oppression in Egypt and how God delivered them.\textsuperscript{176}

The Policy acknowledges the role religion played and can play in the lives of individuals and communities. The Policy further wants to rally the support of religion as a vehicle for transformation. Knowing more about the content and function of religion can give learners a critical sense of location where religion is part and parcel of the plurality in South Africa and continues to play an important role for the majority of South Africans.

\textbf{8.3.5 Religion as vehicle for moral regeneration and values education}

The Policy expresses the state’s attitude of ‘positive impartiality’ towards religion and the teaching of religion. In recognition of the contribution religion made and can make to the need for a moral regeneration in South Africa, the Policy foresees that the inclusion of Religion Education and Religion Studies in the school curriculum will support and sustain the regeneration of the values as embodied in the Constitution.

Though learners will learn about religion and worldviews and the way these religions and worldviews support the values as embedded in the Constitution, this calls forth the question of a ‘sanitised curriculum’. It is an accepted fact that religion has contributed immensely to the enrichment of humankind throughout the ages. There are many narratives to support the claim that religion is a force of good in the world. Unfortunately, there may be just as many claims and narratives claiming the inherent divisiveness of religion throughout the ages. Interestingly, the fact that religion has a track record of good and bad does not support the exclusion of Religion Education from the curriculum. On the contrary.

\textsuperscript{176} Interestingly, as we explored in Chapter 4, the same narratives and claims were used by the Afrikaner to formulate their own notions of racial superiority.
The role religion and/or worldviews played in humankind’s history necessitates learners to have the vocabulary and literacies to engage in interrogating and celebrating the possibilities of good in religion and/or worldviews and petitioning and guarding against its misuse and abuse. The curriculum for Religion Education allows for critical interrogation of the role and function of religion and worldviews in various societal issues like abortion, gender inequality, etc. Though the emphasis is on the role of religion and worldviews in promoting harmony in communities, this ‘partiality’ does not prevent learners and teachers from also engaging in critique. Another critical factor in interrogating the alleged ‘sanitised’ nature of the curriculum proposed by the Policy and the NCS, is the criterion of age-appropriateness. While critical interrogation and a hermeneutics of suspicion are crucial ingredients for and in tertiary education, the appropriateness of such critical interrogation for younger learners can be seriously questioned. In Religion Education and Religion Studies learners will be stimulated to think critically about religion and investigate their own choices of issues. The depth of criticality will depend on a dynamic interplay between the learner, the teacher, the parental home and the context. Except for the importance of age-appropriateness as criterion in evaluating how ‘sanitised’ the curriculum should be, another factor to consider is the amount of time allowed for Religion Education in the curriculum of Life Orientation (Grades R-12). As such I will support an emphasis on empowering learners with the basic vocabulary and concepts to prepare them sufficiently for critical engagement in the debates, controversies and questions that may follow later in life.

In the next section I will interrogate the assumptions of the Policy. I will then return to the alleged ‘sanitation’ curriculum.

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See the discussion in Chapter 6 as well as Chidester 2003; Ferguson 1998; Roux 1998).
8.4 THE ASSUMPTIONS AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE POLICY

In the previous section (8.3) I have considered to what extent the Policy is an appropriate response to a specific context. Considering the context of the Policy (as explored in Chapters 4 and 5) the Policy is a necessary and timely response. In this section I will evaluate the appropriateness of the Policy-as-response considering the Policy’s own assumptions and theoretical framework.

Given the context of the Policy, the question is whether the Policy’s ‘positive impartiality’ towards religion is appropriate. It is also necessary to consider the Policy’s definition of religion, interrogating what the definition includes and excludes. I will first evaluate the latter, and then return to consider the ‘positive impartiality’ of the Policy towards religion.

I find the analogy of Goodenough (1959) as explored in Chapter 3 very useful. He describes *Religionswissenschaft* as humankind’s response to the tremendum, to the ultimate unknown. Throughout the ages humankind has at times dared to venture behind the curtains of confessional belief and dogma to face and experience the tremendum. Most often though, the study of religion has stopped in front of the curtains and painstakingly described the paintings and designs on the curtains.

In my personal reflection on and interrogation of religion as construct, I am at ease with a definition that explains religion and the study of religion as descriptions and explanations of the tremendum. These descriptions and explanations gave and give rise to different meaning-making structures. As these structures became and become embedded in sociocultural, economic and political relations, so did these structures claim universal and at times particular validity. I am also at ease with these different claims to validity, whether universal or particular. What I am uncomfortable with is the seeming exclusion (or
perception of exclusion) of equally valid and legitimate responses to the tremendum.

I propose that an antithesis of a thesis can co-exist alongside with a thesis without attempting a hasty synthesis. I am comfortable with an antithesis and a thesis to coexist in a liminal space that is different from a forced, polite and often comfortable synthesis. This implies that although I am comfortable with the different theses describing and explaining the tremendum, I am equally comfortable with propositions that question or negate the tremendum or phrase it in terminology outside the accepted canons and vocabularies of talking about the tremendum. Continuing the analogy of Goodenough (1959) I do believe that there are also meaning-making structures that venture behind the curtains of traditional religions’ descriptions of the tremendum to claim that there either is no tremendum or that it resembles an antithesis to the ‘accepted’ theses provided with more traditional structures of meaning-making. A case in point is atheism, Satanism and certain worldviews178.

Atheism’s rejection of the claims of all the curtains (in the analogy proposed by Goodenough 1959) as well as the space ‘behind’ the curtain needs further exploration. The fact that atheism rejects the tremendum is not a rejection of the awe of encountering the unexplained. On the contrary. Atheism’s rejection of traditional notions of the tremendum is a claim to face the unexplained without the ‘securities’ of the curtains. Atheism seems to pull down the curtains and live and celebrate not-knowing everything. Atheism, at least for me personally, means walking the tightrope of non-belief in the belief that it is the only possible rational and existential response to not knowing everything. This position is often portrayed of not taking life and death seriously. The contrary is true. Atheism is living in the permanence of the tremendum, not necessarily the negation thereof.

178 In Chapter 1 I have already revealed my personal history regarding my own journey of making sense. I have acknowledged and want to again acknowledge my biases.
Satanism is another case in point, although even more controversial than atheism. Satanism seems to be a system of belief providing an antithesis to the main theses provided by traditional religions. Satanism is an example of a counter-narrative, an oppositional narrative that is, for some people, a valid and legitimate response to the tremendum.

I do not propose that these antitheses like atheism, Satanism and paganism should necessarily be included in the curriculum. Such inclusion may neither be age appropriate nor possible in the time allowed for Religion Education. In the subject Religion Studies learners may be more ready to engage with atheism or Satanism. This is however not the issue. The issue at stake is that the Policy possibly includes structures of meaning-making as equally valid human responses to the tremendum. In Chapter 7 I pointed to the possibility that certain valid ways of making meaning may be excluded from investigation in the classroom on the basis of public mores and norms. The issue at stake, at least for me personally, is the acknowledgement that there are other equally valid and responsive ways of making meaning.

I suspect that the public outcry about the Policy that surrounded the current Policy would have been nothing compared to the public outcry should the possibility have existed that Satanism, atheism or paganism as belief-systems would have been explicit possibilities in the curriculum. The inclusion of these ‘ways of making meaning’ would however have been academically defendable and even appropriate considering the reality of the existence of these structures.

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179 See my discussion in Chapter 7 on the implications of students’ choices within the context of classroom context, the expertise of the teacher, the ethos of the school and its surrounding communities and parental beliefs and assumptions.

180 From the processes resulting in the Policy it is clear that all major religious groupings were in agreement with the Policy in its final format, including representatives of secular humanism. An interesting aspect of the Policy and the deliberations that surrounded it is the notion that some alternative ways of making meaning would have protested against being included in a broad basket of the study of religion. The processes surrounding the Policy also seem to have necessitated careful strategic consideration of the implications of defining ‘religion’ in an even more open manner. The question whether nihilism can be considered a way of making meaning also provokes further contemplation.
of meaning in the international and national domains. With the increased publication of works and authors dealing with and defending non-traditional ways of making-sense, learners may be at loss of not having a vocabulary or literacy to critically engage with these debates.

The ‘positive impartiality’ of the Policy toward religion as vehicle for the promotion of identified values, may create the impression that religion per se is a more ‘trusted’ vehicle than, for example atheism. There is enough evidence to propose that the values as proposed by the Constitution are also treasured and promoted by atheists, pagans and agnostics. Although the Policy itself does not ‘demonise’ non-traditional ways of making meaning, the experience and expertise, assumptions and beliefs of teachers, the ethos of a particular school as well as parental beliefs may create the impression that only traditional religions are ‘trustworthy’ vehicles for values. The Policy and curriculum documents are clear that the Policy also celebrates certain worldviews.

8.5 FINAL EVALUATION

I would like to start these final evaluative remarks on the Policy by referring to two authors whose exploration of the tremendum really impacted on this study as well as on my own ways of making meaning. These two authors are Goodenough (1959) and Krüger (1995).181

In the essay by Goodenough (1959:91) he petitions for scientists of religion to face the tremendum ‘with quiet eyes, astonished, reverent, but unafraid’ (1959:91). He continues

For we can hardly call ourselves scientists of religion if we systematically define religion so as to leave out this great approach to the tremendum going on all about us, and refuse ourselves to share it. In the mid-twentieth century we will seem ridiculous to our generation if we call ourselves scientists, but do not examine our data in the same factual and calm spirit.

181 I have explored both these authors’ works in Chapter 3.
The historical religions, according to Krüger (1995:59), ‘are concretised forms of these frontier experiences; the landmarks, through many millennia, of human beings' intuitions of ultimate reality, truth, beauty and goodness. There is therefore every reason to treat such forms with great respect’.

I have no doubt in my mind that the inclusion of study of religion as envisaged and proposed by the Policy will contribute, in the context of the broader curriculum, to increasing the Mündigkeit and the potential for Mündigkeit in learners. Religion Education (Grades R-12) will provide learners with more than a basic religious literacy that will prepare them sufficiently for participation as citizens in the public sphere, nationally and internationally. Heimbrook, Scheilke and Schreiner (2001:9) define ‘religious competence’ as follows:

Religious competence means being able to deal with one’s own religiosity and its various dimensions embedded in the dynamics of life-history in a responsible way but also to appreciate the religious view of others. It includes active tolerance, competence to act in ethically oriented ways, readiness for dialogue on religious matters. It includes also the ability to deal with religious pluralism and differences in a constructive way.

It is clear from my analysis of the Policy and curriculum documents that the study of religion(s) will contribute to learners growing in religious competence, as envisaged by Heimbrook et al. (2001).

Although the time allocation for Religion Education within the context of Life Orientation is very limited, an increase in the allocation would necessarily mean a decrease of time available for other Learning Areas. It is also furthermore very difficult to determine how much time will be considered ‘enough’ if the current allocation is deemed as lacking. Considering the holistic approach proposed by the RNCS and NCS, Religion Education will fulfil a crucial role in preparing learners to engage in a postmodern, postsecular and increasingly globalised world. Religion Studies (Grades 10-12) as envisaged by the NCS embodies a wonderful example of the study of religion as critical organic praxis.
Although outside the scope of this study, it is necessary to mention that successful implementation of the Policy will further depend on the training of in-service and pre-service teachers, quality learning and teaching support materials, as well as authentic and valid assessment\textsuperscript{182}.

The Policy and resulting various curriculum documents propose the study of religion as engagement with religion as ‘concretised forms of [these] frontier experiences; the landmarks, through many millennia, of human beings’ intuitions of ultimate reality, truth, beauty and goodness’ (Krüger 1995:59). The Policy and curriculum encourage teachers and learners to face the tremendum ‘with quiet eyes, astonished, reverent, but unafraid’ (Goodenough 1959:91).

8.6 (IN)CONCLUSIONS

As shared in Chapter 1, the ‘why’ of this research was grounded in my personal history and interests, as well as in my curiosity about the academic discourses on the role of religion in the public sphere in a postsecular age. Now, at the end of this journey, I am satisfied that I have somehow also successfully resolved the ‘how’ of my research.

Discourse analysis as ‘the act of showing how certain discourses are deployed to achieve particular effects in specific contexts’ (Terre Blanche & Durrheim 1999:154) allowed me to plot several patterns and trends that shaped the Policy. These patterns and trends were like the ‘tectonic layers’ described by the character of Michael who said ‘The tectonic layers of our lives rest so tightly against earlier events in later ones, not as matter that has been fully formed and pushed aside, but absolutely present and alive. I understand this. Nevertheless, I

\textsuperscript{182} It is important that the training of teachers as well as the development of teaching and learning support materials should also provide academic and pedagogic guidance to teachers being confronted with learners’ interest in non-traditional ways of making meaning.
sometimes find it hard to bear. Maybe I did write our story to be free of it, even if I 
ever can be’ (Booth 1999:260)

The Policy was not only shaped by ‘tectonic layers’ but the implementation of the 
Policy will also continue to experience the movement and impact of these layers. 
The Policy can and will never be free of them. In facing this reality it is crucial to 
take into account what Booth (1999:259) proposed regarding memory and 
forgetting:

Forgetting and memory both seem vital to our common life, and it is equally 
possible that we may have too much of either. An excess of forgetting would 
turn us into leaves to be scattered by the winds, mere neighbours passing 
one another by in little more than a community of interests. Too much 
memory would be lead in our wings, denying us a future and closing off the 
possibility of openness to others who are not part of our community of 
memory.

The Policy and resulting curriculum to a certain extent provides a clear picture of 
the role the study of religion can play in re-envisioning and reshaping South 
African society. The Policy and its implementation stand as testimony of a 
‘maybe’.

‘Maybe’ comes with no guarantees, only a chance. But ‘maybe’ has 
always been the best odds the world has offered to those who set out to 
alter its course – to find a new land across the sea, to end slavery, to 
enable women to vote, to walk on the moon, to bring down the Berlin Wall.

‘Maybe’ is not a cautious word. It is a defiant claim of possibility in the face 
of a status quo we are unwilling to accept… (Young in the Foreword to 
Westley, Zimmerman & Patton 2006)
EPILOGUE TO THE THESIS

The central figure in the carnival as explored by Bakhtin was the fool, the clown, the idiot-savants and savant-idiots (Hiebert 2003:116) who in the blasphemous hilarity of the carnival could comment on sacred and profane structures, beliefs and institutions. The fool also translated the untranslatable, commented on the incommensurable and often provided a new vocabulary or language for engaging with the serious and often traumatic of everyday-life. Nothing was sacred. Everything was.

As I confessed in Chapter 1 of this thesis, I assumed various identities in performing this thesis as carnival in an age of carnival. At times I was parrot, ‘enacting someone else’s voice’ (Hiebert 2003:118), repeating what others have said, often out of context. During this thesis I was also the organ-grinding monkey, ‘dressed in a dapper little costume and trained to collect money from passers-by’, and conditioned ‘to perform; conditioned out of the possibility of subversion’ (Hiebert 2003:118). In this heteroglossic carnival, I was also medium – possessed with and speaking with many voices, often speaking in voices I didn’t understand. I performed this thesis as a glossolalic and often xenoglossic act in a xenoglossic world.

And the result is a carnivalesque nonsense. Not a meaningless nonsense, but an uncertain, gestural participation in which nothing makes sense, yet the gesture towards the unintelligible is all that matters (Goodman quoted by Hiebert 2003:123).

This thesis may be nothing more than a ‘gestural participation’ in the debates and future debates and discourses surrounding the Policy. This study provided some pointers to the possibilities and opportunities the Policy missed and the possibilities the Policy encompasses. Towards a ‘maybe’.
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