A confessional postmodern approach to philosophy of education: towards narrative possibilities for educational praxis

GJ Braun

Orcid.org/0000-0002-5833-1246

Thesis accepted for the degree *Doctor of Philosophy* in *Philosophy of Education* at the North-West University

Promoter: Prof FJ Potgieter

Graduation ceremony: December 2020

Student Number: 24735884

DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this thesis is my own original work and that I have not previously (in its entirety or in part) submitted it at any university for a degree.

Signature

07/11/2019

Date

Dedication

Dedicated to my daughters, friends and family. Without their inspiration and support, I would not have made it.

Declaration of proofreading

CERTIFICATE
OF LANGUAGE EDITING

ISSUED ON 30 OCTOBER 2019

This serves to certify that I have edited the language of the thesis

A confessional postmodern approach to philosophy of education: towards narrative possibilities for educational praxis

by

GJ Braun

iD Orcid.org/0000-0002-5833-1246

Thesis submitted for the degree *Doctor of Philosophy* in *Philosophy of Education* at the North-West University Faculty of Education

Supervisor: Prof. F J Potgieter   October 2019

H C Sieberhagen

SATI no 1001489
30 OCTOBER 2019

Acknowledgements

Summary

A confessional postmodern approach to philosophy of education: towards narrative possibilities for educational praxis

Keywords

Key words: philosophy of education, confessional education, narrative knowledge, scientific knowledge, modernity, postmodernity, ideology, relativism, religion, post-Apartheid era, individual and cultural formation

Research Problem

How can a confessional and narrative approach make a contribution towards the advance of philosophy of education in a postmodern age?

Research aims

The main aim of this thesis was to demonstrate the viability of a (Christian) confessional and narrative philosophy of education in a postmodern age by situating the approach (a) historically, (b) existentially and in connection to (c) educational praxis.

Research methodology

As a result of opting for a prescriptive framework in the study of postmodernity and its implications for a (Christian) confessional and narrative approach to philosophy of education, theorization was pursued by means of a trajectory that sought authentic personal dialogue with selected philosophical sources in light of contemporary dilemmas related to postmodernity and educational praxis.

Primary findings

Postmodern critique of rationality offers a promising avenue for philosophy of education. A confessional and narrative approach avoids ideological totalitarianism as well as religious relativism. A confessional and narrative approach translates into creating a culture of honest, committed participation and authentic dialogue when applied by teacher-educators in their individual and cultural formative role.

A confessional and narrative philosophy of education does not legitimate itself by an appeal to universal, scientific reason. Instead, it proclaims a narrative vision that appeals to honest,

committed participation and authentic dialogue for the sake of unity in diversity in individual and cultural formation. In order to arrive at this conclusion, a configuration has been created, which can be understood as follows in terms of an exploratory trajectory:

After justifying the viability of the proposed approach historically in chapter two, by exploring the postmodern narrative identity, a symbolic point of entry was sought in order to locate the proposed approach to philosophy of education existentially.

Chapter three explored the drama of human existence in terms of the archetype of the pilgrim and the narrative landscape which represents human existence as a journey to a Promised Land. The worldview of the pilgrim provided important foundations for dealing with postmodern problems of otherness and difference in chapter four in light of, *inter alia*, the Apartheid ideology and other divisive tendencies. The biblical narrative of Being Human was presented as a vision for a future, unified post-post-Apartheid South Africa.

The explorations of divisive ideological tendencies in chapter four led to the assumption that an overemphasis of group identity at the cost of individual responsibility is a major problem for education in its role of contributing towards individual and cultural formation by guiding individuals to explore their full potential and become responsible individuals.

Subsequently, the narrative schematism presented in chapter five offered an alternative to the (nihilistic) postmodern overemphasis of group identity by appealing to traditionally codified patterns of human experience and behaviour from the Christian symbolic network; to help understanding and authentic interaction with the world from a narrative perspective, which accounts for the individual's power of action in a manner that allows human beings to remain open to the future without disconnecting from the past and/or tradition.

After taking many detours to provide historical and existential justifications for the proposed approach to philosophy of education, thereby constantly establishing the link to philosophy of education and educational praxis, chapter six presented guidelines for a confessional and narrative educational praxis in terms of a more detailed account on suggested narrative exercises and their practical significance for individual and cultural formation.

Guidelines for a confessional and narrative educational praxis – re-enchanting the classroom through (confessed) faith and narrative

In a nutshell, the guidelines for a confessional and narrative educational praxis emphasize that education remains fundamentally about individual and cultural formation, and explicitly appeals to honest, committed participation and authentic dialogue as part of a formative pedagogy. Such a formative pedagogy seeks to address the human heart in order to shape

habits, desires and affections so that these could all support human beings' basic orientation to their world, including their relationships to others. This should, in turn, assist them in developing their own vision of the good life (Smith, 2009:25) in a balanced way which integrates individuality and community, so as to empower and capacitate them to advance confidently during and along their journey to their own, personal Promised Land (i.e. desired future), without absolutizing their own human viewpoints, constantly learning from differences instead.

Recommendations

The human lifeworld (including the conditions of knowledge) has rapidly been changing and teacher-educators need to be best equipped to guide educands along their journey to fully-fledged, authentic adulthood. This thesis provides theoretical and practical signposts to assist teacher-educators, and consequently educands, to develop a strong spiritual vision towards a desired future in order to navigate the current postmodern age. It is, however, up to philosophers of education and teacher-educators to own and adapt this approach and create their own syntheses according to the needs of their own distinctive pedagogical contexts, their own abilities, as well as their own cultural and/or religious contexts. The limited time available for, as well as the scope of, this study unfortunately only allowed for the exploration of a limited number of symbolic and narrative patterns from life-related narratives, the Bible, literature and popular culture. This should, however, be seen as an invitation for others to continue the (arguably infinite) explorations of narrative possibilities to enrich philosophy of education and educational praxis.

Table of Contents

List of figures

Chapter 1: Orientation

The introduction that follows below provides an account of how the research trajectory of this thesis developed. Accordingly, it is neither the main focus nor the purpose of this introduction to provide a complete summary of everything that has been accomplished. Instead, I consciously attempt to provide additional background knowledge on the design structure of this thesis.

1.1 Introduction

Lyotard's (1984:xxiv) definition of the postmodern as incredulity towards meta-narratives has become one of the most common slogans in the defense of a relativistic postmodern view of religion. Lyotard (1984:23) himself, however, views the authority of traditional (i.e. religious) knowledge as given through immediate auto-legitimation in tribal paradigms. Consequently, taking the postmodern condition seriously as a break with modernity's universal, autonomous reason and as a reaffirmation of the primacy of narrative knowledge, I was inspired to elaborate on a narrative[1] and (Christian) confessional approach to philosophy of education as a viable possibility because of its appeal to faith and the religious nature of the human self (Smith, 2006:43).

Unfortunately, the misunderstanding that Lyotard's critique on meta-narratives implies religious relativism has also found its way into South African philosophy of education (Higgs, 1998). By assuming that the so-called epistemological (postmodern) revolution of the twentieth century affects the credibility of traditional religion (i.e. narrative in character), erroneously interpreted in terms of modern rationality instead of acknowledging its ancient (mythical) paradigm, a relativistic direction has been pursued with regard to religion: '*There is no longer any point in talking about God, Spirit, Form, humanity...*' (Higgs, 1998:3). Then

---

[1] The proposed study was concerned with the design, development and evaluation of a confessional and narrative alternative approach for a postmodern age, as distinct from modern, rationalistic paradigms. As such, the presented narrative approach entailed, for instance, that a separate description or elucidation of key terms was dispensed with, so that the meaning of terms can be grasped by means of the context provided for in the text itself, by (a) presenting the terms within a coherent context which related the phenomena at stake to one another and (b) allowing my personal scholarly views to be revealed gradually - as emerging from my dialogue with the primary sources referred to. Although this does not prevent all possible misunderstandings, I regard this attitude as the adequate 'narrative' attitude, amongst others because it seeks to address the readers pre-theoretically (i.e. in terms of reflecting on their notions of time/temporal experience) by means of the text's composed coherence. In contrast to this narrative attitude, one would typically mention a 'systematic' approach and its intention to achieve completeness (i.e. in terms of reflecting theoretically on spatial notions of simultaneity). Accordingly, the proposed narrative approach did not aim at providing all the different (possible) angles that could be trained on a subject (i.e. as would typically be the case in a 'closed system'). Instead, it sought to open up new possibilities of understanding by means of a methodology that can be defined as 'open-ended'. It is important that potential readers of this thesis really understand this.

again, such religious relativism has been suggested as the proper postmodern response to the South African education system in the post-Apartheid era: '*Philosophical discourse at the end of the twentieth century, and especially the discourse of postmodernism carries with it, I believe, a notion of rationality that can provide philosophy of education in South Africa with a new sense of direction, away from the debilitating effects of the discourse of Fundamental Pedagogics*' (Higgs, 1998:12).

Considering that Apartheid ideology was based on the auto-legitimation of a tribal paradigm (cf. Lyotard, 1984:23), it makes sense to question tribalism and ideology instead of shifting the blame to religion *per se*. In fact, Lyotard's account of postmodernism is mainly directed against the modern project (not ancient traditions) and helps to intensify the conflict between science and narrative: '*In a way, then, we see a tension between a modern, scientific worldview, on the one hand, and an ancient-postmodern, mythic worldview, on the other*' (Smith, 2006:40). The postmodern emphasis that everyone has a worldview (i.e. grounded in a narrative) consequently inspired the main goal of the proposed study, namely to show how a (Christian) confessional and narrative approach can make a contribution towards the advance of philosophy of education in a postmodern age. The proposed approach thus emerged based on the assumption that narrative knowledge precedes scientific knowledge, combining a person's (for example Christian) faith perspective with the postmodern condition as an attempt at '*getting everyone's presuppositions on the table and then narrating the story of the Christian faith, allowing others to see the way in which it makes sense of our experience and our world*' (Smith, 2006:46). In other words, the developed approach is deeply personal and philosophically based on the postmodern rejection of the neutrality of science and reason in the proclamation of a narrative vision for philosophy of education.

1.2 Smith as a starting point

Besides exploring the connection between postmodern critique (Lyotard, 1984) and the religious-narrative (confessional) embedment of pre-scientific knowledge, Smith's (2006, 2009, 2013) philosophical work provides fundamental insights concerning the central role of (confessed) faith and narrative for philosophy of education in a postmodern age. In fact, his work inspired the very title of this thesis. Although Smith's ideas are not explored in detail in the course of the thesis, insights therefrom function as background assumptions[2] or implicit presuppositions, especially in the elaborated distinctions between faith, narrative, scientific

---

[2] The importance of the mentioned background assumptions cannot be underestimated. The fact that this thesis' chapters mostly built on other philosophical sources has mainly to do with the envisioned philosophical design structure of this research. For instance, when dealing with narrative theory, I decided to rely on the works of Ricœur and Frye because of their specific analyses of traditionally codified narrative patterns and how these might relate to human experience. Smith's work, however, provided fundamental questions and insights which inspired the beginning of this thesis' philosophical journey.

knowledge and their relationship to education.

In his work *Desiring the Kingdom - Worship, Worldview and Cultural Formation* (Smith, 2009) and its continuation, *Imagining the Kingdom - How Worship Works* (Smith, 2013), Smith develops and applies a philosophical anthropology that integrates the narrative vision implicit in the previously referred work (Smith, 2006). Therein, his critique of modern rationalism goes even further to state the primacy of the (pre-theoretical) narrative over (theoretical) scientific knowledge. Against the common assumption that the latter leads to 'worldview-thinking' as the solution, Smith claims that even worldview approaches tend to fall prey to rationalistic reductions of human beings to thinking machines, as if '*the site of contestation between worldviews or ground-motives is located in the realm of ideas*' (Smith, 2009:24). Conversely, Smith points out how to enlarge the scope of worldview approaches by stressing the centrality of cultural practices as formative pedagogies of desire that address the human heart and shape human beings. By highlighting the pre-theoretical orientation of the heart (i.e. what we love and how desires are shaped by habit-forming practices), Smith (2009:25) links the formation of human identity to human beings' fundamental desires and basic orientation to the world. By connecting formative pedagogies of desire to faith and narrative, Smith's insights ultimately inspire the conviction that a confessional and narrative vision for philosophy of education in a postmodern age should be practically translated into honest, committed participation and authentic dialogue for the sake of unity in diversity in individual and cultural formation.

In short, Smith's work[3] provides basic presuppositions and starting points for the explorative trajectory which was pursued in this thesis. As a result, a confessional (Christian) and narrative approach to philosophy of education is gradually introduced through the exploration of narrative possibilities for educational praxis and interconnected problems.

---

[3] Similarly, Smith's account of the relationship between a (narrative) religious vision and desire was the motivation behind this thesis' exploration of the (religious) pilgrim's worldview in chapter 3, for instance through the insights from 'Imagining the Kingdom' (Smith, 2013:10) that human beings are spiritually directed towards action and ultimately inspired by a narrative vision (Smith, 2013:6). In this way, he assigns to reflection (i.e. reason) the function of leading us to embody our narrative vision and 'to immerse ourselves in different environments and commit ourselves to different practices, with the goal of ultimately acquiring different habits and dispositions' (Smith, 2013:10). His insights also inspired notions of formative pedagogy implied throughout this thesis. For instance, he identifies the pre-theoretical *Sitz im Leben* of education: '*Pedagogies of desire form our habits, affections, and imaginations, thus shaping and priming our very orientation to the world. So, if a Christian education is going to be holistic and formative, it needs to attend to much more than the intellect*' (Smith, 2013:13). A (Christian) narrative vision then obtains the formative function of a '*pre-theoretical compass that guides and generates human action... Christian formation is a conversion of the imagination effected by the Spirit, who recruits our most fundamental desires by a kind of narrative enchantment - by inviting us narrative animals into a story that seeps into our bones and becomes the orienting background of our being-in-the-world. Our incarnating God continues to meet us where we are: as imaginative creatures of habit*' (Smith, 2013:14-15).

1.3 Problem statement

Based on the premise that postmodern critique of rationality leads to a revaluation of religion and narrative, my main research problem dealt with the following question: '*How can a confessional and narrative approach to philosophy of education emerge, considering implications for educational praxis, while avoiding the modern appeal to universal (scientific) reason as well as ideological totalitarianism and religious relativism?*'

1.4 Research sub-questions

The main focus of this research was the development of fundamental (i.e. ontological) tenets of (and for) a confessional and narrative philosophy of education by dealing with basic (a) historical and (b) existential questions such as:

(a) How is a confessional and narrative vision for philosophy of education historically justifiable?

(b) How is the postmodern narrative identity related to the modern and pre-modern narrative identities?

(c) How can human existence be archetypically portrayed in order to encompass the contemporary-postmodern (i.e. uncertain) conditions of knowledge?

(d) How can a narrative-confessional vision help dealing with difference and otherness in such a way that it transcends group identity[4] and highlights the primacy of Being Human?

(e) How can a narrative schematism, as a transhistorical framework, help us interact with the world and human existence in such a way that enhances individual responsibility as well as the individual's integration and participation in society?

More specifically, besides expanding on the five sub-questions above, it was important for me to explore the applicability of narrative strategies and their relevance for educational praxis. This was not only accomplished through the presentation of philosophical foundations, but also through the suggestion of narrative exercises to be implemented by means of appropriate, relevant and justifiable pedagogical activities. Due to the fact that the main focus of my study was the development of fundamental (i.e. ontological) tenets of (and for) a narrative and confessional philosophy of education, the treatment of the South African context offered in Chapter 3 should be viewed as being mainly of illustrative intent. Accordingly, the elaborations primarily deal with fundamental questions related to

---

[4] Derrida's elaboration on binary oppositions (Derrida 1973) is probably the most prominent (and also well-known) example for the postmodern overemphasis on group identity (e.g. male vs female, black vs white, rich vs poor, etc.).

contextualised differences (including the distinction between the reductionistic nature of ideologies and the all-encompassing nature of religion[5]) and therefore deliberately did not prioritize the dialogue with contemporary discourses and/or developments in South African philosophy of education (including the transformation of curricula, digitalization, etc.). In other words, the South African context was chosen mainly because of its multicultural roots and the illustrative character of its recent history, which help approaching confessional and narrative answers to fundamental questions of relevance for both teacher-educators and educands.[6]

After justifying how a narrative vision non-dualistically embraces the whole of life by assuming the unity of the pre-theoretical and theoretical in human existence (Smith, 2006, 2009, 2013), the proposed study went beyond Smith's philosophical anthropology and explored narrative possibilities from different angles, such as Ricœur's philosophy of narrative in 'Time and Narrative' (Ricœur, 1984, 1988), the postmodern narrative identity and its relationship to premodernity and modernity (Taylor, 2007) or the tension between a

---

[5] Accordingly, this study refers to ideology in the traditional reformational-philosophical sense, namely that ideologies consist of a reductionistic understanding of reality which, in turn, absolutizes an aspect (or set of related aspects) of a particular reality.

[6] Considering the leading role of teacher-educators in the communication of knowledge in education, the proposed study was primarily designed to address educators with vocation at different levels of education (including philosophers of education who inspire teacher-educators) at a foundational level that involves religion and worldview. Since a narrative approach is primarily concerned with conveying a vision and addressing the imagination (prior to action), this also implies that the translation of those insights into praxis remains the teacher-educator's main responsibility who, on the other hand, might consider them valuable or not, based on his/her own judgement. The same applies to educands, based on their own abilities and competence to integrate insights from teacher-educators in their own lives. This research thus intended to suggest possibilities without imposing or prescribing them.

It was therefore assumed that by making teacher-educators the main target group of the study, educands were *de facto* implied and therefore also indirectly addressed in the process. It was due to this (indirect) connection between teacher-educators and educands that the proposed study nevertheless included educands as part of the target audience. Consequently, the distinction between a main target group and an indirect target group not only suggests that the proposed approach to philosophy of education should primarily be conveyed at an academic level that presupposes the teacher-educator's capacity of understanding (including philosophers of education), but it also justifies elaborating insights that might possibly be relevant for educands as well - as suggestions that teacher-educators might consider implementing as part and parcel of their own preferred (and, if need be, adapted) pedagogy. That said, it was essential to this study to develop guidelines in a more general and inclusive sense. In other words, the narrowing down of teacher-educators and educands into further sub-groups will be avoided for the sake of conveying a vision that could aspire to be as broad and inclusive as possible. The main reason for avoiding such 'narrowing down' into sub-groups was the philosophical conviction that the very core of this project should be to focus on providing an alternative, namely a postmodern, narrative and confessional approach to philosophy of education and to accomplish it in such a manner that might lead postmodern critique and its religious possibilities to reach more of their potential. In this way, the decision to avoid further specificity was rooted in the assumption that by enlarging one's imagination through the exploration of (pre-scientific) narrative knowledge, it is possible to arrive at a broad and foundational vision for education through basic distinctions. Nothing prevents the proposed project to become more specific later (i.e. at a post-doctoral level), but one step should be taken at a time.

(Christian) religious and a nihilistic version of postmodernity (Loughlin, 1996; Milbank, 1999, 2003, 2013). Later in chapter 5, for instance, Frye's theory of fictional modes was introduced as a narrative typology that accounts for the individual's power of action through traditionally codified patterns of action and behaviour, providing answers to questions such as: What are the basic types of narratives that are experienced by human beings (Frye, 1957)? How can the understanding of such narratives enrich the everyday experience of human beings and their self-actualization? Why is it important for teacher-educators and educands to understand the narrative possibilities of human experience?

1.5 Design of conceptual research and purpose of the research

The starting point of this proposed study was the assumption that postmodern critique of rationality offers a promising avenue for a confessional and narrative approach to philosophy of education. This approach avoids both ideological totalitarianism as well as religious relativism. The fact that postmodern critique has been distorted due to a reminiscent modernist understanding of rationality and science has, however, prevented it from reaching its potential impact upon philosophy of education. Subsequently a need manifested for clarifying the relationship between the modern scientific and a narrative view of rationality. By expanding on the primacy of narrative knowledge and proclaiming a narrative view of rationality as the actual ground of scientific knowledge (Smith, 1996), this study elaborates an alternative (Christian) to philosophy of education, which is deeply personal and confessional. The envisioned confessional and narrative approach emphasizes the central role of the imagination in activating and opening up the self towards narrative (religious) possibilities (Frye, 1957) of making sense of the world. As a result, the purpose of the research was not only descriptive and explanatory, but also normatively emancipatory. Besides positively developing an approach to philosophy of education, this study establishes a contrast between ideological tendencies and religion (Strauss, 2010) and suggests that postmodern critique should lead to a revaluation of (confessional) religious discourse within the field of philosophy of education. In order to emphasize the central role of education in individual and cultural formation, it has been a main concern throughout this thesis to relate philosophical insights won through the study of sources to educational praxis, as these insights provide ways of enriching educational praxis, as well as educational experience.

In order to justify the revaluation of religious discourse within the field of education, this study began by highlighting how postmodern critique unveiled that scientific knowledge is grounded in a narrative (i.e. legitimizing) myth, although it does not own up to it (Smith, 2006:43). As Lyotard points out, modern scientific knowledge cannot legitimate itself, but is

inevitably forced to appeal to narrative (popular) knowledge[7] to sustain itself (Lyotard, 1984:28). This is in line with Kuhn's standard work, entitled *Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, where it is demonstrated that scientific paradigms represent constellations of belief (Kuhn, 1962). Consequently, in response to the modern view of science, a confessional and narrative approach to philosophy of education has been developed by appealing to faith and narrative instead of universal, scientific reason.

The established contrast between the modern primacy of science and reason on the one hand and the postmodern primacy of narrative and faith on the other hand, inspires questions which are explored in this thesis, such as: '*How does a (pre-theoretically) narrative approach manage to express its primacy in concrete human experience (including educational experience) compared to a (theoretically) scientifically rooted one?*'

Smith's (1996:46) answer to this question highlights the all-encompassing way in which narratives address human beings, in contrast to scientific (theoretical) reductive views: '*...[a] narrative is a more fully orbed means of communication (and hence revelation), activating the imagination and involving the whole person in a concrete world where God's story unfolds*' (Smith, 1996:46). Although Smith's answers are satisfactory on a foundational level, his philosophical work does not offer a narrative theory per se. Consequently, by questioning more specifically what would constitute a narrative approach to philosophy of education and how it could be communicated to and used by teacher-educators and educands, it was important to move beyond Smith's work. For this purpose, Ricœur's *Time and Narrative* (Ricœur, 1984, 1988) became a central source of inspiration for this thesis, in combination with Frye's theory of fictional modes from his famous *Anatomy of Criticism* (Frye 1957), Taylor's magnum opus *A secular age* (Taylor, 2007) and other sources which were gradually introduced as contemporary (postmodern) dilemmas presented themselves along the way and new confessional narrative strategies had to be developed in response.

That said, besides justifying the suggested (confessional) narrative approach historically, it became increasingly important to explore existential and practical implications as well, for instance through the development of narrative strategies and exercises. The pursued trajectory of exploring the historical and existential relevance of narrative and (confessed) faith in education (including its central role in individual and cultural formation) consequently lead to an open-ended (confessional) approach to philosophy of education.

---

[7] More precisely, Lyotard refers to those popular narratives as fables, myths and legends (Lyotard, 1984:27)

1.6 Philosophical underpinning

The philosophical underpinning of the proposed study has emerged as a result of my continuing concern with respect to the following issues:

- By sharply distinguishing between religion and ideology and highlighting the unifying vision on Being Human (Strauss, 2010), there was room to reclaim the relevance of a (Christian) confessional narrative approach (Smith, 1996, 2009, 2013) to philosophy of education which also applied to South Africa's post-Apartheid era.

- A misunderstanding of postmodern critique, as if it affected the credibility and auto-legitimization of religious discourse, has led to the adoption of relativistic religious notions in philosophy of education. The same religiously relativistic interpretation of postmodernity has been suggested as a new direction for South African philosophy of education in the post-Apartheid era (cf. Higgs, 1998).

- The radical difference between the all-encompassing nature of religion and the reductionist nature of ideologies (Strauss, 2010) has been blurred.

- Conversely, my investigation of primary sources from western philosophy has led to the assumption that postmodern critique opens the space for religious discourse (i.e. everyone has a worldview that is grounded in narrative knowledge) in philosophy of education. On the other hand, the postmodern rediscovery of narrative inspired a more detailed study of narrative theory, including the study of ancient cosmology and the study of narrative and symbolic patterns.

- By abandoning modern scientific universal reason and adopting a narrative view of knowledge (based on an auto-legitimizing myth), a (confessional) faith-based alternative, when practically used in educational praxis appeared to be deeply personal, following narrative patterns of proclamation and activation of imagination instead of (a scientific) demonstration (Smith, 2006, 2009; 2013).

Consequently, the philosophical underpinning of the study built on the implications of postmodern critique (Lyotard, 1984), as inspired by Smith's interpretations thereof (Smith, 2006, 2009, 2013) and how these implications might connect to Ricœur's (Ricœur, 1984, 1988) and Frye's narrative theories (Frye, 1957). Philosophical reflections on the postmodern narrative identity as it relates postmodernity to modernity as well as premodernity (Taylor, 2007; Loughlin, 1996; Milbank, 1999, 2003, 2013) also led to questions and answers related to narrative patterns which were addressed through the aid of insights gained from psychology (Peterson, 1999) and ancient cosmology symbolism

(Pageou, 2018). This research trajectory locates the study[8] in the context of western philosophy. Accordingly, the developed approach engaged in dialogue with philosophers of the western tradition by drawing on the relevance of their insights in the process of elaboration of the study (Burbules & Raybeck, 2002). By taking a narrative stance and accepting the postmodern premise that everyone has a worldview, it is acknowledged that my interpretations reflect my own, personal Christian worldview[9] and that these interpretations narrate a (Christian) confessional way of making sense of the world (Smith, 2006).

1.7 Methodology to be followed

Drawing on the above mentioned sources of inspiration[10] and in light of the indicated ambition of this study, which includes embracing the postmodern condition in a confessional-narrative (religious) way and emancipating it from religious relativistic and ideological tendencies, the pursued methodology criticized concepts and visions in terms of ideology; thereby exploring implicit assumptions[11] as well as their alignment to schools of thought and worldviews. Moreover, the distinction between scientific and narrative knowledge allowed the intended methodology to deconstruct theories[12] and praxis in order to highlight the distinctive

---

[8] This application of western philosophy was not meant as an essentialisation of western philosophy for the South African context; it merely reflects my own, personal western background - consequently my limited (western) perspective. Nevertheless, the spreading of globalization and the cross-continental influence of western philosophy might, at least, diminish this contextual discrepancy.

[9] My views are rooted in the Christian tradition and in the dialogue with continental and reformational philosophies. For those interested in reading more about my views on the relationship between philosophy and theology, my MA-Thesis is recommended. It is entitled: *A Trinitarian Modal-Spherical Method of Apologetics - An attempt to combine the Vantilian method of apologetics with reformational philosophy* (Braun, 2013).

[10] The chosen methodology and sources of inspiration are the result of over ten years of intense study of the continental and reformational traditions. Here are some examples that underline the credibility of the chosen sources: (a) James Smith is widely accepted in both academic and intellectual circles pertaining to studies in postmodern and Christian philosophy/theology. Northrop Frye's 'Anatomy of Criticism' is a classic example of literary criticism. Strauss' PDD ('Philosophy as the Discipline of Disciplines') (b) is regarded as one of the most basic systematic works on reformation philosophy that has ever been written. The fact that (c) the term postmodernity found its way into philosophy dictionaries due to the success of Lyotard's work, also gives testimony to the credibility of choosing it as a main source for this study. These examples underline my intention of including credible sources. Conversely, the exclusion of other sources was based on two overarching assumptions, namely: (a) the included sources were deemed to be sufficient for the achievement of the established goals of the study and (b) it was more profitable to investigate fewer standard sources in depth than to investigate too many sources superficially. Nevertheless, as remarked in my overview of the body of scholarship, other sources were inspirational to me and served as background knowledge, although they were not explicitly named in the text.

[11] In line with the previous footnote, I assumed that by drawing on basic philosophical (i.e. primary) sources, it is possible to point to self-contradictions (by means of immanent criticism) of particular viewpoints and thereby clarify the issues at stake. An example of how to use immanent criticism was presented in the first section of this introduction, whereby it was pointed out that Lyotard's postmodern critique has been misused in order to oppose theoretically the credibility of religious discourse, although Lyotard himself affirmed the opposite; namely that (i.e. theoretical) scientific knowledge is grounded in (i.e. pre-theoretical, mythical) narrative knowledge.

[12] Drawing on the presented distinctions regarding narrative and scientific knowledge and reaffirming the primacy of faith (i.e. worldview) over reason, the reader should notice that the envisioned

nature of religion (i.e. as the aspiration to re-connect wholeheartedly with the absolute) in contrast to the time-bound nature of theoretical frameworks. Besides highlighting the deeply personal nature of true self-knowledge and religion, the latter also served as backdrop for providing normative accounts on how authentic forms of human existence can shape human education, which may profit from a deeply religious attitude of the human self in its quest for meaning and purpose in the world. With this in mind, analyses of imaginary situations have been presented through suggested narrative exercises, exploring how situations of educational praxis might respond to the suggested concepts and distinctions. In view of the need for enhancing imaginative knowledge, as a way of becoming aware of one's concrete possibilities, basic types of possible narratives were also introduced and illustrated in terms of works of popular art (e.g. movies, TV shows, music, etc.[13]).

1.8 Researcher's role[14]

As a Christian, it was my intention to take a stance that is transparent with regard to my own presuppositions, and to elaborate an approach that promotes authentic dialogue with others. My intent was captured by the previously mentioned quote: '…getting everyone's presuppositions on the table and then narrating the story of the Christian faith, allowing others to see the way in which it makes sense of our experience and our world' (Smith, 2006:46). I have lived on four different continents, and since my childhood in Brazil I have been in touch with people from different religious and social backgrounds. Since I moved to Europe as an adolescent, I have been actively interested in different religious streams, groups and intellectuals. As a young adult I became a Christian and pursued studies in theology, and I have been engaging sympathetically with reformed and patristic theology and reformational philosophy ever since (approximately ten years ago).

As an active member of intellectual groups related to the traditions mentioned above, although still sharing numerous basic convictions, I have, nonetheless, come to distance myself from the predominantly negative attitude of reformational philosophers towards diverging philosophical streams, thereby adopting a more inclusive and positive view with regard to western philosophy. On the other hand, this development has led me to revive my

'deconstructed theories' are those which still rely on the modern project of absolutization of reason. That said, the rationale provided by Smith as a starting point (including basic insights from reformational philosophy on multi-aspectual facets of the world), offered sufficient angles of entry for a 'deconstruction' of theories, in a positive fashion that sought the integration of important insights.

[13] In my first PhD (completed in Religion Studies at the University of the Free State in Bloemfontein, South Africa), I investigated some of the narratives of popular culture, *inter alia*, in movies and popular music, etc. I was, therefore, aware of basic sources related to popular arts during the pursued research trajectory of this study. For the sake of coherence, it should be noticed that the study only referred to works of popular arts and culture where they served to illustrate specific points, which were firstly laid out as based on primary academic sources.

[14] On an undergraduate level, I specialized in reformed apologetics and its link to reformational philosophy in Germany. Thereafter, I pursued my postgraduate studies at the NWU (Potchefstroom campus).

personal interest in narrative theory. This personal development has been decisive in the process of determining how to proceed and define the goals of this study. Having been convinced anew of the shortcomings of philosophical traditionalism and exclusivism, I identified as one of the main concerns of this thesis to highlight the individual nature of truly actualized self-knowledge (including individual responsibility in education) over uncritical (copy-paste) repetitions based on collectivist attitudes.

After questioning my own history and background, my cultural context as well as philosophical and personal turning points based on various strategies of deepening knowledge, I became convinced that I should be more attentive towards postmodernity as a dominating contemporary *Zeitgeist* and explore its connections to my own, personal confessional (Christian) stance. Besides the fact that I have been actively participating in intellectual communities since a young age, I have been working as a lecturer and researcher for more than ten years. Consequently, in my role as researcher I was obliged to make the best possible use of my history, background, know-how and philosophical training in order to investigate the identified subject themes and to translate won insights into a conceptual framework that might prove valuable for philosophy of education and educational praxis. Finally, it was my responsibility as researcher to do my best to enrich educational praxis and educational experience by providing fresh perspectives and insightful ways of making sense of the world.

As a researcher, I was furthermore, personally responsible for:

- generating and developing theory,

- adhering to all relevant ethical research principles[15] (in as far as such principles might apply to a conceptual study such as this one),

- conducting exhaustive reviews of the available body of scholarship; interpreting, organizing and synthesizing relevant ideas,

- developing guidelines for a confessional and narrative approach towards a truly postmodern advance of philosophy of education.

---

[15] Intellectual property was, for example, treated with great care; plagiarism was avoided by full, detailed reference to all scholarly sources where insights were obtained from. The name of the NWU was not jeopardised at all, generated knowledge was designed to motivate respondents to become more inclusive in their thinking in such a way that it might enrich their understanding of the coherent diversity of human experience and that it might enable them to gain deeper insight into a Christian alternative to philosophy of education in a postmodern age. This mode of knowledge intends to promote human responsibility and freedom without imposing or prescribing; it invites the reader to self-reflection and a deepening of knowledge comprehension (including religious knowledge and knowledge of the world). As such, it is a free invitation to enter into authentic personal dialogue.

I consulted regularly with my supervisor during the course of my studies and especially during the process of theory generation. My findings were discussed with my supervisor before being submitted for peer-evaluation.

As part of this process of peer-evaluation, it needs to be pointed out that at the time of my writing here, one article from this thesis has already been published in a highly acclaimed, internationally accredited and peer-reviewed journal (cf. Braun & Potgieter, 2019a). A second article from this thesis, which has also already been accepted for publication in a top internationally accredited and peer-reviewed journal, is currently in the galley-proof stage of editing and will be published before the end of November 2019 (cf. Braun & Potgieter, 2019b). Two more articles (bringing the tally to a total of four) from this thesis have been submitted to yet another acclaimed, internationally accredited and peer-reviewed journal. Both have since been sent out for peer-review and no further news regarding the status of these two articles is available at this juncture (cf. Braun & Potgieter, 2019c, 2019d).

1.9 Contribution and context of the study

This study forms part of the research that is undertaken in the Edu-HRight Unit in the Research Focus Area of the Faculty of Education Sciences at North-West University (Potchefstroom campus). It was, specifically, conducted in the sub-project, entitled: *Social Justice, Religion and Spiritual Capital*. This research can be seen as a Christian-philosophical initiative to promote a non-relativistic and non-ideological vision for religious education in a postmodern age. Its main contribution is the development of guidelines for a confessional and narrative approach to philosophy of education, which might help promoting the life-enriching insights of a (Christian) religious worldview orientation as well as advancing the implementation of postmodern sensibilities in the field of philosophy of education.

Besides contributing to scholarly knowledge in the field of philosophy of education, the guidelines will hopefully prove to be a useful tool in educational praxis as well, assisting teacher-educators and educands to actualize knowledge in the context of educational experience. This research emerged in the post-Apartheid era and it will help to promote a unifying vision that is profitable for teacher-educators and educands, by sympathetically embracing postmodernity while elaborating a prescriptive framework which is inspired by sources of western philosophy.

1.10 Ethical considerations

Since this study will mainly work with exhaustive reviews of the available body of scholarship, and since it will be based on theory analysis and development, it has been

classified in terms of ethical considerations as an example of 'no risk' research[16] by the relevant Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Education at North-West University.

1.11 Overview of body of scholarship

As a result of opting for a prescriptive framework in the study of postmodernity and its implications for a (Christian) confessional approach to philosophy of education, I have been compelled to generate my theorisation with respect to the selected body of scholarship by means of a trajectory that sought (personal) dialogues with selected insights of western philosophers, in contrast to predominantly analytical or critical attitudes (cf. Burbules & Raybeck, 2002). Accordingly, Lyotard's definition of the postmodern as incredulity towards meta-narratives (Lyotard, 1984:xxiv) was chosen as the starting point for the proposed study, for besides its prominence in western philosophy, its influence has also become evident in South African philosophy of education. The latter claim can be substantiated, for instance, by referring to the work of philosopher of education, Phillip Higgs, and his articulation of a re-vision of (South African) philosophy of education in a post-Apartheid era, based on the postmodern philosophical discourse (Higgs, 1998).

On the other hand, while Higgs suggests a postmodern discourse that excludes God (Higgs, 1998:3), Christian philosopher James K.A. Smith postulated that instead of abolishing the relevance of religious narratives, Lyotard's critique of meta-narratives reaffirms the primacy of narrative knowledge over scientific knowledge (Smith, 2006:43), which implies, amongst others, that postmodernity made room for religious discourse. Applying this insight to the South African (post-Apartheid) context has therefore led to the need for clarifying the relationship between religion and ideology. In order to reframe the importance of religion in a postmodern context and to integrate Higgs' legitimate claim that the postmodern discourse might help to liberate philosophy of education from ideological hegemony, D.F.M Strauss' multi-aspectual perspective on the biblical narrative of Being Human was consequently introduced (Strauss, 1998:18-21) in chapter 4, providing substantiating arguments towards the goal of elaborating a postmodern foundation of philosophy of education for a post-Apartheid era in South Africa. In this sense the term 'postmodern' refers to the rejection of the modern project '*that sought universal human emancipation through the light of universal human reason, deployed through the powers of modern technology, science and democracy*' (Vanhoozer, 2003:8).

After indicating that postmodernism intensifies the tension between a scientific (i.e. modern) worldview and an ancient-postmodern, mythic worldview (Smith, 2006:40), thereby giving primacy to narrative knowledge, Smith states that this should motivate Christians to take a

---

[16] Refer to Addendum A for all relevant details.

confessional stance and to engage in authentic dialogue with other worldviews by narrating the story of the Christian faith (Smith 2006, 2009, 2013). Accordingly, this study built on this presupposition as the justification for a confessional (Christian) approach to philosophy of education, appealing to (narrative) faith instead of (scientific) reason. Consequently, and in line with the chosen prescriptive framework, the intended confessional approach has drawn on Christian sensibilities as a deeply personal way of making sense of the world. This procedure included insights from Ricœur's (Ricœur, 1984, 1988) and Frye's (Frye, 1957) narrative theories and throughout this study it has been extensively elaborated how the human self can be actualized by means of imaginatively participating in narratives. By drawing on the appropriation of narrative theory, this research also engaged popular arts (e.g. music, TV shows, movies, etc.) and suggested narrative exercises as means of illustrating how to apply the proposed confessional narrative approach in order to enrich educational praxis, as well as the educational experience of teacher-educators and educands.

In conclusion, I am aware that my selection of specific starting points and my selective use of sources resulted in a limited perspective which reflects my own, personal human condition. The suggestion is therefore made that the following approach should remain open towards postmodernity and future adjustments while distancing itself from modern attempts of arriving at definite (timeless) answers (Vanhoozer, 2003:8). Although this study was selective with regard to its explicitly quoted sources, it was nonetheless my intention to continue seeking authentic dialogue with western philosophers and their relevant insights regarding postmodernity, (i.e. as background knowledge), such as Kierkegaard's (1846) critique of modern society and its annihilation of the individual, Nietzsche's (1967) account on the Apollonian root of Western (modern) rationalism and his messianic account of Dionysian art; Heidegger's (1962) account on the West's oblivion of being in a scientific-technological age; Derrida's (1974) claim that there is nothing outside the text (i.e. everything is interpretation), Habermas' (1987) critique of postmodern philosophy and its inclinations towards performative contradictions, etc. These are merely some examples of inspirational sources which served as background knowledge to this study.

Finally, in order to fulfil the goal of developing guidelines for a confessional and narrative approach towards a truly postmodern advance of philosophy of education, it should be highlighted once again that this research was oriented towards the translation of insights into educational praxis. This (directional) orientation led to the development of narrative reading strategies and the suggestion of narrative exercises to be implemented by teacher-educators.

1.12 The organization[17] of the thesis

Chapter 1:   Introduction

Chapter 2:   A confessional and narrative vision for philosophy of education: justification and basic presuppositions of a postmodern approach

Chapter 3:   The worldview of the pilgrim and the foundation of a confessional and narrative philosophy of education – how to re-enchant the classroom spiritually through (confessed) faith and narrative

Chapter 4:   Confessional and narrative perspectives on Being Human - Philosophy of education in a post-Apartheid (postmodern) age in the tension between maximal and minimal reconciliation

Chapter 5:   Complementing the foundations of a (Christian) confessional and narrative approach to philosophy of education: applying Frye's narrative typology of fictional modes to life-related narratives of everyday experience and postmodernism

Chapter 6:   Guidelines for a narrative and confessional educational praxis – how to re-enchant the classroom spiritually through (confessed) faith and narrative

Chapter 7:   Conclusions and future work from: 'A confessional postmodern approach to philosophy of education: towards narrative possibilities for educational praxis'

---

[17] The make-up of the upcoming chapters can be understood as flowing from the design structure outlined in this introduction. I named (a) selected sources and (b) defined key terms within the text and integrated these within a meaningful context of relationships and standard sources.

Chapter 2: A confessional and narrative vision for philosophy of education: justification and basic presuppositions of a postmodern approach

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I attempt to justify and present the basic presuppositions of a (Christian) confessional and narrative vision for philosophy of education in a postmodern context. I argue that while postmodernity's incredulity towards the meta-narrative seems to challenge both the viability of religious and scientific discourse, it also re-opens the world towards its pre-rational foundations by means of the rediscovery of the primacy of narrative. In a postmodern age, any philosophy of education implies a basic understanding of, at least, the (historical) present and the past in order to establish its place in the scholarly community of educators and educationists. I therefore discern between two different versions of postmodernity and then proceed to explore what constitutes the postmodern narrative identity. As the rise of postmodernity is intrinsically linked both to modernity and to the pre-modern Christian vision of the world, I explore the justification of a (Christian) confessional and narrative vision for philosophy of education in this chapter by means of three fundamental questions. By elaborating on a postmodern Christian vision and by attempting to answer these questions in a narrative manner, I propose that a confessional and narrative vision for philosophy of education may be justified for the contemporary age. Towards this end, I deepen the postmodern rediscovery of narrative further by exploring the work of narrative (i.e. as a means by which our pre-understanding is re-configured through the narrative [configuration] plot). This is followed by a (confessional) reformational account of the nature and scope of philosophy of education (including worldview, pedagogy, didactics, formation, semiotics and many aspects of reality). Finally, I present, narratively, some of the central tenets of the Christian faith, which are presupposed by a (Christian) confessional and narrative vision for philosophy of education.

2.2 Background

In contrast to modernism, postmodernism starts from the assumption that grand utopias and master narratives[18] are either impossible or not viable. What seems to be in the process of unfolding as a result of the advent of the postmodern *Zeitgeist* is that the propensity to adopt

---

[18] In the available scholarly literature, the terms 'grand narratives', 'master narratives' and 'meta-narratives' are often used interchangeably. In this chapter, I try to use the term 'master narrative' as often as possible, for the sake of semantic consistency.

and support the master narratives (which effectively determine and predispose an individual's value system from above) is either disappearing, or has already disappeared (Potgieter & Van der Walt, 2015:240). Postmodernity has therefore become known as incredulity towards 'meta-narratives', as Lyotard (1984:xxiv) chooses to refer to grand utopias and master narratives.

It remains a moot point, however, whether postmodernity can indeed afford to escape master narratives. Prior to postmodernity, when religious master narratives started losing their credibility, the modern world began re-telling timeworn grand narratives about history, evolution, scientific progress, emancipation through reason and techno-science, etc., in a rational manner. In the postmodern age, the credibility of these master narratives is, however, increasingly being questioned. While postmodernity seems to have deprived the master narratives of the past of their power to prescribe to people (their adherents) what they should be ascribing or attaching value to, it has caused the resultant value-gap to be filled in by the values that individuals could obtain for themselves by 'shopping around' in the ever-expanding 'value supermarket' (Potgieter & Van der Walt, 2015:238).

What postmodernism has brought about is that we now recognise the fact that we have to deal with a melange of value systems, and since modernity eclipsed God's narrative, the world has been left with no legitimating authority. As a result, the individual's own, personal life- and world-view became merely one among many (Loughlin, 1996:30-31). One should recognise that such suspicion about modernity's master narratives implies the recognition that everyone has a worldview as well as the right to it (Smith, 2006:43). We also need, however, to consider the implication that by rejecting the modern project of emancipating human beings through the light of universal reason (Vanhoozer, 2003:8), postmodernity, in fact, re-opens the 'world' towards its pre-rational foundations.

2.3 Two postmodernities

Among those who follow the postulate of postmodernity as incredulity towards master narratives, there are those who believe that each individual has now become his/her own source of legitimacy as an autonomous agent who, alone, should be allowed to tell his/her own narratives. There are, however, still those who, against the background of postmodernity, continue to narrate God's narrative (Loughlin, 1996:33).

This chapter draws on the latter option although I take a few deliberate detours along the way before arriving at my intended goal of presenting a confessional and narrative vision for, specifically, the field of philosophy of education. The very attempt at developing a postmodern and (confessional) Christian narrative vision for the field of philosophy of education implies that the trajectory to be pursued should be one of narrative coherence.

This implies that the intended design should be primarily devoted to preserving the narrative flow of the elaborations (which should not be overshadowed by critical tendencies). Although nothing impedes critical stances to appear in the course of the elaborations, such elaborations should be embedded in the proposed (narrative) framework itself, if it is to be justified as such, so that a confessional and narrative vision for the field of philosophy of education can unfold naturally (i.e. according to its own character).

Master narratives are essentially all-comprehensive. While the Christian story of creation, fall and redemption places human beings within the drama of God's created, fallen and redeemed world, modernity presents transformed stories: '*Marxism places us within the unfolding dialectic of history; Darwinism writes us into the epic of evolution; Freud locates us in the theatre of the psyche*' (Loughlin, 1996:8). On the other hand, it would seem that postmodernity cannot escape the master narratives, for by telling our own little, individual stories among the ruins of former master narratives, we, as well as the stories that we tell, still presuppose an understanding of everything prior to it in order to establish its place in the world (Lyotard, 1992:40-41).

For some proponents of postmodernity, our master narratives are told against the Void and ultimately lead to nothing: there is only nothing (Jameson, 1991:44). In contrast to this claim, in the Christian view there is nothing beyond God's story. Milbank makes the distinction between malign and benign postmodernism. While the former is nihilistic and condemns us to endless violence, the latter (Christian) '*imagines the possibility of harmonious difference and peace as the inner dynamic of the triune God. The Church imagines people remaining in their many different cities, languages and cultures, yet still belonging to one eternal city ruled by Christ, in whom all humanity is fulfilled*' (Milbank, 1990:227). Loughlin (1996:21-22) suggests, therefore, that the nihilistic kind of postmodernity, which sets the world against the Void, still remains rooted in the modern narrative of emancipation from the divine. As he puts it elsewhere: '*They still believe in the story of human emancipation humanly achieved, and because they understand the narrative as one of emancipation rather than of formation, they conceive its conclusion only negatively, as freedom from rather than freedom for*' (Loughlin, 1996:25). That said, Loughlin (1996:25) proposes the possibility of a true Christian postmodernism directed towards the future, as a story about the possibility of human formation for harmonious union with God. (This has a direct implication for the field of philosophy of education, because of the central place attributed to educative duties and obligations, as well as to the responsibility of and for formation in education. I return to this point later.)

2.4 Postmodernity's narrative identity

Important issues regarding modernity's aftermath emerge when the tension between nihilistic and Christian responses to postmodernism is acknowledged. By taking into account that the former is still inclined to the modern narrative of autonomous human emancipation from the divine (Loughlin, 1996:21-22), albeit with due recognition that everyone has (and is entitled to) a worldview (Smith, 2006:43), one might convincingly suggest that the postmodern (nihilistic) suspicion against Christianity signifies more than a mere intellectual rejection of its possibility; it seems to be a matter of *narrative identity*. Keeping in mind that the postmodern identity encompasses an understanding of everything prior to it in order to situate itself in the world (Lyotard, 1992: 40-41), it would seem almost inevitable that one should take a closer look at the modern imaginary and its effects on the conditions of belief if one is willing to articulate a postmodern vision which restates the value of a contemporary Christian (i.e. narrative and confessional) philosophy of education.

Such a closer look begs at least the following three fundamental questions, namely:

1. What is it that constitutes the postmodern narrative identity?

2. What impedes some contemporary postmodernists from embracing the Christian faith?

3. How can a deeper understanding of the contemporary life-world in light of modernity and postmodernity be elucidated in terms of narrative identity?

By drawing on Charles Taylor's (2007) *A secular age*, I will attempt to demonstrate that: (a) the postmodern suspicion against Christianity is not only rooted in modern master narratives which should be overcome, and (b) that a (nihilistic) version of postmodernity that antagonizes Christianity (i.e. as a pre-modern and auto-legitimizing ancient tradition) ultimately fails in fulfilling its potential to become post-secular and to overcome the secular illusion of religious neutrality. This again, is of central importance to the field of philosophy of education, for '*there is no neutral, non-formative education; in short, there is no such thing as a secular education*' (Smith, 2009:26)*.

2.5 Modern secularism and the postmodern suspicion against religion

The connection between modernity and postmodernity in the contemporary lifeworld can be a surprising one. A careful reading of Taylor's work provides useful clues for a better understanding of the postmodern identity within a (secular) modern social framework. One can easily suspect that the so-called postmodern incredulity towards master narratives is intrinsically incompatible with the contemporary societal order, which is based on the

(secular) modern ideal of an immanent moral order and homogeneity. The inner tension is inevitable. Although Taylor's work only addresses postmodernity in passing, it does imply that the rise of a multiplicity of faiths in postmodernity (little/micro narratives), which he coins as *the Nova effect*, and, what he refers to as their mutual 'fragilization' in society, are linked to the crisis of modern identity, which is intensified in postmodernity (Taylor, 2007:316-317).

Taylor describes the effects of the 'Nova' as a consequence of the modern cosmic imaginary. This phenomenon is important to understand as it affects the postmodern lifeworld and identity, uncovering the fact that the root of religious instability and uncertainty haunting postmodernity is to be found in modern background assumptions:

> *Thus the salient feature of the modern cosmic imaginary is not that it has fostered materialism, or enabled people to recover a spiritual outlook beyond materialism, to return as it were to religion, though it has done both these things. But the most important fact about it which is relevant to our enquiry here is that it has opened a space in which people can wander between and around all these options without having to land clearly and definitively in any one. In the wars between belief and unbelief, this can be seen as a kind of no-man's-land; except that it has got wide enough to take on the character rather of a neutral zone, where one can escape the war altogether. Indeed, this is part of the reason why the war is constantly running out of steam in modern civilization, in spite of the efforts of zealous minorities* (Taylor, 2007:364).

Nihilistic postmodernity is thus heir to modernity's autonomous subjectivity and cosmic imaginary. It is interesting that Taylor (2007:318) also suggests that the rising multiplicity of faiths as well as new forms of unbelief are not only deeply rooted in modern assumptions (i.e. autonomous reason), but also in historical objections against Christianity. Related to people's narrative identity, there is thus a clear, recognisable interplay between modern (theoretical) rationality and (pre-theoretical) background assumptions.

2.6 Postmodern narrative identity and accusations against Christianity

Taylor identifies a couple of modern accusations against Christianity which remain vivid in postmodern criticisms of it (Christianity). By naming some of them, the intention is to emphasize that *narrative identity* is something that nihilistic postmodernists cannot escape and that master narratives always play a decisive role due to the historicity of human existence. Moreover, Christian postmodernists also cannot ignore these issues. Instead, a Christian (postmodern) orientation towards the future must responsibly engage with the past if it is to provide a reasonable way to re-imagine the world according to the Christian faith. The main accusations against Christianity include: (a) offense against reason (paradoxes such as the God-man), (b) it is authoritarian (offends freedom and reason/individuality), (c) it poses impossible problems of theodicy (or avoids them proposing to compensate for terrible events in history in a future life), (d) it threatens the order of mutual benefit (mortification of

the self, it inveighs against sexual satisfaction), (e) persecution and condemnation of others, etc. (Taylor, 2007:319).

The reader will notice that the accusations are somehow always based on realities which pertain to human existence in the world as *welt-an-sich*. These realities are handed down to us either by means of personal (narrative) experience or by means of some (traditionally interpreted) version of historical narratives. As this is the case, instead of rushing to a defence of a specific position, one should rather keep the constitutive role of the *human response* to those realities in mind, as it is decisive for the development of one's *narrative identity*. In order to create a harmonious world for themselves to abide in, human beings have no choice but to assume an underlying purpose to life and to situate themselves in their world together with, and as a consequence of, their life-related narratives. In other words, human beings must unavoidably follow some sort of master narrative which offers and provides meaning to life in general and also to their own lives, in particular.

Although this is not enough to make a case for Christianity *per se*, it would seem to suggest the possibility of offering a pre-theoretical narrative that could re-describe the world (the tenets of which I describe below). Since the above-mentioned main accusations can be understood in their relation to the modern, immanent, impersonal and rationally understandable order that aims at securing autonomous freedom (Taylor, 2007:319), it seems logical to ask how postmodernists justify holding on to modern background assumptions while rejecting Christianity as an ancient (pre-modern) possibility. Taylor suggests that one's response to the above-mentioned dilemmas depends mainly on *narrative identity* (in the sense of one's life-related narrative) and belonging to a specific solidarity group. Although he does not use the term *narrative identity* at this point, it is perfectly fitting:

> ...*which way one goes may have a lot to do with pre-existing solidarity groups? If one is in a profoundly believing/practising way of life, then this hanging in to trust in God may seem the obvious way, and is made easier by the fact that everyone is with you in this; and the same goes for the rebellion against God* (Taylor, 2007:319).

2.7 Postmodernity and the loss of meaning

Keeping in mind the tension between modernity and Christianity as constitutive of the postmodern identity, one can further consider how the modern scientific eclipse of narratives on God and the transcendent, having attempted to 'disenchant' the world through the utopia of universal rationality, still haunts postmodernity's sense of being-in-the-world. Modern master narratives have left us with what Taylor refers to as the *malaise of immanence*, whereby people are forced to live with a fragility of meaning and uncertain answers. This

fragility ultimately affects the significance of everything, leading to a loss of meaning and a sense of emptiness in the everyday, which cannot be satisfied by the rituals of a consumerist society. Often, all that remains of *higher significance* are important turning points in one's life-related narrative; moments such as birth, marriage and death which, in most cases, are still 'solemnized' through church rituals (Taylor, 2007:321-322). This is relevant, especially if one is to recognize Christianity as a constitutive part of the postmodern narrative identity, even if the sense of its presence inspires its rejection instead of considering it as being a viable life option.

Furthermore, if there is credibility in the statement that the postmodern situation cannot be contemplated without considering its traditional context of origin, then it does not seem to make any sense to idealize it as if Christianity (or modernity) did not play a role in it. In fact, the very symbolic network and root of both modernity and postmodernity cannot be understood apart from Christianity. Not only is the root of the postmodern narrative identity historical, but it also evolved with a specific symbolic network and a traditional context that can also be demonstrated as being related to Christianity (Ricœur, 1984:74). Such context consists of the interplay between *innovation* and *sedimentation* (Ricœur, 1984:68). This means that narrative identity encompasses deviating as well as reaffirming tendencies, although it cannot escape tradition. Christianity might, therefore, be considered as a source of insight and of narrative possibilities in order to respond to postmodern dilemmas, such as the five that were mentioned above.

2.8 Postmodernity and the ideal of authenticity

Another hindrance that seems to prevent postmodernists from opening themselves to Christianity as a possible (pre-modern) life-option is based on the modern notion of religion as an enemy of authenticity. This assumption has provided credibility to the secularization narrative, leading to a growth of autonomous freedom and to the decline of religion (Taylor, 2007:543). I am not convinced that this is how it should necessarily be. In light of the postmodern suspicion against master narratives and modern rationality, postmodernity has not only reaffirmed the primacy of narrative knowledge (Smith, 2006:43), but it has also established the fact that everyone has a worldview, as well as the right to it (Smith, 2006:46). One can therefore suggest that being postmodern should lead to post-secularism, and that by narrating and enacting the Christian narrative in a postmodern context, one might find authentic ways of being-in-the-world with an orientation that is directed towards the future without ignoring the past. Such narrative vision implies that one should not rely on the (modern) authority of reason, but rather imagine the world according to a spiritual vision and act upon it. Since this enactment can only be performed by responsible individuals with their own unique life-related narratives, there is no reason to fear a lack of authenticity in religion,

per se: the fact that we draw on given possibilities from a specific symbolic context does not hinder us from responding to life in a deeply personal fashion.

The main goal of the trajectory pursued so far was to indicate some of the tensions and problem fields within which (philosophical) postmodernity is entangled. Within this context, Lyotard's (1984:23) definition of postmodernity as incredulity towards the meta-narrative suggests more than a mere rejection of the latter. While all postmodernists aim at rejecting the modern ideal of universal reason, recognizing that everyone has a pre-rational worldview, modern ideals of autonomy and human emancipation from the divine, nevertheless remain vivid in some postmodern streams of thought. It is therefore important to point out that there are two competing versions of postmodernity that are being proclaimed; a nihilistic and a Christian one. The fact that postmodern identity is constituted by a symbolic network derived from both Christianity and modernity (presupposing the interplay with Greek and Roman legacies previously assimilated and continuously revived in western culture) is, unfortunately, often ignored. This is why I indicated how common objections against Christianity in our postmodern age are partially related to modern (rationalist) assumptions and partially to the historically perceived impact of Christianity upon the social imaginary, culture and personal (narrative) identity.

Postmodernity can therefore be understood as existing within a tension-field between the leftovers of (pre-modern) Christian culture on the one hand, and the modern imaginary of autonomous freedom, reason and immanent cosmic order on the other. A positive effect of this development, one could argue, can be seen in the ideal of authenticity, which is affirmed by both Christian as well as nihilistic postmodernists. In line with this partial ideological agreement, it can be argued that authentic dialogue has become possible due to postmodernity's rediscovery of (the) narrative. I regard this as a central premise for the unfolding of a (Christian) confessional and narrative vision for, specifically, philosophy of education. By no means does this imply the obliteration of different worldviews; it seems, instead, to reinforce the notion that postmodern streams of thought ought to confess their presuppositions openly. By narrating their ways of re-imagining and making sense of the world, postmodernists move towards a post-secular age where the modern ideal of neutrality in worldview (religion) is bluntly rejected. This should lead to a fundamental re-appraisal of religious discourse in the public sphere.

After reaffirming the primacy of narrative I will now explore the primacy of narrative knowledge in more detail. Educationally speaking, we should be asking: How does narrative relate to the way we configure our lives in the world? In other words, what does narrative have to do with our temporal experience and what are the pedagogical implications for a

contemporary (and future) philosophy of education? Following the postmodern emphasis that we are responsible for (creatively) shaping our own life stories, it makes sense to have a closer look at the work of narrative. For this purpose, Paul Ricœur's 'Time and Narrative' will provide us with basic distinctions and insights. I argue that this detour is important for the clarification of further presuppositions of the envisioned (Christian) confessional and narrative vision for philosophy of education, which unfolds towards the end of this chapter.

2.9 How narrative works

Narrative is the work of the productive imagination and it brings forth a synthesis, a plot, which 'grasps' together (direct translation of Ricœur's original text) scattered events, goals, chances and causes into the whole of a complete story. The plot is a mimesis of action, which encompasses three senses: (a) the pre-understanding (pre-figuration) of the order of action, (b) poetic composition (configuration) and the (c) re-figuration of the pre-understood order of action (Ricœur, 1984:ix-x).

The combinatory rationality of narrative gives rise to schematization, thereby configuring and transfiguring the (practical) field of action and encompassing acting and suffering characters who function within the plot both as agents and victims (Ricœur, 1984: xi). Here, one notices how the work of narrative is suitable for (our) human efforts to re-describe the world poetically. There is a power pertaining to narrative due to the (traditionally codified) schematization and imitation of human action as human possibilities, which can be internally experienced and re-lived by its readers/hearers.

As poetic composition, the narrative plot '*is grounded in a pre-understanding of the world of action, its meaningful structures, its symbolic resources and its temporal character*' (Ricœur, 1984:54). These distinctions are of paramount importance when elaborating on a postmodern and confessional narrative approach, for (a) one's pre-understanding of the world of action presupposes a familiar conceptual network in order to be intelligible, (b) narrative discourse implies meaningful structures that are embedded in pre-understood rules of composition which govern the story, (c) narrated human actions are symbolically mediated and therefore presuppose a traditional context of signs, rules and norms, and finally, (d) narrative's mimetic activity and work of configuration presupposes the temporal structures of human experience, which can be characterized as the dialectic interplay of discordance and concordance. The latter interplay is central to any narrative (fictional, personal or historical), and as a temporal feature, it offers testimony to the pre-narrative structure of human experience (Ricœur, 1984:54-60).

While (a) – (c) reaffirm the previously stated postmodern claim that everyone has a worldview as well as the right to it, calling on nihilistic postmodernism to recognize the

inevitability of one's (religiously rooted) traditional symbolic network, the last distinction (d) indicates the power and suitability of a narrative philosophical approach for our age. Subsequently it can be suggested that the power of narrative lies not only in its capacity to imitate the dramatic nature of human existence in its interplay between discordance and concordance, but most importantly in its ability to project a world, or 're-imagine the world', through a specific (creative) configuration which transforms our pre-understanding of the world by means of a re-figuration of our temporal experience. In fact, the latter transforming power of narrative is precisely what Ricœur (1988:157-179) suggests towards the end in the chapter that deals with the world of the text and the world of the reader of the last volume of his master work entitled *'Time and Narrative'*. Nevertheless, the insights from Ricœur, which I have presented, provide a satisfactory and workable theoretical and conceptual bridge between the work of narrative, the previous sections, as well as the section that is to follow. I will now focus on the transposition of these gained insights into a philosophy of education, and on my proposal of a (Christian) confessional, postmodern and narrative vision for philosophy of education.

2.10 Basic presuppositions of a confessional philosophy of education[19]

Before proceeding with the intended transposition of insights into philosophy of education, it makes sense to indicate some of the limits of science according to postmodern insights. In light of the fact that science is a theoretical enterprise which builds on a person's pre-theoretical assumptions (i.e. worldview), it is important to address the issues at stake in terms of the pre-scientific human lifeworld as well. In other words, an account of philosophy of education can only be truly postmodern and overcome modern (rationalist) assumptions by rejecting the modern-scientific ideal which subordinates reality to theoretical constructions. This by no means implies an irrational move, but rather emphasizes that when the primacy of narrative knowledge is acknowledged, the true existential value of reason is regained in that it leads human beings to embody their (narrative) vision, to commit themselves to different practices and to the formative acquisition of habits and dispositions (Smith, 2013:10). In this way, reason is dethroned from its absolutization and scientific endeavours become a reasonable enterprise through which human beings seek a (theoretical) deepening of (pre-theoretical) everyday experience in the world.

All this nevertheless begs the question why we need to deal with such foundational issues at such a late stage of this particular chapter. It seems the main reason has to do with narrative

---

[19] The following sub-paragraphs, especially from §2.10 to §2.13, are heavily inspired by the non-reductionist ontology that was first developed by reformational philosophers. For those readers who might be interested in this line of scholarly thought, I strongly recommend that they start with an exploration of the reformational philosophical tradition (please refer to my bibliography at the end of this thesis for appropriate and relevant literature in thi regard).

design. It would appear to be more profitable to start off by presenting the postmodern (philosophical) context in terms of some of its most intricate fields of tension. This is important in order to establish important connections between postmodernity, modernity, narrative identity and the Christian worldview. Having then indicated the promising role of narrative in a postmodern world due to its power to re-configure our temporal experience so that we can re-imagine the world according to a spiritual vision, we have finally reached the point where the scope of philosophy of education can be delineated without (modern scientific) rationalistic extrapolations. The following approximation to philosophy of education presupposes the primacy of the biblical narrative and is inspired by two texts from the collected works of the (Christian) reformed philosopher H.G. Stoker: 'Prinsipiële Grondslae van 'n Christelike Pedagogiek'[20] (Stoker, 2007a) and 'Calvinistiese Didaktiek (Onderrigkunde) en Vakdidaktiek'[21] (Stoker, 2007b).

2.11 Education versus pedagogy

All human societies, past and present, have had a vested interest in education, because education equips individuals with the skills and substantive knowledge that allow them to define and to pursue their own goals, and also allows them to participate in the life within their community as fully-fledged, responsible citizens (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2016). As such, education is a conscious, purposive intervention by an adult in the life of a non-adult to bring him to independent, responsible action. It implies the positive influencing of a non-adult by an adult, with the specific purpose of effecting changes of significant value. It is therefore a purposive act, designed to guide the child's humanization on a determined course, with an educand co-operating in full acceptance of his mentor's guidance. In order to accomplish this, the educator/pedagogue needs pedagogy as an educative occurrence (not 'process'). Pedagogy is a dynamic occurrence (mainly in the form of teaching and learning) which takes a particular course, because the educator (adult) and the educand (child) are actively engaged in characteristic activities which are known as pedagogic activities. All pedagogic acts are essentially goal-directed i.e. the ultimate adulthood of the child.

2.12 Confessional pedagogy

Every pedagogy presupposes not only the teacher or parent's (pre-theoretical) worldview, but also that of the educand; it involves teacher-educators and educands as human beings; human beings and their community; human beings and their lifeworld; human beings and the cosmos; the cosmos and God; God and cosmos; creation, fall and redemption; the creation order; the human order of norms; human calling and freedom, etc. (Stoker, 2007a:4).

---

[20] Foundations of a Christian Pedagogics
[21] Calvinist Didactics and Teaching Science (i.e. didactics)

These basic relationships can be specified further and understood in terms of education's embeddedness in the world:

Education involves educands and teacher-educators. Moreover, the occurrence of education, per se, implies the acts of teaching and learning in which both educands and teacher-educators participate. It aims at the care for basic needs (food, clothing and housing) and the formation of character, (will, mind, heart, emotions,) etc. It deals with the relationship between human beings and community and therefore also relates to family, nation, state, church, school, workplace, etc. Moreover, there are different types of education (and therefore also different kinds of pedagogic occurrences and activities) in different areas and for different purposes (religious, moral, jural, economic, lingual, logical, psychic, biotic, arithmetic, kinetic, etc.) (Stoker, 2007a:4).

This diversity of possible areas of (and for) educative and pedagogic encounter, refers to the aspects of reality, which together constitute the temporal horizon of human experience. The acknowledgement of the aspects of reality is central to a Christian vision for philosophy of education, for besides accounting for the radical diversity and coherence of human experience, they provide valuable insights for didactics (i.e. science of teaching). For Stoker, teaching (didactics) is the central means of education (Afrikaans: 'hoofweg van die opvoeding'). It has two sides: the disclosure of knowledge and the explanation of meaning. It leads to the acquisition of understanding, the acquisition of the ability of appreciation and the acquisition of skills which enable one's responsible action (Stoker, 2007b:1-2).

2.13 Confessional didactics and philosophy of education

In light of the twofold task of didactics (i.e. disclosure of knowledge and explanation of meaning), a confessional (Christian) and narrative perspective on philosophy of education emphasizes that the religious (pre-theoretical) commitment to the biblical narrative leads to the appreciation of the rich diversity and coherence of reality with all its aspects as ultimately dependent on the creation order as it is established and sustained by God. According to this understanding, the modern scientific absolutization of reason represents a reductionist vision of reality, which presupposes a (pre-scientific) religious commitment to the scientific ideal - a theoretical extrapolation which is easily overseen. On the other hand, by acknowledging the primacy of narrative knowledge, a confessional (Christian) and narrative vision for philosophy of education can be truly inclusive, integrative and postmodern while having (and acknowledging) its ancient roots.

2.14 Narrating the Christian life and worldview to philosophy of education

In the last section of this chapter I intend to narrate some of the central tenets of the Christian vision as a dramatic narrative about the possibility of human formation in

harmonious union with God (Loughlin, 1996:25). For this purpose, Kevin Vanhoozer's (2005) 'The Drama of Doctrine: A Canonical-Linguistic Approach to Christian Theology' will be taken as my primary point of reference.

Vanhoozer's work owes a lot to Ricœur's philosophical approach to narrative. His doctoral thesis is entitled 'Biblical Narrative in the Philosophy of Paul Ricœur: A study in Hermeneutics and Theology' (Vanhoozer, 1990). Vanhoozer's Drama of Doctrine is part of his mature work and, as such, it fits well into this last section of this chapter because it helps to translate some of the central biblical themes into a narrative (Christian) approach that corresponds with the proposed postmodern and confessional perspective on philosophy of education.

Christianity understands the story of the Church as the continuation of the story of Jesus in the lives of His followers. The story of Jesus is interwoven with many other life stories, which altogether represent, ultimately and on a symbolic level, the story of humanity (Vanhoozer, 2005:82-83). Vanhoozer (2005:78) calls the Gospel (i.e. the good news of Christianity) the theo-drama of redemption, which is God's communicative action in Jesus Christ and provides a narrative script for individuals (and the Church) so that they can actively participate in God's drama and perform their roles accordingly. Narratively speaking, the Gospel narrative enables individuals to re-imagine the world as a place of harmonious difference and peace in union with the triune God (Milbank, 1990:227) and to re-configure their lives according to God's vision for the Church, which symbolically represents the new (i.e. re-created) humanity in Jesus Christ.

According to a narrative vision, the Bible enables one to understand God's communicative action in the past, present and future and to become a part of God's drama of redemption (Vanhoozer, 2005:124; 97, 177, 279). The Bible testifies to the centrality of Jesus Christ as the one in whom our lives are ultimately reconciled with God, the world and ourselves by means of a (pre-theoretical) narrative that immerses us into a life of fellowship with God. Consequently, human life is seen as a 'divine-human interactive theater' which involves God's word to us and our grateful response to him (Vanhoozer, 2005:37-38; 46-48, 65-66). Moreover, in a narrative understanding of the Bible, the Holy Spirit is seen as the author of the dramatic script that directs the performance of (Christian) individuals and the Church (Vanhoozer, 2005:102, 179). The Holy Spirit is therefore the one who brings about understanding of the Bible for its readers of today, applying the communicative acts of God to their hearts so that they can embody the Christian vision in their being-in-the-world (Vanhoozer, 2005:226-227).

Such narrative visions of the Bible and the Christian understanding of life fit perfectly into the postmodern approach proposed in this chapter, for they suggest that the Bible can be understood as a covenant document defined by a dialogical love relationship between the triune God and His people throughout the ages. This approach stands in contrast to modern visions that reduce the Bible to a propositional handbook about truth claims and objective realities (Vanhoozer, 2005:5-71, 132, 199, 301). In correspondence to Ricœur's (1984:68) emphasis on the insoluble link and interplay between (traditional) innovation and sedimentation, Vanhoozer suggests that in the theo-drama, the Bible should be viewed as inseparable from tradition. Tradition has historically connected faith and language with the practices of Christians and the Church, thereby preserving the Word of God throughout the ages (Vanhoozer, 2005:155). This is the case because tradition is also based on the work of the Holy Spirit in the communication of the words of Jesus Christ, as well as in the words about Jesus Christ and his life and worldwide community-shaping impact across cultures and generations (Vanhoozer, 2005:191-208).

Although more could be said about Vanhoozer's Drama of Doctrine, the paraphrase provided above suffices in offering the reader with a narrative rationale for a confessional and narrative understanding of the Christian life- and worldview.

2.15 In conclusion: consequences for philosophy of education

This chapter has proposed a narrative vision of Christianity which relates in many ways to philosophy of education in a postmodern age.

I started by emphasizing that the postmodern incredulity towards master narratives has led to the recognition that everyone has a worldview as well as the right to it (Smith, 2006:43). However, the postmodern rejection of modernity's project of autonomous emancipation through universal reason, apart from God's narrative (Vanhoozer, 2003:8), has led to consideration that the postmodern narrative identity is constituted by a tension between the immanent frame derived from modernity (including its rejection of transcendent religion) and the pre-modern Christian vision. Within this context, contemporary suspicions with respect to the Christian faith appeared to be inseparable from the (cultural) symbolic network which is traditionally inseparable from Christianity itself. By recognizing the tension between two opposing visions of postmodernity, namely a nihilistic and a Christian one, it has furthermore been suggested that the postmodern rediscovery of narrative should lead us toward a post-secular age where the modern ideal of neutrality in worldview (religion) is bluntly rejected and the Christian narrative vision can be openly proclaimed in the public sphere (i.e. also as a viable vision for philosophy of education).

In this way, the main goal of this chapter, which was to propose a (postmodern) narrative and confessional vision for philosophy of education, seems to have been justified. In addition to this justification, the narrative rationale that undergirds the proposed approach, has been deepened not only by Ricœur's insights with respect to the work of narrative, but also to Stoker's reformational account on the nature and scope of philosophy of education (including worldview, pedagogy, didactics, formation, semiotics and many aspects of reality). Finally, insights from Vanhoozer's *Drama of Doctrine* were presented in order to translate some of the central tenets of the Christian life- and worldview into the narrative framework that are presupposed by the evolving (Christian) confessional postmodern vision for philosophy of education. On the whole, I believe that this chapter offers historical justifications and basic presuppositions of an evolving Christian vision for philosophy of education, providing a vision upon which I intend to expand in the next chapters by starting with a narrative and existential account on the worldview of the pilgrim as a basic archetype of the human condition.

Chapter 3: The worldview of the pilgrim and the foundation of a confessional and narrative philosophy of education

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter I explore the worldview of the pilgrim and how it relates to the drama of human existence. The worldview of the pilgrim is the starting point in this chapter's explorations of the postmodern conundrum and interrelated subjects such as epistemology, ethics, religious symbolism, hospitality and practical life strategies from a narrative and confessional perspective. These elaborations will serve the ultimate goal of this chapter, which is to contribute to philosophy of education (including educators and educationists) and consequently to equip individuals with skills and substantial knowledge that would allow them to understand, define and pursue their own life-goals as well as to participate with integrity in the life of their community as fully-fledged, responsible citizens.

3.2 Background

In order to explore the worldview of the pilgrim, I will pursue the following trajectory:

Firstly, a distinction will be made between two varieties of postmodernity based on the insights gained from a theological movement called Radical Orthodoxy (please refer to the first footnote below for a brief introduction). Radical Orthodoxy is inspired, *inter alia*, by (pre-modern) patristic theology and by postmodern philosophy, suggesting Christian alternatives to nihilistic dilemmas, while still positively engaging and integrating postmodern sensibilities.

Secondly, a narrative approach will be proposed in terms of the worldview of the pilgrim, as a suitable metaphorical way of conceiving of spirituality and the drama of human existence in a postmodern age where theoretical certainties have been questioned and where they might even have lost (at least) some credibility.

Thirdly, the metaphor of the pilgrim will be used to provide different points of entry to subjects such as epistemology, ethics, religious symbolism, hospitality and practical life strategies. It is hoped that readers might experience this as providing them with helpful signposts along their own journeys into a postmodern world.

3.3 Radical Orthodoxy and two varieties of postmodernity: justifying a Christian narrative approach

Radical Orthodoxy (RO) (cf. Loughlin, 1996), Milbank (1999, 2003, 2013) claims that there are essentially two varieties of postmodernity, namely a nihilistic and a religious[22] one. Milbank intentionally argued in favour of a Christian style of postmodernity. He was of the opinion that it could make use of postmodern insights in order to re-describe the world narratively and to link it up with the symbolic realism of ancient Christianity.

According to RO, religious postmodernism is a postmodernism of unending hope. It imagines the possibility of harmonious difference and peace. This theme is, however, not restricted to Christianity alone. It also runs through the latest work of religious scholars from, *inter alia*, the main Abrahamic religions. They all share the idea that postmodernity's emphasis on narrative could represent an important starting point for reconceptualising the place and role of a religious postmodern approach to any future philosophical account of education. In particular, it is the place and role that narrative and, more specifically, confessional narratives could play as pedagogical devices in religious, as well as in educational contexts that have recently captured the attention of scholars in, for example, Judaism (cf. Haase, 2008; Gerrard, 2012; Tzoref, 2018), Christianity (cf. Atkins, 2016; Beaver, 2017; Nutt, 2017; Price, 2018) and Islam (cf. Andaya, 2006; Khan, 2016).

Based on Loughlin's premise (1996) that the rise of postmodernity is intrinsically linked both to modernity and to the pre-modern Christian visions of the world in particular, I have attempted (cf. Braun & Potgieter, 2019a) to justify and present the basic tenets of specifically a (Christian) confessional and narrative approach to philosophy of education in a postmodern context. I pointed out that postmodernity's incredulity towards meta-narratives re-opened the world towards its pre-rational foundations by means of the rediscovery of the primacy of narrative. I also asserted that any philosophy of education implies a basic understanding of the historical present and the past in order to situate itself in the world (including in the scholarly community of educators and educationists). Consequently, my exploration of the work of narrative has shown that a particularly Christian narrative approach to philosophy of education offers a viable alternative to postmodern nihilism. More specifically, this is the case because postmodern approaches of master narratives are told

---

[22] On the one hand, RO is a theological movement that speaks in the idiom of contemporary continental thought, engaging in theological reflection in the language of French phenomenology and critical theory. On the other hand, it has taken such thought in a polemical sense, seeking to demonstrate the paucity of postmodern nihilism and then to recover an alternative, Christian vision by returning to decidedly pre-modern sources (without wanting simply to recover pre-modernity). RO's critique, therefore, does not aim at addressing all kinds of postmodernism. What RO does, is to confront postmodern nihilism specifically with a Christian alternative. This approach is how I believe these two versions of postmodernity could best be understood.

against the Void and ultimately lead to nothing (Jameson, 1991:44). A Christian approach to narrative on the other hand places human beings and history within the all-comprehensive drama of God's created, fallen and redeemed world (Loughlin, 1996:8).

3.4 A dramatic approach for re-imagining the world

The background provided above suggests that a Christian narrative approach is essentially dramatic. In terms of the work of narrative it can be said that it is the individual's responsibility to bring forth a synthesis, a plot, which brings together scattered events, goals, chances and causes into the whole of a complete story (Ricœur, 1984:ix-x). Narrative is therefore the work of the individual's productive imagination and it builds on a person's pre-theoretical worldview. A narrative approach overcomes modern rationalism by rejecting the subordination of reality to theoretical constructions[23] and suggesting that theoretical frameworks always depend on a pre-theoretical worldview. Consequently, based on Ricœur's work I have affirmed that narrative has the power to re-configure our temporal experience (Ricœur, 1988:265) so that we can re-imagine the world (Ricœur, 1984:181-182) according to a spiritual vision. The Christian life (as the story of the Church) can be narrated as the continuation of the story of Jesus in the life of His followers. As a result, the Gospel narrative(s) enable(s) individuals to re-imagine their lives in the world in union with the triune God (Milbank, 1990:227).

This vision allows individuals to re-configure their lives according to God's vision for the Church[24], which symbolically represents the new humanity in Jesus Christ

3.5 Setting out the narrative landscape of the pilgrim

> *These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims[25] on the earth (Heb 11:13).*

---

[23] One possible way of bringing narrative to the classroom could be for instance through the study of biographies of historical figures in subject matters such as religion, history and ethics as well as imaginative exercises where educands are asked to re-author life histories (including their own) and/or stories where ethical dilemmas present themselves.

[24] It would be interesting to implement narrative exercises in pedagogical activities, e.g. in multicultural and interreligious contexts and discuss how other (i.e. personal and communal) visions are built in terms of their presuppositions, both to enhance one's understanding of other people's worldviews as well as to get a better grip on how life questions and challenges can possibly be practically dealt with according to those viewpoints. This does not mean that narrative would automatically solve all problems of society, but it could be a step towards increasing tolerance, cooperation between people from different backgrounds, as well as mutual acceptance of each other in the formation of a normative consensus and the unification of society. Narrative exercises can help in this process for instance by repositioning the participants in a manner where voices are equally heard, thereby allowing for greater personal empowerment and agency (Stephens, 2014:23).

[25] The use of the concept of the pilgrim implies a metaphorical use and is not a literal translation from the Greek. In terms of the narrative configuration elaborated in this chapter, the concept of the pilgrim brings concepts such as the 'nomad', the 'wanderer', the 'other', the 'stranger' and the 'foreigner' together into the intended archetypal configuration.

For here have we no continuing <u>city</u>, but we seek one to come (Heb 13:14).

3.5.1 The epistemology of the pilgrim

The archetype of the pilgrim is the perfect circumscription, according to the Christian worldview, of the limited human condition with regard to knowledge. Pilgrims have no permanent city on earth and this means, symbolically speaking, that although humans explore and expand their territory, building culture and setting up 'walls' to protect themselves from unexplored threats (i.e. dragons), they are called by God to keep on the move. To keep on the move in terms of knowledge means that one should not expect to find theoretical certainty on earth[26] and that our modes of being and models of interpretation should be constantly transformed before God.

In this chapter I intend to show how the archetype of the pilgrim offers interesting insights for philosophy of education by suggesting relevant modes of acting and orienting oneself in our highly complex world (including strategies of coping with reality) that we still do not really understand. This, in turn, will be linked up with the narrative model of confessional philosophy of education that I have been working on.

3.5.2 The pilgrim, God and postmodernism

While western postmodernists have come to similar insights with regard to human limitations, pointing out the shortcomings of the progress narrative of modernity, the postmodern inclination towards nihilism leads to irremediable relativism and chaos (Loughlin, 1996:21; Milbank, 1990:227-228). In an ultimate sense, postmodern nihilism fosters chaos with no remedy, individual micro-narratives with no definitive purpose, and existential drama without hope but the hope of the subject that is now missing (Habermas, 1987:160). The intellectual conundrum underlying all of this, is how can human beings orient themselves[27] in a nihilistically conceived world? It is practically impossible to live and act consistently based on these presuppositions. Narrative exercises could be used by educators/teachers to explain this to educands, for instance by presenting an ethical dilemma and asking them to imagine how he/she could meaningfully solve it based on the given presuppositions.

One of the main characteristics of postmodernism is its denial of ontic universals and its adherence to the linguistic turn, which lead to an interpretation of reality and the human lifeworld as merely being socially constructed (Strauss, 2009:73). Postmodernism tends toward a self-refutable philosophy of difference on the ground level, for it denies the validity

---

[26] Since those motives are very prominent in narratives of popular culture (e.g. Lord of the Rings, Games of Thrones, and many other 'old world' shows) it should not be difficult for educators to use them as illustration in the classroom.

[27] For instance, if there is no ultimate purpose in life, why should someone carry on with his life after he loses all his loved ones and all his possessions (cf. the biblical story of Job)?

of universal narratives, while at the same time imposing its own narrative. Postmodern philosophy has therefore been facing pertinent criticism due to the performative contradictions that it keeps producing (Habermas, 1987:210). The Christian pilgrim agrees with postmodernists in the sense that one should not think of one's theoretical frameworks as being trustworthy representations of reality *per se*. Instead, one should think of them as mere provisional frameworks that enable human beings to cope with reality.

In order to update constantly his/her modes of being in the world (including models of interpretation), the pilgrim directs his/her being towards God, who symbolically represents the highest possible good, purpose-provider, sustainer and outcome-guarantor of all things. Consequently, s/he avoids postmodernist performative contradictions because, on the one hand, s/he acknowledges that human knowledge and strategies should be constantly updated, while on the other hand, s/he can still rely on the universality of the Christian narrative through participation in the life of God, from whom s/he derives a sense of direction and purpose for his/her being-in-the-world.

3.5.3 The journey of the pilgrim in symbolic terms

The pilgrim can be seen as an individual who mediates between heaven and earth (Pageau, 2018:46); order (culture) and chaos (nature) (Eliade, 1978:60-86; Peterson, 1999:27). This implies that s/he does not have an enduring/permanent city on earth. The main purpose of the city is the creation of culture, which is human beings' fragile attempt at establishing order and to protect it from chaos apart from God (cf. the Tower of Babel). The pilgrim deems this undertaking to represent the utopian dream of attaining heaven on earth. The relationship between culture (order), nature (chaos) and the individual's journey is what primordially constitutes human existence, aptly captured in the widespread Xinyang symbol (Jung, 1976:375) and conceptualized in the Christian ground motive of creation, fall and redemption (Dooyeweerd, 2012:127-128). The pilgrim therefore dwells on the liminal point of conscious awareness between order and chaos and is oriented by faith in God towards the Promised Land. This orientation does not imply that the pilgrim will not also dwell in the city and make use of cultural resources in order to make a living for him-/herself and hence to survive. Instead, it implies that the latter are merely provisional tools to be used during his/her spiritual journey to the Promised Land. In other words, being created in the image of God, individuals are called upon to transcend both culture and nature, while at the same time making use of their resources. For the pilgrim, thresholding is never an 'either-or'. Instead, it seems to be a continuous act of beyonding 'either', as well as transcending 'or'.

Archetypically speaking, it is Christ who is the perfect model to be imitated and embodied by the individual on his/her beyonding and transcending journey to the heavenly City. As the

ultimate archetype, Christ guides the pilgrim through existential sufferings and transformations which s/he has to undergo to reach his/her ultimate destiny.[28]

3.5.4 The ethics of hospitality and the pilgrim

> *Insofar as it has to do with the ethos, that is, the residence, one's home, the familiar place of dwelling, and inasmuch as it is a manner of Dasein (i.e. of being present there), the manner in which we relate to ourselves and to others, to others as our own or as foreigners, ethics equals vulnerable (and not ritualised) hospitality.* (Derrida, 2001:16-17)

Ontically speaking, hospitality is not an object, *per se*, that can be measured and studied. Instead, it is an occurrence that brings the pilgrim-as-host and the Other as stranger and guest together to '...explore an unknown experience of pushing their identities together – so close that one identity cannot be named (pilgrim-as-host or the Other as stranger and guest) unless the other identity already exists' (Fewell, 2016:347): one can only identify as a pilgrim-as-host, if the Other, in the form of a stranger-as-guest, exists.

Standing on the liminal threshold between the known and the unknown, between order and chaos, the ethics of the pilgrim can be circumscribed by means of vulnerable hospitality. As

---

[28] In temporal existence 'ultimate destiny' can be conceived in terms of the fulfilment of one's potential so that s/he can truly live an authentic life (i.e. Heidegger's '*eigentliche Existenz*'). In a (pre-modern) traditional sense, the imitation of Christ or the embodiment of biblical archetypes has little to do with theoretical or dogmatic understanding because the literal meaning is the lowest and furthest from the divine. Language is insufficient and the divine is incomprehensible, per se, so that it can only be approached through the 'via mystica'. The patristic 'method' symbolically moves from the literal meaning to the analogical, then to the moral and to the anagogical. Narratively speaking, as a method it is a path of contemplation where rational understanding is the lowest and the spiritual vision is regarded as the highest, with 'God' only being approachable through participation (not theoretically). Within such a symbolic framework, dogma is simply an attempt to delineate limits (unlike many types of protestant theology where there is devotion to dogma) whereas the actual mystical experience has to do with a journey of contemplation which depends on participation and never ends in temporal existence.

In postmodern paradigms, some might argue, there is no such thing as 'the ultimate'. This would, however, be a simplistic conclusion because 'the ultimate' merely stands for a limiting concept ('*Grenzbegriff*'), such as '*the Void's nothingness*' (Jameson, 1991:44) or even Derrida's claim that language is the limit in his famous '*there is nothing outside the text*'. Moreover, postmodernist viewpoints (i.e. there are many) which presuppose the modern ideal of emancipation from the divine can easily be contested in terms of the postmodern aspiration to overcome modern rationality. What is fundamentally at stake is the postmodern insight that the structure of reality per se cannot be accessed or understood theoretically and that any human attempt of doing so will never result in anything else than a human model of interpretation. In other words, the true nature of reality remains a mystery. Conversely, the (Christian) postmodern alternative referred to in this chapter presupposes the mentioned postmodern sensibilities but instead of ending in nihilism, it offers a return to the pre-modern (Christian) symbolic worldview (see, for example, Boersma's 2009 Nouvelle Theologie and Sacramental Ontology, A Return to Mystery) where the divine (from a Christian pre-modern perspective) is sought and believed without losing its mysterious character. In this sense, the suggested Christian postmodern alternative leads to a return to a symbolic worldview with its emphasis on a multiplicity of possible meanings and of reason's and language's incapability of providing the last word on anything. A postmodern response does therefore not necessarily have to end up in nihilism, and postmodernity does not exclusively refer to French phenomenology, but to a much broader philosophical and cultural context.

illustrated in John 13:1-11, in the New Testament, authentic (or vulnerable) hospitality should not only be about the pursuit and expression of benevolence and charity *per se*. Instead, vulnerable hospitality can only be activated when both the pilgrim-as-host and the Other as stranger and guest understand that they are invited to switch places (both physically and mentally)[29] and be willing to resign oneself to the other (Fewell, 2016:347). Precisely because it is Jesus Christ who is the perfect model to be imitated and embodied by the individual on his/her beyonding and transcending journey to the heavenly City, vulnerable hospitality therefore refers, essentially, to a primordial, original, preparatory, liminal, shared and ineffable genesis point that is located at the centre of every great religion (in this case Christianity), namely a 'silent, speechless openness to a message that transcends all of us: a surplus of meaning that exceeds all our different beliefs, and a metaphysical, mystical ground of what is most fundamental in each religion and which is not easily translatable into language but rather borders on a common profound, revered silence' (Kearney, 2011:179).

From Krüger's (2018:6) recent paradigm-shifting work in which he contributes to the current multilogue of human discourses about the ultimate meaning of life, it can be inferred that every occurrence of authentic, vulnerable hospitality can be understood as a 'signpost to silence': the journey of every soul '*to the furthest, most inclusive horizon, the domain of an all-transcending, enlightening silent awareness, which underlies the religious and metaphysical urge of humankind in its finest forms*'. Every occurrence of authentic, vulnerable hospitality – even if it might include traces of traditional and ritualised pursuits and expressions of benevolence and charity (regardless of what Derrida might have had to say about it) – should preferably be understood as, at their most sublime, not final, planned little individual destinies or even as unplanned stops on the journey of the soul. Instead, they should be understood as clear, negotiable signposts towards a horizon of all-transcending, enlightening, silent awareness of what it ultimately means to live a life that is, in all respects, a testament of the fundamental principle of natality-until-mortality: '*I, for the sake of you and only then, you – should you so decide – for the sake of me*'.

Having no enduring/permanent city, but seeking one to come, the pilgrim is, after all, him-/herself a stranger on earth. S/he does not derive his/her religious identity from his/her natural origin or his/her culture although s/he integrates that culture's 'resources' and strives towards the Promised Land, which can only be attained by grace through a spiritual journey that does not end with temporal existence. The pilgrim can therefore, be considered a suitable archetype to be embodied by individuals in the postmodern age, who seek to have

---

[29] Fewell (2016:347) explains that in John 13:1-11, Jesus, the guest in this particular world, ventures into an unknown space (dinner) and takes the role of the host in order to experience the hosts, now turned guests (disciples).

active communion with the Other as stranger and guest. In contrast to those who seek to preserve their group identity and culture[30], the pilgrim strives for constant transformation and exploration of unknown territory. S/he knows that there are no 'city walls' on earth which can protect him/her from chaos and no earthly city which is sophisticated enough to encompass all the possibilities of self-actualization. A basic premise of the pilgrim's mode of being has to do with his/her willingness to explore the unknown which manifests itself in countless liminal points of conscious awareness, for without this continued openness there can neither be authentic (vulnerable) hospitality, nor authentic encounters with the Other.

The ethics of vulnerable hospitality consequently forms part of the pilgrim's identity, for being a stranger him-/herself, s/he identifies with the Other as Stranger and guest and can easily integrate the experience of having communion with strangers (including the experience of switching roles between host and guest) as a part of his/her journey towards the Promised Land.

3.6 How to orient oneself and act in a world that we still do not understand

Up to this point in this chapter I have attempted to introduce briefly the narrative landscape of the pilgrim.

Simplified to an extreme, one could say that this narrative configuration is characterized by at least the following four basic features: (a) an immanent scepticism regarding the nature of the world per se, (b) the self's transcendent orientation and participation in the divine (theosis), (c) linguistic and cultural pragmatism rooted in an ancient symbolic worldview and (d) a mythological approach to the journey of life which includes the ethics of vulnerable hospitality in inter-subjective relationships.

In the following section I intend to elaborate on a couple of practical life strategies derived from the above mentioned basic features of the pilgrim's mode of being. To accomplish this, I refer mainly to the work of Nassim Nicholas Taleb (2007, 2012), for it is my belief that these strategies could be transformed into powerful pedagogic tools for educators with which to pass on relevant knowledge, skills and demands of propriety to their educands (as members and representatives of the next generation).

3.6.1 Trial and error

Trial and error simply means to keep trying constantly. The fact that people might experience difficulties with trial and error does not make this particular strategy less necessary in real life contexts (Taleb, 2007:204).

---

[30] Every human being (including Christians) is in danger of overemphasizing group identity at the cost of authentic individuation.

Humans are surrounded by mystery and although they try to remain safe, they cannot avoid being confronted by unpredictable events and situations. A typical case in point is the story of the patriarch Abraham. God's revelation to Abraham that he and his seed would inherit the Promised Land (Genesis 12) did not keep Abraham safe from misunderstandings and hardships along the way, including waiting several decades for an heir to be born, the quasi-sacrifice of his son Isaac and the fact that at the end of the day Abraham himself did not inherit the Promised Land (in the physical sense that he might have expected). The latter illustrates the primordial human striving for the 'Promised Land' as a symbol of the desired future. The same rationale applies to the rest of the biblical stories. God's promises inspire us towards the good and orient us in the world. Faith inspires action by offering a sense of direction and orientation in the world, but it does not prevent human beings from suffering. Consequently, the fact that suffering is part of existence should not prevent us from acting. Furthermore: acting in a world that we still do not really understand, as limited creatures, presupposes that we have to keep on moving and trying, constantly adjusting our strategies and learning to use new tools that we might discover and learn how to use along the way[31].

3.6.2 Optionality

Somehow complementary to trial and error, another strategy which could be employed to obtain some sense of order in our complex and unpredictable lifeworld, is optionality. It presupposes an attitude of openness towards change and the unknown, as the ability to switch from a course of action in order to benefit from uncertainty (Taleb, 2012:160). Essentially, it means that our chances of success increase when we remain open to multiple options, so that even if some particular option might fail (and it most probably will) we still have an alternative trajectory of action to pursue. A very practical example of optionality in daily life has to do with our social network and the multiple possibilities of inter-subjective encounters that it enables. While catching up with good (known) friends might sometimes be the best option to regulate[32] our emotions after a stressful week, going to a party and encountering (unknown) strangers might offer greater opportunities of learning or getting into something new. This is, however, only one of many possible examples. The bottom line is

---

[31] Educands can be asked to author stories, based on personal experiences or stories of others (e.g. friends, family members, news, historical figures, etc.) dealing with unpredictable events and situations (e.g. death, sickness, crime, break-ups, financial struggles, etc.). What long and short term strategies would they use to survive and keep trying to progress? What would the role of love, hope and faith be in those situations? There are infinite possibilities for writing such stories which could result in plenty of material for classroom interactions between teachers and educands.

[32] Although this might sound like a modernist, controlling language, it simply refers to the same dynamic of finding some sense of order when dealing with the multiple facets and challenges of life which are experienced as chaos. It would be modernist to believe that any human established order can be definite.

that the exploration of unknown territory[33] is part of a person's developing process.

If we take Taleb's premise (Taleb, 2007:xxvii) to be true that black swans (i.e. highly improbable events) have the greatest impact in our lives, we should not strive to gain mastery of our lifeworld in terms of the modern ideal of control, as if we could avoid the unexpected. Instead, we should rather stack the proverbial deck so that we might profit from unpredictable events. In terms of the mythological language presented in the beginning of this chapter optionality implies the pilgrim's attitude of exploring the world beyond the borders of known territory and the conviction that the Promised Land is not to be found in cultures established by human hands, but that the Kingdom of God is within us (Luk 17:21).

Symbolically speaking, the strategy of optionality suggests that humans are enabled to slay multiple dragons[34] in order to succeed in a complex and rapidly changing world. The dragon, just like the snake in the Garden of Eden (Gen 3), is a symbol of change. Change represents a threat to any paradisiacal state of consciousness, for it has the power to throw our lives into chaos and expose the vulnerability of our mortal state. This explains why Optionality works under the premise that the best way to counter change and to avoid total chaos[35] is by embracing contingent possibilities and by orienting oneself properly in the world which we cannot control. In other words, our goal should be that of the pilgrim, namely the heavenly city. This does not mean that we should neglect our worldly duties. Instead, our worldly duties[36] are necessary and important means to an eternal end. The more options we have, the higher the probability would be of finding a meaningful course of action.

Most importantly, this transcendent orientation inspires responsible action and behaviour in such a way that by striving to master one's own life[37], we become progressively more

---

[33] This point might and, indeed, can, be contested by reference to introversion as a personality trait. I am aware of possible difficulties, but this point nonetheless relates to the codified mythological pattern of leaving one's comfort zone and exploring unknown territory in order to grow (e.g. unknown territory beyond the walls of the city, dragons as fears residing outside the city's explored territory, etc.)

[34] Although this mythological language is not biblical, it is not strange to the Christian tradition (e.g. St. George).

[35] The emphasis is on 'total' chaos and not on chaos, *per se*. Symbolically speaking, total chaos would be something like e.g. Jonah not being able to get out of the belly of the fish, or St. George being killed by the dragon.

[36] This seems to beg the question: 'Do the heavenly city and the eternal stand in contrast to being open, receptive and adaptable?' From a symbolic point of view, not necessarily, because the heavenly city is simply a metaphor for the humanly 'incomprehensible' desired future. Being receptive and open refers to temporal existence while the eternal and ultimate refers to a faith intuition, an ideal which we cannot truly understand but rather only hope for. It is for this reason that the anagogical sense of scripture refers to 'hope' and does not go beyond it (cf. De Lubac, 1998, 2000)

[37]Educands can be asked to author stories about possible professional careers and thereby imagine what kind of talents, personality traits and skillsets they should have or would have to learn and master in order to become good professionals in the respective fields. By imagining and writing about multiple roles and professions, educands can imaginatively explore their own interests and possibly find out more about themselves. Later on in life, they could also try to explore the interconnection

effectively equipped to counter its sufferings positively.

3.6.3 Transforming from fragile to antifragile

Another idea proposed by Taleb (2012:11) is that one of our goals should be to become antifragile: '*everything antifragile has to have more upside than downside and hence benefits from volatility, error and stressors…*'. He claims that antifragility goes beyond resilience, because the resilient person, although resisting shocks, essentially remains unchanged, while the antifragile person continues to develop. As a property, antifragility seems to form the backbone of everything that endured over time: culture, ideas, revolutions, political systems, technological innovation, cultural and economic success, corporate survival, the rise of cities, legal systems, etc. (Taleb, 2012:16). From a symbolic perspective, all these mentioned phenomena evolved from formative activities, consisting of human beings applying strategies to cope with unknown realities. Basically then, this underlines the fact that action takes precedence over thinking in the order of being – our thinking being inclined towards narrative fallacy and confirmation bias (Kahneman, 2011:81).

In mythological terms, we develop our thinking according to our vision of the Promised Land, and not the other way round. This is why the antifragile always survives the tests of time. Taleb suggests using a simple test of asymmetry to detect antifragility (Taleb, 2012:17), namely that anything that has more upside than downside as a result of random events, is antifragile. The inverse would be fragile. While one might dispute Taleb's reliance on Seneca's stoicism as a way to circumvent the vulnerability of human existence, the strategy of antifragility is convincingly highly practical. Take human relationships as an example. Those relationships which endure tragedies and existential difficulties, supporting the various transformations that the self has to undergo in order to advance in the spiritual journey, become antifragile relationships. Fragile relationships, on the other hand, become obstacles of self-actualization, weakening people and preventing them from moving on.

Another interesting feature of antifragility is that it evolves in macro and micro events of human history (including personal narratives), underlining the fundamental relationship between order and chaos, culture and nature, and the individual's responsibility to rise up

---

between different professional fields in terms of skillset and requirements, so that they can increase their chances of getting into one field or the other instead of investing everything into one career path. The development of interdisciplinary skills can later be a difference maker when they 'fight' with others for a position, because versatility increases one's suitability for different tasks. An advantage of the digital age to be explored by teachers/educators when interacting on those exercises with educands, could be the integration of popular arts and games into the tasks, be it in form of tasks including games or popular movies/shows, or as a vehicle for illustration. The immersive power of games and popular arts has drastically increased in our digital age, allowing gamers and viewers a greater participation and internal experience of the world(s) thereby projected. Games and popular art works can be suitable pedagogical tools in narrative exercises.

and take up his/her cross (*imitatio Christi*), to bear the sufferings of life voluntarily and to direct his/her innermost towards the good to become a shining light in the world. In this regard, antifragility both encourages and incentivizes the pilgrim's act of liminal leaping into the unknown. In other words, to become antifragile[38] means to become stronger in the midst of trials and chaos.

3.7 Conclusions – four implications for philosophy of education

3.7.1 Education with respect to the limits of knowledge and responsibility

Just as the pilgrim has 'no permanent city on earth', it is important that educators teach the epistemological standard that human knowledge can never be definite, final or finite. Educands should be taught that their modes of being and models of interpretation should be constantly revised and transformed. The drama of life entails the fact that the world and human beings are constantly subjected to change and unpredictable events. As limited creatures, human beings do not really understand the nature of the world, being forced to rely on faith, and a spiritual vision that guides them in and along their life journey. Human beings are all too familiar with drama '*from the complications, tensions, catastrophes, and reconciliations which characterize our lives as individuals and in interaction with others*' (Balthasar, TD I, 1998-1999:17).

This acknowledgement of the limitations and dramatic nature of human existence can lead to a chaotic relativism though. The fact that theoretical frameworks do not provide accurate representations of reality as such, does not however, necessarily lead to the belief that certainty is unattainable. Instead, theoretical frameworks should be seen as provisional tools which enable human beings to cope with reality. By teaching that theoretical models are tools, educands can therefore learn that they should remain open to new knowledge in order to update their modes of being when necessary.

By taking a religious starting point and by embodying the archetype of the pilgrim, it is possible for human beings to direct their being towards a transcendent purpose. This in turn enables them to orient themselves in the world in a way that always aims at the highest

---

[38] Similar to the narrative exercise on trial and error, when dealing with anti-fragility, educands could author stories about tragedies and all sorts of possible sufferings and heartbreaks human beings encounter in life, by drawing on personal experience and known stories from others. Hardships can be related to primordial needs and finances but also include heartbreaks in relationships, unfulfilled dreams or losses of all sort. They can ask themselves while imaginatively positioning themselves and/or others in those situations, what course of action one could possible take to benefit from the chaos caused by those events and become stronger in the long run. Be it by learning to care for others in grief after the loss of a beloved ones or in terms of survival strategies to deal with all sorts of heartbreak, learning to deal with risky situations and how to rise up again after one's vulnerability is exposed by difficult situations, imaginatively exploring rituals, discipline and strategies of becoming better through life's challenges.

possible good, so that they can always move forward in their lives and grow despite life's difficulties and challenges. It can therefore be stated that a religious approach serves the deepest purpose of education, namely to bring non-adults to responsible action so that they can participate with integrity in the life of their community as fully-fledged, well-rounded, responsible citizens. So far, I have mainly presented a Christian approach. I do, however, believe that other religions, or even non-religious people, could benefit from it as well. The reason is that I refer to symbolic patterns which have been culturally present for ages and therefore are not only codified in literature but also represent culturally established patterns of behaviour (including deviant or reaffirming tendencies with regard to tradition). This could, therefore, just as easily apply to educands who are being educated without religion.

3.7.2 Education with respect to responsibility and the basic dimensions of nature, culture and individuality

It is of paramount importance that educands learn about the basic relationship between culture (order), nature (chaos) and individuality, because failure to do so would probably prevent educands from becoming independent, well-rounded, responsible citizens who can, will, and want to act and behave with integrity. This is the case because culture is subjected to change on the macro-level and needs to be open to updates – just like the individual – on a micro-level. In narrative terms, on a micro-level it is the responsibility of the individual to bring forth 'a synthesis, a plot, which brings together scattered events, goals, chances and causes into the whole of a complete story' (Ricœur, 1984:ix-x).

Culture on the other hand, develops on the macro-level as a result of the interaction between individuals with one another and their surrounding world. As the individual participates in the development of culture, while at the same time transcending it due to his/her individual responsibility, his/her individuality can therefore not be reduced to culture. In other words, one must distinguish between (collective) culture and (individual) responsibility and acknowledge the distinctive normativity of each. Within this context, nature can be seen as the 'raw material' of the potentialities which are to be actualized by means of human beings' responsible actions.

My narrative approach implies that human beings discover their individuality by means of a spiritual vision which transcends both culture and nature, namely the drama of God's communicative action in Jesus Christ which takes place in dynamic interaction with his creation (Vanhoozer, 2005:38). As limited and contextually-situated creatures, human beings are nevertheless participants in culture and nature. In order to become 'themselves' and consciously begin their spiritual journey, human beings need to obtain self-knowledge, which is a process that involves distinguishing between culture, nature and the transcending of the

self (individuality).

That said, it is a central task of education to engage educands in the process of their individuation (as self-actualisation) so that they can ultimately reach the goal of becoming independent, well-rounded, responsible adult citizens who can, will, and want to act and behave with integrity.

3.7.3 Dialogical pedagogy and the ethics of hospitality

Pedagogy is a dynamic occurrence (mainly in the form of planned and organised teaching and learning activities) and it always takes a particular course, because the educator (adult) and the educand (child) are actively engaged in characteristic activities which are known as pedagogic activities. As all pedagogic acts are essentially goal-directed (i.e. aimed towards the ultimate adulthood of the child) the educator can, amongst others, be seen also as a spiritual mentor preparing his/her educands for their journey to the 'Promised Land'.

The dialogical character of pedagogic activities is such that it equips educands by activating their productive imagination through (*dia-logos* = through the logos/word) 'simulations' of possible situations, threats and opportunities to be found along the way as well as shared actual experience(s). Just like the work of narrative allows its audience to relive the story internally in order to inspire responsible action, goal-directed pedagogic activities aim at familiarizing the educands over time, gradually and step-by-step, with the existential landscape that they will have to explore and cope with in their future. A primordial feature of this existential landscape is the cosmic tension between order and chaos and the role that the individual has to play as a mediator between the two. Although human beings are acting and suffering subjects in specific cultural and natural settings, they are also mediators because human order and culture are constantly subjected to change while human beings participate in the formative process of actualization of culture. Essentially then, the responsibility of human beings seems to imply the ability to respond to the chaos of existence with the creation of provisional structures of order (be it on a micro or on a macro level). The individual nevertheless tries to transcend this tension, and this is the meaning of spirituality that I have been emphasizing in this chapter. The acknowledgment that the spiritual life is a pilgrimage where individuals constantly linger on the liminal threshold between the known and the unknown, as strangers who have 'no permanent city', is intrinsically linked to the ethics of (vulnerable) hospitality, which should ideally form a central curricular component of all Citizenship Education programmes at present.

To teach about the archetype of the pilgrim and hospitality in our days seems more than appropriate, because on the one hand, it enables people from different cultures to interact on the basis of their spiritual unity as strangers (i.e. pilgrims) on earth. On the other hand, this

spiritual unity fosters the individual's integration and positive participation in a world where the borders between different cultures have completely shifted and different forms of life and spirituality intersect daily in a wide variety of captivating and innovative ways. Teaching vulnerable hospitality and spiritual pilgrimage therefore implies opening up the educands' hearts towards difference and encouraging communion with strangers for the sake of cultural and self-transformation.

The reasons why this particular subject has been ignored for so long, seems to have to do with the cultural optimism, tribalism and the homogeneity of modernity in its erroneous belief that a definite (world) order will eventually be established via progress and technology. Our lifeworld has, however, changed drastically due to the pluriculturality that is continually being caused by globalisation, glocalisation and the technological revolution, and which compels human beings in general to face the fact that human culture (order) is constantly subjected to change (chaos), and that they have to adapt their strategies constantly in order to navigate it.

3.7.4 Religious pedagogics and practical life-management

The fact that we live in a world which is drastically changing in an unprecedented way (e.g. mobility, information technologies, digitalization, etc.) places an incredible burden on educators, who face the need of becoming 'sages' themselves in order to fulfil their task of mentoring their educands in their pursuits of discovering, managing and mastering life. A very sophisticated skillset is needed in order to navigate properly in an unpredictable world of (maybe) infinite possibilities, and we should be honest about our ignorance regarding what the future might realistically be capable of delivering. It appears to us to be most reasonable, therefore, to draw on practical life strategies which can become part of educators' toolsets and assist them in their goal-directed pedagogic activities.

Coupled with a narrative (religious) orientation that is open towards the future and the unknown, 'trial and error', 'optionality' and 'antifragility' are three such strategies that could enable individuals to cope adequately with the uncertainties of life and even to profit from them by voluntarily undergoing the necessary self-transformations in order to maximize one's chances of success (whatever that means is to be individually discovered) and to advance meaningfully in the journey of life. It should be clear that these strategies are dynamic and demand individual responsibility, for we should not expect a static system which guarantees a predictable outcome in a rapidly changing world.

Chapter 4: Confessional and narrative perspectives on Being Human - Philosophy of education in a post-Apartheid (postmodern) age in the tension between maximal and minimal reconciliation

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter I present confessional (Christian) and narrative perspectives on Being Human in post-Apartheid South Africa. From the perspective of philosophy of education, it is my goal to explore past and present ideological developments in the South African context and to show how the biblical narrative of Being Human can not only play a positive role in the education of South African citizens but also contribute towards the restructuring of South African society into a non-racist society. Therein, the endorsed biblical ideal of Being Human can be understood as compatible to Waghid's emphasis on the traditional (African) notion of Ubuntu in his proposed African philosophy of education as a philosophy of caring (Waghid 2019). More specifically, there is a symbolical convergence between the biblical narrative of Being Human and Ubuntu, as both imply a pre-theoretical and pre-modern form of belonging together which transcends ethnical boundaries.

After providing some historical background and pointing out how the influence of racism and divisive ideologies still persist in post-Apartheid South Africa, I elaborate on how the Apartheid as well as the Neo-Marxist narratives are both rooted in (divisive) community ideology and intrinsically contradict the core of Christian religion and consequently the (unifying) biblical narrative of Being Human. Moreover, I argue that those divisive narratives which tend to focus on group identity and collectivism at the cost of individual responsibility should be strictly rejected as a foundation for philosophy of education and replaced by the biblical narrative of Being Human as a re-directing alternative which empowers both individuals and communities by means of a unifying vision for human beings and society. The implementation of such a unifying view of Being Human would lead to a stronger emphasis on multi-, inter- and transcultural education and ultimately serve the long term goal of creating a truly nonracist South African society through committed, honest participation and authentic dialogue between people from different backgrounds and the abolishment of divisive ideologies.

4.2 Rationale

The academic subfield of Philosophy of Education essentially studies the (a) necessity, (b) possibility and (c) limits of education. In order to accomplish this, philosophers of education

observe, survey, study and research the objectives, forms, methods, meaning and outcomes of education. This means that Philosophy of Education involves, amongst others, scholarly reflection about fundamental questions such as the following three, which I will address in light of my proposed approach to philosophy of education:

- What should the aim of education be?

- What should human beings be taught and should this differ in terms of their individual and/or communal interests and abilities?

- How should human beings be educated (formed, taught and/or trained)?

My answer to the first question draws on the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy[39] and emphasizes the ultimate goal of education, which is to guide individuals to develop their potential and become responsible citizens. The emphasis on individual responsibility is of paramount importance, especially in the South African context which is highly influenced by community ideology and tribalism. This definition is also suitable for a confessional and narrative approach because it allows the educand to define and pursue his/her own life goals; confessionally by being open with regard to his/her convictions and beliefs, and narratively by imagining a trajectory which can lead to the desired and established goals. This definition also recognizes the person's belonging to a community with its own set of confessed beliefs and narratives and consequently one's need of learning to participate in dialogue and communal life. Despite the divisive tendencies of community ideology in South Africa, it is nonetheless crucial to enhance individual responsibility without devaluating the intermediary role played by culture in education (Stephens, 2014:24) in order to maintain a balanced view regarding individual and community in education and truly progress in the process of building up a unified society[40] constituted by people from different backgrounds.

---

[39] The aim of education is '*to equip individuals with skills and substantial knowledge that allow them to understand, define and pursue their own life-goals as well as to participate with integrity in the life of their community as fully-fledged, responsible citizens*' (Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy, 2016).

[40] It is important that the child as an individual and autonomous person be taught and pedagogically accompanied from birth with regard to taking responsibility in and for the many and varied social and societal contexts and relationships in which s/he might find him/herself in the future. The reason seems straightforward enough: being a child (specifically also in this day and age in, for example, post-Apartheid South Africa) implies involvement in the fellowship of his/her fellow human beings. Because the individual child can (and, perhaps, should) still be understood in terms of the Stofferian notion of existing-from-birth ('*Sein-von-der-Geburt-her*') (Stoffier, 1965:174), his/her parents/care-givers, as well as members of the wider community into which s/he was born, should not only recognise, but also assist the child as a being-with-potentiality (also in terms of having the potential to design his/her own future world). They should understand their responsibility in terms of assisting the child to become a fully-integrated, mature human being with commendable and creditable values (a moral being); an autonomous person who is not only completely human and pathically related, but who is also a perpetual explorer of meaning. They should understand that the child is a being who has a unique will-to-making-sense; a person who – especially in later life – will be aware of being called upon to live in peace with his fellow human beings and to accept co-responsibility for them; a person

Due to the fact that education does not only take place at school and university, but also at home and in community, it is my conviction that teacher-educators would benefit from adopting an approach which takes the primacy of narrative and confessed beliefs into consideration[41] and promote a culture of committed, honest participation and authentic dialogue between teacher-educators and educands. Although this is a broad definition, I believe it provides a valuable framework of background assumptions which can enrich pedagogical activities and the teaching of subject matters in a postmodern post-Apartheid age where past injustices and totalitarian ideologies have been questioned and still remain influent. An alternative route to divisive ideologies is needed, as well as individual empowerment if South Africa is to progress towards a greater level of reconciliation and unity in the long term goal of forming a post post-Apartheid culture where people from different backgrounds dialogue and participate in one another's lives to a greater degree than is the case at present. Regarding the second and third questions, it is not my intention to answer exhaustively what ought to be taught and how to educate. Instead, I would like to offer complementary insights on how to deal practically with such questions via narrative reasoning. Following the premise that a narrative and confessional approach can only be properly applied if one makes it his/her own by becoming aware of one's own presuppositions, it is up to the educator and/or teacher to integrate it creatively and responsibly into his own field of competence and interests.

4.3 Rethinking philosophy of education: the South African experience

Despite the fact that the quest for liberation of South Africa from racial divides has been going on (since 1994) for more than 24 years, the impact of racism and apartheid (*inter alia* community ideological tendencies) still determines the makeup of post-Apartheid society and influences the lives of the majority of people in South Africa (Baloyi, 2018:1). Even prior to the inception of democracy in 1994, philosophers of education (for example, Ashley, 1988; Bauer, 1982; Boraine, 1990; Enslin, 1984, 1987, 1988, 1992; Eshak, 1987; Fouché, 1982; Gluckman, 1981; Higgs, 1994a, 1994b, 1995a; 1997; Horner, 1977; Kallaway, 1983; Lawrence, 1984; McKay, 1990; Millar, 1979; Morrow, 1989; Nel, 1967, 1980 1984; Nicolls,

---

who is fully capable of judging him-/herself and of assessing and evaluating his/her own actions in light of the demands of propriety that were inculcated in him/her since birth.

[41] By proposing a (Christian) confessional and narrative approach, I suggest that authentic dialogue (and not, for example, general conversation) in the classroom can enrich people's understandings and play a role in culture formation. By being open to learn about/from the other, new insights are gained and new syntheses are created, enabling greater participation in each other's lives and consequently building the foundations for a unified society. A narrative and confessional approach to education creates a sense of community without forgetting the importance of individual autonomy, as Waghid proposes in his *Philosophy of Caring in Higher Education*: '*they constantly engage with me about their understandings, and then construct and deconstruct their own narratives as they begin to situate their understandings of important seminal works in their writings. I recognise them as autonomous beings, capable of articulating their own arguments*' (Waghid, 2019:82).

1989, 1990; Penny, 1988; Randall, 1990; Reagan, 1990; Saunders, 1992; Segal, 1996; Slamat, 1993; Taylor, 1993) have recognized that it was important to rethink the assumptions that undergird and support the apartheid ideology in order to restructure the South African education system. Before 1994, under apartheid, the South African education system had been fragmented along racial and ethnic lines (Higgs, 1998:6). Unfortunately, under the influence of Neo-Marxist ideology[42] this movement of the emancipation provided impetus and direction to further divisions between white and black groupings in the 80s, promoting a binary narrative (one of oppressed-vs-privileged) instead of a unifying narrative which could guide post-Apartheid South Africa into a process of authentic reconciliation and nation building. The Apartheid ideology has therefore been countered[43] by another ramification of the same romantic ideology derived from the modern Enlightenment era.

Although the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was completed nearly two decades ago, as part of the restructuring of South African society into a nonracist society, its relevance for reconciliation studies in South Africa cannot be overlooked. While the far-reaching efforts of the TRC can also never be underestimated, it is no surprise that the complexity of the South African history, society and of human beings in general would prevent the achievement of a maximal goal of reconciliation in the post-Apartheid era, as the above mentioned persisting ideological influence suggests. A liminal state of reconciliation has nonetheless been politically established in post-Apartheid South Africa, based on a

---

[42] From this angle especially, we received radical and very negative societal criticism – only the destruction and shattering of the existing structures (the so-called *status quo*) offer hope for a new future. This can only be achieved – so argue these neo-Marxists thinkers – through a *continued revolutionary process*. The effect of this philosophy also became tangible in South Africa. The 1970's represented *engagement* for us – a theme which was, at the time, even dealt with in a meeting of the SA Academy of Arts and Sciences. It would surely not be excessive also to recognise a connection between neo-Marxist societal criticism and the burning involvement of the different societal life forms (i.a. even the church) in the difficult political questions of South Africa in the nineteen eighties. In 1985 and 1986 it became increasingly clear that neo-Marxist perceptions provided both impetus and direction to various white and black groupings. In passing, we may remark that the ideology of a people'/'nation'/'volk' that was dominant during the entire *Apartheid*-era, actually demonstrates the influence of the romantic reaction to the 18th century (the so-called Enlightenment period) – a reaction in which philosophers moved beyond the *abstract individual* and started to emphasize the *people* in a cultural-ethnic sense (Strauss, 1998:2).

[43] The main problem caused by Neo-Marxism in education is that it prioritizes the reversal of power relations between privileged and marginalized groups instead of unity and fails to unite people from different groups. While the intention might often be to counterbalance past injustices, it legitimates the continuation of a privileged vs marginalized narrative which might easily lead to further injustices against people of good will who cannot be blamed for their ancestors' behaviour. In order to bring this insight to the classroom, educands could be given the assignment of studying stories of people who have opposed totalitarian regimes in spite of their 'privileged background'. This kind of assignment could enhance the sense that people should not be ultimately judged based on their background and status but rather on their character and behaviour, which are most clearly manifested in challenging situations. While Neo-Marxists might argue that this could threaten their intended subversion of power, I am convinced that it is always important to create a space-time portal (as *lebensraum*) for integrating people of good will from the most different backgrounds. If not, we could be heading towards a new form of Apartheid under the disguise of countering Apartheid's injustices.

minimal view of reconciliation as (individual) peaceful coexistence and coupled with a still unrealized maximal vision of (collective) restorative reconciliation[44] which seeks to transform all structural inequalities (Danaher, 2010:122).

The TRC has defined reconciliation as being both a goal and a process; a vision of a society based 'on the recognition of human rights, democracy and peaceful co-existence' and also based on the development of opportunities 'for all South Africans irrespective of colour, race, class, belief or sex' (The Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 1999:106). Although it is highly questionable whether such a broad vision could be enforced mainly through political efforts, there should be no doubt regarding its desirability, as a long-term goal to strive towards. Nonetheless, due to the complexity of South Africa's history and societal makeup (including different ethnicities and cultures and the extraordinary pervasive influence of community ideology) it is reasonable to conclude that the TRC could not achieve much more, on a fundamental level, than merely to capture the people's imaginations with a narrative which could encourage and enable the beginning of a process of reconciliation and open up future possibilities of social and societal transformation.

Equally, such a broad vision also entails the danger of becoming vague and simplistic due to specific problems related to the multiple contexts in which human beings are immersed (e.g. individuality, community, culture, aesthetics, ethics, history, ethnicity, economics, etc.) and the influences of ideologies that they are subjected to on a daily basis.

In this chapter I intend to focus on problems related to religion and ideology which are directly related to South Africa's past and present and therefore remain relevant for the future, including the future of education in a post-Apartheid era and the associated educative formation of future South African citizens. It is my view that the elucidation of, specifically,

---

[44] A possible way of going beyond peaceful coexistence is by promoting a sports culture which unifies South Africans from different backgrounds. While SA-Rugby might arguably be moving in this direction – especially after winning the World Cup for the third time in November 2019 – as the multi-ethnic national team's roster suggests and despite people's criticisms of quotas, rugby remains the Afrikaner's national sport while soccer is prioritized by other groups. It is puzzling why soccer remains so unpopular among Afrikaners although it is the world's most popular sport. One can easily wonder if this is somehow related to racial bias, but regardless of that being the case or not, it would be desirable if South African soccer would also move in a more inclusive direction. The reason why these examples can be of importance for education is that sport, a collective enterprise, has a formative character, disciplines and rituals, being able to bring people from different backgrounds together into a world with its own set of rules, characters and developing narratives. Having its own villains and heroes, participation in sports can be a space-time portal where people are equal in spite of their ethnic backgrounds. In other words, it can be a world of ethnic, structural equality and it can even develop characters who can become heroes to people from other ethnic backgrounds, inspiring and creating a sense of identification in, as well as for, the 'real world' outside of sports: '*Because participation normally is voluntary, and because contests are unscripted narratives, sports provide a perhaps not unique but very public "moral laboratory" in which the nature and role of concepts such as fairness, sportspersonship, and respect for persons can be illustrated, expressed and debated*' (Simon, 2015:40).

the Christian narrative on 'Being Human' can assist in overcoming the many and varied ideological tendencies which have been characteristic of the previous political dispensation and which still persist in the post-Apartheid era. One important starting point is that reconciliation cannot be achieved without overcoming the predominant separatist mind-set[45](e.g. peaceful co-existence). Education should, instead, emphasize the individual's responsibility to live according to a narrative that unites people on the basis of 'Being Human' – i.e. a narrative which transcends group identity[46].

Religious relativism has been proposed by some (and criticised by others) as the proper postmodern response to the South African education system in the post-apartheid era (Potgieter & Van der Walt, 2014:1-9; Potgieter, Van der Walt & Wolhuter, 2014:1-7; Potgieter, 2015:53-59) and it has even been suggested that 'there is no longer any point in talking about God...' (Higgs, 1998:3). While no one would doubt that religious views and practices have oftentimes played a negative role in the last few decades of South Africa's history, one cannot ignore the fact that the great majority of the South African population still refer to themselves as Christians[47] and that the eradication of religious discourse from the education system, *per se*, can therefore not be considered a viable option.

After exploring some of the ideological and political aspects of post-Apartheid South Africa in light of a (Christian) confessional perspective on Being Human, I will articulate how '...talking about God' (Higgs, 1998:3) can still play a positive role in re-thinking philosophy of education in a post-Apartheid South Africa.

4.4 Reconciliation vs. ideology

Part of the problem of the TRC's reconciliation approach could be related to the (albeit debatable) point that individual reconciliation is not sufficient and that reconciliation should ideally take place simultaneously at multiple levels of (and in) society (The Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 1999:106-110). Moreover, while the TRC explored the conditions of Apartheid on a societal level, it failed to engage seriously in the examination of the ideological and historical origins of Apartheid (Bell & Ntsebeza, 2001:1-3). Consequently, it could not prevent the promotion of a re-modelled divisive community ideology.

Conversely, there are serious ideological problems related to a collective understanding of

---

[45] Visker (1994:89) refers to this as: '…*a new form of racism which conceals a fundamental indifference with respect to the Other behind a mask of respect and interestedness. This unsuspected cynicism traces back to a confusion in the underlying concepts of identity and culture.*'
[46] In previous footnotes I have already suggested that narratives of multi-ethnic heroes (e.g. sports and history) can be important pedagogical devices, helping to create a sense of unity based on Being Human.
[47] Countrymeters. 2019. South Africa population. https://countrymeters.info/en/South_Africa#religion Date of access: 25 Oct. 2019.

restorative justice, which I intend to question in this chapter, in light of Apartheid ideology itself, from a non-reductionistic, ontological perspective which identifies it as being rooted in community ideology. One of my basic premises is that the biblical narrative on Being Human can play a long-term positive role in achieving some of the above-mentioned goals defined by the TRC.

Archbishop Desmond Tutu, who was Chairperson of the TRC, defined reconciliation in terms of restorative justice as '*characteristic of traditional African jurisprudence; not as retribution or punishment, but rather with the central concern of 'the healing of breaches, the redressing of imbalances, the restoration of broken relationships, a seeking to rehabilitate both the victim and the perpetrator, who should be allowed the opportunity to be reintegrated into the community that s/he has injured by his/her offense*' (Tutu, 1999:55). The TRC has, however, also acknowledged that its focus on outrageous human rights violations '*has drawn the nation's attention away from the more commonplace violations*'. As a consequence, the TRC could not reach ordinary people who do not see themselves as perpetrators and who might, as a consequence, fail to recognise the 'little perpetrator in each of us' (The Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 1999:133).

Common sense suggests that individuals should not be made responsible for the mistakes of other individuals, and similarly the Bible states: 'The son shall not suffer for the iniquity of the father, nor the father suffer for the iniquity of the son' (Eze 18:20; cf. Jer 31:30). So, although the TRC might implicitly have acknowledged the importance of personal responsibility[48], we should nevertheless interrogate the incompatibility between individual responsibility and (collective) restorative justice.

While opinions with regard to individual and collective responsibilities vary, peaceful co-existence between people of different groups can never claim to be the ultimate goal when a unified society is pursued. This assumption offers sufficient reason to justify multicultural, intercultural and even transcultural relationships according to the logic that to be human (in the purest form) means to be able to transcend all forms of, as well as all attempts at forming, group identity(-ies). Here lies an important educational obligation and opportunity for teacher-educators and educands in the future. It should deservedly receive the focused and serious attention of all stake-holders and role-players in education, especially with regard to their planning, development, implementation and assessment of all future education-related, as well as pedagogical activities.

---

[48] As previously suggested, history and the sports world offer various examples of developing narratives where individual responsibility is able to transcend ethnic bias and the power of divisive ideologies.

By considering the impossibility of a short term/immediate transformation of society, I focus in this chapter on individual responsibility and offer confessional (ontological and narrative) perspectives which can motivate individual development and responsible action on a micro level. This micro level of responsibility is important for the future of post-Apartheid education in shaping a unified national identity which integrates people from all sorts of ethnic backgrounds.

Due to the reactionary tendency of the predominant narrative[49] which is based on subversion and the opposition between the oppressed and the privileged, teacher-educators should consider promoting the goal of moving towards a post-post-Apartheid era, where individuals of such a future society will no longer recognise the need for trying to define themselves in reaction to the Apartheid era anymore. Although such a post-post-Apartheid era might only come into existence in the distant future, it would not be unreasonable to suggest to all relevant stake-holders and role-players that teacher-educators should strive towards this goal and encourage and empower individuals to develop their full potential and to take responsibility in the different spheres of life.

In other words, the field of education might have a limited scope of influence although both teaching-learning as well as educative responsibilities with respect to the educative formation of individuals continue to play an integral role in society. The primacy of individual, as well as collective responsibility in education can be justified by referring to the notion of the *paedagogica perennis* (cf. Du Plooy *et al.*,1983:136). The paedagogica perennis remains a mode of the ontic fact of dependence of one human being on another human being: from the moment of conception, until the moment of death (i.e. for the entire duration of the earthly journey between natality and mortality). This ontic fact is an expression of the mutual relatedness between human beings. The reason for this mutual relatedness between human beings (especially between parents and/or legal caregivers and their children) can, in turn, be found in the aim of education which, according to Van der Walt (2018:personal communication), should always be geared towards the aim of life, where the aim is no ultimate destiny, but a *modus vivendi*, a way of living. The child (as *Sein-von-der-Geburt-her*) should experience, live and acquire the different facets of adulthood gradually and in a safe and secure, caring educative environment.

The paedagogica perennis directs one's focus to the development of competence and skills to the benefit of both the individual and the larger community. Collective teaching-learning as well as educative goals are, however, indirectly achieved through the efforts of individuals

---

[49] The predominant narrative, which is presupposed by the TRC's collectivist notions of restorative justice is the Neo-Marxist oppressed-vs-privileged narrative, which has become a driving force in South African politics as indicated by Strauss (Strauss, 1998:2).

who agree to collective action and unavoidably exclude others. It is therefore reasonable to suggest that the community might profit from the enhancement of individual responsibility, while a collectivist focus tends to foster separatism between different groups. I argue that the collectivist oppressed-vs-privileged narrative is deliberately being employed to marginalize those belonging to any grouping that was previously considered as 'privileged'. This is a well-known tenet of classic Marxist logic and has merely been re-modelled by Neo-Marxists.

In order to serve their community in the best possible way, individuals are morally obliged to become responsible, disciplined citizens who understand the need for developing – to the best of their ability – their own, personal skillsets and talents so that these might eventually serve the best interests of their fellow citizens. The more an individual person becomes 'competent', the more s/he can become useful to others (in his/her community, as well as in the world at large). Referring to the basic human condition, it seems fair to conclude that human beings have limited access to both resources and time, simply because they do not live forever. It therefore makes sense to assume that human beings should be educated so that they will be able to manage responsibly the resources that they might have access to, as well as their time. However, the oppressed-vs-privileged narrative focuses, for instance, on the (past) shortcomings of others and consequently tends to leave people's (present) potential unfulfilled by fostering an irresponsible (i.e. blame-shifting instead of responsible action) use of the limited (economic) means and time.

In order to establish individual responsibility as a goal in South African education while still appreciating the traditional African community bonds, it is important, however, to overcome the separatist mind-set which was characteristic of the Apartheid ideology and which is still present in the reactionary ideology which cultivates opposition between groups instead of promoting unity in diversity. South Africa has not yet reached reconciliation at the level of the ordinary citizenry. Instead, ordinary citizens are still saddled with the daily yoke of authentic racism and not only with the wounds caused by racism in the past (Chikane, 2015:21). As Meiring (2015:22) states:

> *We do have to face the fact that South Africa, 20 years after democracy, is still a fractured and a very divided country. Racism, alienation, xenophobia are still with us, as is the case with corruption, greed and endemic violence.*

4.5 Being Human as a starting point which transcends group identity
After referring briefly to the South African political situation in the post-Apartheid era and pointing to some ideological challenges which are relevant for education and the future of the country's pursuit of unity and reconciliation, I will now indicate some of the ideological views

which have had a negative impact in South Africa. I will also suggest some viable alternatives for the future. My central theoretical assumption, namely that Being Human in a (Christian) religious sense means (amongst others) to transcend ethnic boundaries and group identity, is found in the work of South African (Christian) philosopher DFM Strauss (Strauss 1998), and this assumption will be related to the community ideology which was dominant during the Apartheid era. I point out that this dominant community ideology not only strengthened group identity and divisions at the time; it also obscured the true meaning of religion, as well as the meaning of the Christian narrative on how best to be a human being.

On the other hand, the postmodern discourse has also been influential in South African society, promoting a new variant of divisive ideology where (especially White) Afrikaners (as a believed ethnic-cultural group(-ing)) are reduced to the group of the oppressors, while most others are reduced to the group of the oppressed. Although the atrocities and oppression of Apartheid cannot be denied, it can never be the ultimate solution for a country in pursuit of unity to seek to subvert this power relation on the basis of reputed group identity alone, because this will ultimately lead to further social marginalization and societal divisions. In contrast to this approach, I would therefore like to pursue a positive route of engagement and explore non-divisive perspectives of traditional[50] Christianity against the decor of a non-reductive ontology and the work of narrative. It is my hope that this will not only elucidate problems from the previously predominant Apartheid ideology but that it will also help overcoming ideological tendencies in the post-apartheid era.

4.6 Ideological starting points of the Apartheid ideology

In his book *Being Human in God's World*, Strauss points to two ideological and divisive starting points of the (past) main stream South African theological discourse:

> *During the last few decades we have noticed clear differences on the theological front about the relationship between church and society. On the one side we find those who think that the many 'natural differences' between peoples (concerning their race, cultural group, language preference, political affiliation and so forth) are not removed by the 'grace' in the church as organization (institution) because there we experience a special ('supernatural') unity in Christ. On the other side, a starting-point is chosen in the primary unity in Christ – also understood in terms of the institutional church...* (Strauss, 1998:14).

---

[50] In a narrative sense, the traditional merely conveys that which survives the test of time and retains the potential to attend to primordial human needs and to adapt to contextual changes so that it can offer orientation and purpose to mortal and vulnerable human beings. Ideologies, on the other hand, tend to present a reductive and divisive account of Being Human (Strauss, 1998:18) and in this chapter I attempt to demonstrate how a confessional (traditional) and narrative approach can help advancing a non-reductive approach to philosophy of education in a post-apartheid era.

The above mentioned (two) starting points are both ideological in nature. The first, that 'natural differences' between people remain intact after receiving 'grace', clearly runs counter to the biblical narrative which argues in favour of the unity of all people in Christ: 'There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.' (Gal 3:28). The second, namely that the unity in Christ is to be understood in terms of the institutional church is also ideological in that it confuses the central religious orientation of the person which is all-encompassing (i.e. reborn in Christ) with the institutional church which is merely one of many relationships of human beings, which can, for example, also include being a spouse, a lecturer, an educand, a parent, a citizen of a particular state, ethnicity and all sorts of partial (not all-encompassing) and differentiated relationships (Strauss, 1998:12).

What the above-mentioned starting points have in common is that they seem to confuse the central religious and all-demanding relationship (i.e. unity in Christ) with group identity and societal structures which are not all-encompassing, such as the church or any other (finite) human organization. This confusion is rightly defined by Strauss as an exchange of root and branch (Strauss, 1998:15).

It is unquestionable that Apartheid has strengthened separation and tribalism. This is an unjustifiable and contradictory development for any group constituted of a majority of so called Christians because it embodies a vision of Being Human which stands in diametrical opposition to the biblical view (Gal 3:28). Besides distinguishing between (religious) all-demanding and partial relationships, it is nevertheless of central importance for teacher-educators to engage with educands in narrative exercises where they can imagine and author stories of a unified South African society (Stephens, 2014:23). This kind of narrative exercise can be seen as an application of what Smith calls a (Christian) formative pedagogy of desire which aims at the human heart and shapes human action by an appeal to love and desire, through the formation of habits, affections and imagination (Smith, 2009:25). If there is to be a unified South Africa in the future, it is of crucial importance for teacher-educators and educands to create a culture of honest, committed participation and authentic dialogue and to engage actively in the creation of unifying narratives which connect the life histories of people from different backgrounds. This would be in line with the biblical narrative on Being Human and the call to be one in Christ (Gal 3:28). This can be achieved through narrative exercises in the classroom. It can also be accomplished through the sharing of individual narratives with one another outside classroom boundaries.

4.7 Ideological vs. non-ideological religion
Because the central unity in Christ is not the result of human activity but seen (in the

Christian religion) as a gift of faith, it becomes problematic when this central unity is understood in terms of visible[51] social structures or group identity. When this understanding of religion as all-encompassing and transcendent is neglected, exchanging the proverbial root for the branch, the institutional church becomes an instrument of division, for instance between ethnic groups, instead of promoting the unified new humanity in Christ (Gal 3:28).

The biblical narrative on Being Human could have prevented the development of separatism between groups in South Africa and drawn people from different backgrounds closer. Instead, even after more than two decades of implemented[52] democracy, the separatist mind-set persists, as Baloyi for instance indicates with regard to the unwillingness of Afrikaners to partake in multicultural church gatherings (Baloyi, 2018:5). There are certainly other examples of contexts where resistance or even opposition to unity is displayed. However, churches should set an example and send a different message by promoting greater diversity and avoiding monocultural settings[53] in order to reflect the possible unity in 'Being Human'.

4.8 Apartheid, postmodernism and the future post-apartheid era

Without distancing oneself from separatist tendencies it seems to be fairly difficult – if not entirely impossible – to move towards unity in the post-apartheid era. In order to sustain this claim, it makes sense to have a closer look at how Strauss (1998:18-20) relates specifically the (White) Afrikaner community's ideology to its ideological roots in his chapter on *Identity and Ideology*.

> *From the previous explanation, it is not difficult to give a brief indication of the question of identity and the nature of an ideology. In South Africa, we are often confronted with the question: am I first an Afrikaner or a South African? What finally determines my identity, my ethnicity or my state citizenship? Most Afrikaners tend to say that they are first Afrikaners and then South Africans whereas English speaking South Africans tend to say that they are first South Africans. In reality, these people possess, simultaneously, a differentiated variety of (DPP) relationships – without the possibility of elevating anyone of these branches to the primary relationship of being human. I have, for example, simultaneously a (DPP) identity as Sotho (i.e. a Sotho identity), a South African identity, a cultic-religious identity (e.g. a member of a specific church denomination), a marriage identity, an academic identity (e.g. a Kovsie), etc. When we fall prey to identifying the central religious dimension with any of its branches – we are in the grip of an unbiblical ideology. That is why any attempt to identify any differentiated (DPP) relationship with our (RCT) relationship in Christ is*

---

[51] The distinction between the visible and the (true) invisible Church is attributed to St. Augustin and it has become a familiar distinction in Christian theology ever since (Alston, 2002:53). The ideological tendency to identify the true church with an ethnic group's institutional church is derived from the *romanticism of the modern Enlightenment era (Strauss, 1998:2).*

[52] Baloyi (2018) uses the verb 'incepted' in this particular instance. Because this is an abstruse and semantically murky English verb, I replaced it with the verb 'implemented'.

[53] The same applies to other institutions (including schools and universities) envisioning unity in diversity.

ideological and therefore idolatrous. An ideology desires to seduce humankind into finding its last life anchor in some or other temporal relationship, i.e. to find a temporary haven ('pastoral home') for the restless heart of a person. When the Afrikaner nation is seen as the true Israel, as the nation of God, we meet an ethnic ideology which exchanges root and branch. Whoever is encompassed in Christ, shares in a RCT-relation which transcends ethnic differences – in Christ we are no longer Jew and Greek (cf. Gal.3:28) (Strauss, 1998:18).

It is important to indicate that the Afrikaner ideology in South Africa was inspired by philosophical developments in modernity where the ideal of a rational autonomous individualism was opposed by irrational romanticism which led to a holistic (universalistic) community ideology (Strauss, 1998:18). As Strauss indicates elsewhere, this development also inspired the emergence of the community ideologies of Nazism and Fascism in the 20th century (Strauss, 2009:500). Unfortunately, the same ideological tendency is also present in postmodern neo-Marxist philosophy, which has been a driving force in the South African political and academic scene, e.g. providing direction to divisive white and black groupings in South Africa since the 80's. The ideology of a 'people'/'nation'/'volk' (Mosse, 1964; Löns, 1910; von Polenz, 1895; Riehl, 1863; Langbehn, 1890), which was dominant during Apartheid, has therefore been countered by another ramification of the same romantic ideology from the modern Enlightenment era (Strauss, 1998:2). Consequently, it is illogical to reject the Apartheid ideology and to adopt another ramification deriving from the same root. Although Apartheid caused divisions, postmodern neo-Marxism draws from a similar (divisive) ideological well and should not be the main source of inspiration in the post-Apartheid era if the goal is to pursue a unified South Africa where Being Human is understood in its totality, and where it includes a central religious relationship which is all-encompassing and which offers direction to all the various differentiated and partial relationships (including ethnicity). When this distinction is neglected and ideology is allowed to dominate, partial relationships are elevated to religious status, promoting a reductive view on Being Human, and thus inevitably causing divisions (including racial divisions).

4.9 Conclusions for philosophy of education in post-Apartheid South Africa

Several renowned philosophers of education have recognized the problems deriving from the community ideology of Apartheid. The resultant need to revise philosophy of Education in South Africa (see, for example, Ashley, 1988; Bauer, 1982; Boraine, 1990; Enslin, 1984, 1987, 1988, 1992; Eshak, 1987; Fouché, 1982; Gluckman, 1981; Higgs, 1994a, 1994b, 1995a; 1997; Horner, 1977; Kallaway, 1983; Lawrence, 1984; McKay, 1990; Millar, 1979; Morrow, 1989; Nel, 1967, 1980 1984; Nicolls, 1989, 1990; Penny, 1988; Randall, 1990; Reagan, 1990; Saunders, 1992; Segal, 1996; Slamat, 1993; Taylor, 1993) and to move away from the legacy of Fundamental Pedagogics of the Christian National Education era,

therefore remains a scholarly priority. Higgs (1998:6) aptly describes how the Apartheid ideology for education has had a negative and divisive impact on the entire South African society:

> ...developments in South Africa have drawn the attention of the international community to the dismantling of apartheid and the abandoning of the assumptions which underlie and support this ideology. The resultant restructuring of the South African society into a democratic, nonracist and non-sexist community has far reaching implications for educational thought and practice, and especially for philosophy of education. The education system under apartheid had been fragmented along racial and ethnic lines, and had been saturated with the racial ideology and educational doctrines of apartheid. The theoretical undergirding for this fragmentation in education was traced to the influence of Fundamental Pedagogics, which in its practice of science, its critics claimed... had been responsible for reproducing and maintaining the ruling social and political ideology in South Africa, namely, Christian National Education.

The Christian Nationalism of the Apartheid era tended to distinguish between a vertical relation to God (Christian) and a horizontal relationship referring to fellow Afrikaners (national). The mythologisation of early settlement in Southern Africa and the Great Trek had played an important role for the dissemination of the Afrikaner nationalist ideology in the 1930s (Dobosova, 2009:306). The myth itself had been created through the heroic interpretation of a series of historical events in which the 'becoming' Afrikaner nation was identified with Israel and the Great Trek with Israel's exile from Egypt. While the nationalist superheroes (Boers, Trekboers, Voortrekkers) helped preserving their people from being Anglicised, their identification as God's people legitimized their use of 'barbarians' as source of labour (Mills, [n.d.]). Soon, the combination of a people's identification with Israel with a vision of society based on the Tower of Babel story (Kinghorn, 1994:402) would provide the basis of apartheid and a justification for segregation (Dobosova, 2009:307-313).

> When the Afrikaner nation is seen as the true Israel, as the nation of God,[54] we meet an ethnic ideology which exchanges root and branch. Whoever is encompassed in Christ, shares in a RCT-relation which transcends ethnic differences – in Christ we are no longer Jew and Greek (cf.Gal.3:28) (Strauss, 1998:19).

A narrative and confessional way of addressing the Apartheid ideology in the classroom would be through narrative exercises. One possibility of creating a counter-narrative can be derived from the biblical narrative itself, where believers are described as being one in Christ despite of their ethnic background (Gal 3:28), a vision that stands in diametrical opposition to the Afrikaners' mythologisation of early settlement and identification with the true Israel. A

---

[54] 'The migrant farmers and pioneers who took part in the Great Trek into the interior did not have any kind of organized church life and not having ministers of religion, their only source of knowledge was the bible. In their struggle for survival they gradually came to identify themselves with the nation of Israel. With the establishment of another two Dutch Reformed (Hervormde and Gereformeerde) churches in the 1850s in the Transvaal three so-called sister churches originated. Afrikaners believed that they were called upon to spread the Christian faith in Africa' (South African History Online, [n.d.]).

possible narrative exercise for a classroom would be for educands to imagine and author stories on how South Africa could possibly have developed if the forefathers had recognized that God has children from every tribe (Rev 7:9) and consequently they are not the only 'chosen ones'. Alternatively, educands could also author stories on how the future of South Africa could be if everyone would truly embrace the vision of unity in Christ (Gal 3:28) and recognize they have brothers and sisters from every tribe (Rev 7:9). Mere peaceful co-existence would then become untenable and a true rainbow nation would become a reality.

Although South Africa might seem distant from maximal reconciliation and true unity in diversity, teacher-educators can make valuable contributions and play inspiring roles in the formation of South African citizens. A narrative and confessional approach can help teacher-educators in providing them with a unifying vision for the future. Narrative exercises can serve as part of a (Christian) formative pedagogy of desire which addresses the human heart and inspires human action by appealing to love and desire, through the formation of habits, affections and imagination. The journey towards a post post-Apartheid society might be long, but narrative can be a vehicle for teacher-educators to engage with educands in the creation of a culture of committed, honest participation and authentic dialogue where life histories of people from different backgrounds can be truly connected as they openly confess their beliefs and together explore narrative possibilities of a reconciled South Africa.

Teacher-educators should be placed within multicultural, intercultural and transcultural contexts (primarily in family environments and schools, but especially also in universities) which encourage and enable honest, committed participation and authentic dialogue in the lives of people from different backgrounds. It is only by voluntarily becoming mutually involved in the lives of one another, that it will finally be possible for South Africa as a post-Apartheid society to enter a post-post-Apartheid epoch where individual citizens will no longer experience the need for defining their own identities in relation to (or in terms of) Apartheid semantics and rhetoric. Although unity might be a blurry and distant vision at this juncture, it would nonetheless be pedagogically justifiable if teacher-educators could be persuaded to make the time in their busy daily schedules to intensify their own teachings on the meaning of Being Human and to keep pointing out the inherent dangers of reductive ideologies to their educands. In order to move forward toward maximal reconciliation in South Africa, this might, arguably, be our best chance of overcoming the legacies of the past.

Chapter 5: Complementing the foundations of a (Christian) confessional and narrative approach to philosophy of education: applying Frye's narrative typology of fictional modes to life-related narratives of everyday experience and postmodernism

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter I present Northrop Frye's typology of fictional modes as a supplement to a (Christian) confessional narrative approach to philosophy of education (Braun & Potgieter, 2019c). Frye's typology is introduced as a transhistorical framework, based on traditionally codified patterns, that helps understanding and interacting with the world from a perspective that narratively accounts for the individual's power of action in a way that allows him/her to remain open for future innovations without disregarding the value of either the past, or of tradition. In order to illustrate how this typology can be used, I have applied Frye's narrative schematism to biblical narratives, life-related narratives and nihilistic postmodern philosophy. This threefold procedure was chosen in order to substantiate the claim that a confessional and narrative approach offers philosophy of education a viable alternative to postmodern nihilism. Since the latter tends to overemphasize group identity and revolution at the cost of order and individual responsibility, I argue that my approach can serve philosophy of education's goal of guiding educands to responsible citizenship and the fulfilment of their (individual and collective) potential in a postmodern age.

5.2 Rationale

The academic subfield of Philosophy of Education essentially studies the (a) necessity, (b) possibility and (c) limits of education. In order to accomplish this, philosophers of education observe, survey, study and research the objectives, forms, methods, meaning and outcomes of education. This means that Philosophy of Education involves, amongst others, scholarly reflection about fundamental questions such as the following three, which I will address in light of my proposed approach to philosophy of education:

- What should the aim of education be?
- What should human beings be taught and should this differ in terms of their individual and/or communal interests and abilities?
- How should human beings be educated (formed, taught and/or trained)?

Our answer to the first question draws on the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy[55] and emphasizes the ultimate goal of education, which is to guide individuals to develop their potential and become responsible citizens. The postmodern emphasis on difference has become a problem for education as it often leads to overemphasising group identity at the cost of the individual. Nihilistic postmodernism also tends to be sceptical of tradition and to overemphasize revolution and chaos at the cost of ideals of order. Narrative schematisms do, however, offer transhistorical ways of interpreting life-related narratives[56] according to an ever-evolving traditional symbolic network. By supporting the individual's pursuit of meaning (including his community) in the face of life's existential tensions, offering poetic solutions and opening up viable ways of progressing without forgetting the past, narrative schematisms provide orientation and inspire responsible action, empowering individuals to take full responsibility in and for their own life-journeys.

A confessional and narrative approach to education allows the educand to define and pursue his/her own life goals; confessionally by being open with regard to his/her convictions and beliefs and narratively by imagining a trajectory which can lead to the desired/established goals. This approach also recognizes the person's belonging to a community with its own set of confessed beliefs and narratives and consequently one's need of learning how to enter into and participate in authentic dialogue, and also how to participate in communal life. It is my contention that teacher-educators should make use of narrative's universal strengths as it provides a bridge between individual stories of experience and the symbolic meanings derived from people's cultural and social backgrounds (Stephens, 2014:22). As narrative generates a sense of both the individual and the community by connecting life histories with narrative schematisms, it can enrich the interactions between teacher-educators and their educands while at the same time paying attention to the individual voices of their educands

---

[55] The aim of education is '*to equip individuals with skills and substantial knowledge that allow them to understand, define and pursue their own life-goals as well as to participate with integrity in the life of their community as fully-fledged, responsible citizens*' (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2016).

[56] As suggested by ordinary speech, temporal experience has a pre-narrative structure (Ricœur, 1984:59). Therein, emplotment has the mediating function of configuring our pre-understanding, enabling different components and situations to be conceived as interrelated parts of the same or a different narrative (Ricœur, 1984:66). Over time, this mixed intelligibility engendered by emplotment is what ultimately constitutes the narrative schematisms of culture, and consequently, tradition. This is why 'To understand a story is to understand both the language of 'doing something' and the cultural tradition from which proceeds the typology of plots' (Ricœur, 1984:56). Considering that narrative schematisms are constituted within a history that has all the characteristics of tradition (Ricœur, 1984:68), it is legitimate to refer to an enduring '*traditional symbolic network*' preceding postmodernism which necessarily guarantees some sort of narrative coherence in cultural formation. It should, nevertheless, be clear that this narrative coherence is dynamic and that it can never translate into uniformity, because narratives are either deviant or dependent paradigms (Ricœur, 1984:217) and they reflect the traditional interplay between innovation and sedimentation (Ricœur, 1985:31).

(Stephens, 2014:28) instead of dogmatically imposing worldviews and interpretations on them in a top-down fashion.

Due to the fact that education does not only take place at school and university, but also at home and in the community, it is my contention that teacher-educators, as well as parents/caregivers would benefit from adopting an approach which takes the primacy of narrative and confessed beliefs into consideration and promotes a culture of committed, honest participation and authentic dialogue[57] between teacher-educators and their educands. Although this is a broad definition, I am of the opinion that it provides a valuable framework of background assumptions which can enrich pedagogical activities and the interaction between teacher-educators and their educands in a postmodern age.

Regarding the second and third questions, it is not my intention to answer exhaustively what ought to be taught and how to educate. Instead, I wish to offer complementary insights on how we might best deal with such questions on a practical level via narrative reasoning. Following the premise that a narrative and confessional approach can only be applied properly if one makes it one's own by becoming aware of one's own presuppositions, it is up to the teacher-as-educator and/or the parent or caregiver-as-educator to integrate it creatively and responsibly into his/her own field of scholarly knowledge, professional competence and pedagogical interests.

In order to make use of narrative's power to create a bridge between individual stories of experience and the symbolic meanings derived from people's cultural and social backgrounds (Stephens, 2014:22) the following pages will introduce Northrop Frye's theory of fictional modes and explore its applicability as a narrative schematism which not only offers transhistorical ways of interpreting life-related narratives according to a traditional symbolic network but also offers practically valuable perspectives to enrich the interactions between teacher-educators and their educands. Accordingly, I believe that the following narrative perspectives can help education's goal of supporting individual and communal pursuits of meaning by providing poetic solutions and inspiring progress in the face of life's existential tensions.

5.3 Frye's fictional modes as a narrative typology

Northrop Frye, who was one of the most influential literary critics of the previous century, developed a theory of fictional modes in his classic work 'Anatomy of Criticism' (Frye, 1957)

---

[57] A (Christian) confessional and narrative approach should be distinguished from religious relativism. I emphasize that the neutrality of reason should be openly rejected by teacher-educators in order to promote a culture of committed, honest participation and authentic dialogue. Authentic dialogue enriches and brings people closer culturally, helping to create new syntheses and enabling committed, honest participation in each other's lives.

which helps accounting for the different narratives experienced by human beings in terms of the (narrative) hero's power of action in traditionally codified stories.

It is important to note that narrative schematisms are not to be seen as metaphysical categories obtained through abstract thinking. Instead, they should be understood as (symbolically) representing codified patterns of human experience and behaviours. *Symbolic* here refers to the pre-modern manner of interpretation which united (objective) fact and (subjective) meaning in a description of phenomena that does not aim at (modern) objective precision[58], but at the coherence between subject and object in human experience instead (Pageau, 2018:9). Symbolic interpretations[59] (Peterson, 1999:15) have widely lost their prominence since the rise of modern objectivistic models. Carl G. Jung offers an explanation which elucidates the core of symbolic interpretations, based on an example of pre-modern man's interpretation of a sunrise:

> *It is not enough for the primitive to see the sun rise and set; this external observation must at the same time be a psychic happening: the sun in its course must represent the fate of a god or hero who, in the last analysis, dwells nowhere except in the soul of man. All the mythologized processes of nature, such as summer and winter, the phases of the moon, the rainy seasons, and so forth, are in no sense allegories of these objective occurrences; rather they are symbolic expressions of the inner, unconscious drama of the psyche which becomes accessible to man's consciousness by way of projection — that is, mirrored in the events of nature* (Jung, 1980:7).

Although it would be difficult to find someone nowadays who would agree with this specific (symbolic) pre-modern understanding of a sunrise, it is nevertheless a perfect example of an interpretation that describes an event not for the sake of its pure objective meaning, but in terms that highlight its subjective significance instead. The same justification applies to the rationale of the fictional modes as Frye (Frye, 1957:33-67) developed them. He distinguishes between five modes in literature which also represent the types of narrative that can possibly

---

[58] Pageou aptly describes the difference between (modern) scientific and (ancient) traditional cosmologies: '…*scientific and traditional cosmologies see reality from two completely different perspectives: 1) in terms of its practical and material implications, and 2) in terms of its higher meaning. The first is the specialty of modern science, which conceptualizes all things in terms of meaningless matter and mindless causality. The second is the specialty of religion, which interprets every phenomenon as the manifestation of spiritual truth*' (Pageau, 2018:9).

[59] Peterson elucidates the contrast between the former (pre-modern) and the latter (scientific) manner of interpretation in the following way: '*The former manner of interpretation – more primordial, and less clearly understood – finds its expression in the arts or humanities, in ritual, drama, literature, and mythology. The world as forum for action is a place of value, a place where all things have meaning. This meaning, which is shaped as a consequence of social interaction, is implication for action, or – at a higher level of analysis – implication for the configuration of the interpretive schema that produces or guides action. The latter manner of interpretation – the world as place of things – finds its formal expression in the methods and theories of science. Science allows for increasingly precise determination of the consensually-validatable properties of things, and for efficient utilization of precisely-determined things as tools, once the direction such use is to take has been determined, through application of more fundamental narrative processes*' (Peterson, 1999:15).

be lived by human beings, namely the mythical, the legendary, the high mimetic, the low mimetic and the ironic narrative.

As literary categories, they do not aim at representing pure objective realities. Instead, they highlight the existential, subjective meanings attributed to narratives experienced by individuals and codified in literature. By representing the most basic narratives experienced by human beings, Frye's typology can serve educators in their pedagogical activities of providing existential orientation and helping educands to seek for, find and make meaning in their personal lives.

Significantly, by postulating that Frye's five fictional modes correspond to the basic (possible) narratives experienced by human beings, this narrative typology can be applied as a way of qualifying events and human action from a traditionally codified perspective.

Frye's theory of fictional modes will be presented in the following pages as a traditionally codified perspective in the sense of a narrative schematism which elucidates the continental (literary and cultural) tradition. Such schematism is helpful because it links up to the pre-narrative structure of our temporal experience, and as suggested by Ricœur (Ricœur, 1984:59), it mediates between experience and culturally established patterns of stories which configure our pre-understanding of the world.

5.3.1 Frye's fictional modes and the work of narrative

Narrative re-describes the world as a world that is open to the future although it never loses its connection to tradition. This is so because the interplay of innovation and sedimentation is derived from narrative schematisms that constitute tradition (Ricœur, 1984:77). Narrative has the power to reconfigure our temporal experience through the work of the productive imagination, connecting our understanding and intuition by engendering a mixed intelligibility[60] between themes, points, story, circumstances, characters, episodes,

---

[60] A narrative approach to texts is less concerned about scientific accuracy and more about the text's transformative power. Imagine for instance that a teacher-as-educator is discussing the ethics of Jesus' sermon of the mount: '*You have heard that it was said, "You shall love your neighbour and hate your enemy." But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven*' (Mt 5:43-45). While the natural human impulse might be to hate those who hate you, the reader of the text is invited to consider a different course of action, where immediate satisfaction is sacrificed for the sake of the greater good and of individual self-control over passionate impulses. Accordingly, pedagogic activities can be enriched by the discussion of narratives, because narratives activate the imagination and involve the whole person in a world where a story unfolds (Smith, 2006:46), opening up different possibilities of action and creating a sense of community which enable teacher-educators and their educands to connect their own stories to the narratives they discuss together. Smith calls such narrative approach a pedagogy of desire which addresses the human heart by an appeal to love and desire through the formation of habits, affections and the imagination (Smith, 2009:25) Narrative offers an interesting pedagogical alternative to the paradigmatic knowing often prioritized by educationists. Paradigmatic knowing is rooted in scientific modes of thought and represents the world through abstract propositional

discoveries, changes of fortune, etc. Narrative schematisms function within a traditional framework as '…the living transmission of an innovation always capable of being reactivated by a return to the most creative moments of poetic activity' (Ricœur, 1984:68). Ricœur classifies Frye's theory of fictional modes as such a (traditional) narrative schematism which does not justify itself by its (rational) coherence or its deductive virtues, but by its transhistorical capacity for providing an account of our cultural heritage, by means of an open, inductive process (Ricœur, 1984:15). In this chapter I will apply this particular rationale to the biblical framework which is the cornerstone of Christian religious heritage and which is of central importance to a confessional (Christian) approach.

5.3.2 The biblical narrative and human experience

According to Frye, the organizing principles of literature are myth (i.e. story or narrative) and metaphor (i.e. figurative language). The world of literature is a completely liberal world; the world of the free movement of the spirit. Poetic texts do not pressure us to believe in a story or to act upon it. They provide metaphors and we need not worry about factual absurdities. Poetic literature incorporates ideological concerns, but it devotes itself mainly to physical and spiritual concerns: fiction shows human beings in the primary throes of surviving, loving, prospering and fighting with the frustrations that block these things. Fiction is at once a world of relaxation (where even the most terrible tragedies are still called plays) and a world of far greater intensity than ordinary life can afford. In short, fiction does everything that can be done for people except transform them. Fiction creates a world that the spirit can live in[61], but it does not make us spiritual beings (Frye, 1991:16).

Frye concludes that the Bible, on the other hand, as a spiritual text, cannot be understood as a work of literature alone, even though it is written in the language of literature (i.e. myth and metaphor). Myth is classified by Frye as being neither historical nor anti-historical, but as being counter-historical instead (Frye, 1991:17). Accordingly, the Gospel presents Jesus Christ as a figure who drops into history from another dimension of reality, thereby showing the limitations of the (human) historical perspective. By emphasizing that the literal basis of faith in Christianity is mythical and metaphorical, Frye argues that the literary language of the New Testament, unlike literature itself, is not simply about suspending judgment but rather about conveying a vision of spirituality that continues to transform and expand our lives. In other words, the narrative configuration of the biblical stories become 'myths' to live by and

---

knowledge. Narrative on the other hand bridges individual stories of experience and the social meanings and spring of other worlds and cultures (Stephens, 2014:22).

[61] Accordingly, narratives can be used by teacher-educators who would like to address sensitive subjects in a classroom but are insecure on how their educands might react. By prescribing texts to be read and responded or even suggesting to their educands that they author texts on specific subjects, narrative offers a more immersive and less imposing route of interaction by inviting the reader to participate in terms of his own experience and associations he/she might relate to a given text.

its metaphors become metaphors to live in (Frye, 1991:18). That said, Frye's reading of the Bible underlines the primacy of narrative over reason and suggests that (biblical) religion provides a pre-theoretical framework which aims at orienting (i.e. configuring) and transforming human beings internally. Following this logic one could suggest that (biblical) religion is to be tested in terms of the way it shapes people's lives (including its various relationships) and actions when the biblical message is embodied.

5.3.3 Frye's fictional modes and the biblical narrative

Being written in the language of literature, the biblical narrative also contains the five basic types of characters: (a) God, (b) prophets, seekers and believers[62] (i.e. legendary type), (c) high mimetic, (d) low mimetic and (e) ironic. Accordingly, the Bible[63] offers numerous accounts of people having encounters with (a) God. Their existence is thereby elevated to a (b) legendary/prophetic plane (i.e. mediating between the human and the divine), as their encounters with God are characterized by a synchronicity between natural and personal events in such a way that it (symbolically) joins 'heaven and earth' (Pageau,[64] 2018:22-23). In other words, the biblical narrative offers testimony of spiritual encounters and at the same time presents a world where human beings (i.e. its readers) can relive these experiences by living in accordance with those stories.

The biblical narrative also presents characters (c) of the high mimetic type such as, for example, the Pharisees and Sadducees, who are oftentimes characterized as scholars with greater theoretical knowledge of Scripture and tradition than others who nonetheless ironically misinterpret the true meaning of God's Word and lack the spiritual vision to grasp the truth that Jesus is the Christ who fulfils the promises of God in Scripture. In fact, the biblical narrative often classifies the pursuits of pure reason as ironic, human wisdom being foolishness before God (1 Cor 1:23-26) because it does not consider God as the beginning

---

[62] Seekers and believers belong to the legendary type because their spiritual pursuits elevate their existence to the prophetic plane where synchronicity and fullness of meaning are obtained through faith and religious experience.

[63] After being presented with an overview on the characteristics of each one of the five types of characters, the educands can be allocated tasks of classifying the characters from different stories. After identifying the five types in different stories, they could also be asked to imagine what the characters would have to do in order to be classified differently. Such exercises of classifying characters entail the classification of action/behaviour and they can therefore serve to inspire or/and question action/behaviour as well. By imagining how situations can possibly play out through the behaviour/actions of characters, teacher-educators and their educands can engage in open discussions about all sorts of imaginable subjects.

[64] In his new book on (ancient) biblical cosmology, Mathieu Pageau aptly describes the centrality of heaven and earth being brought together in the biblical cosmology and spirituality: '…*the union of heaven and earth involves a dual interaction, in which the heavens 'cover the earth' and the earth 'supports the heavens.' On one end, spiritual reality informs corporeal reality with meaning and purpose. On the other end, matter expresses spirit by making it visible and tangible in the universe*' (Pageau, 2018:22-23). This underlines the centrality of metaphorical language, as emphasized by Frye, as it is used in the Bible.

of wisdom (Prov 9:10), who is the absolute Origin and ultimate source of purpose and coherence of meaning. The Bible also contains many stories of 'common people' (i.e. low mimetic type) who just go with the flow and simply follow the *Zeitgeist* and/or the instructions of human authorities (e.g. intellectual authorities such as Pharisees and Sadducees) despite divine revelation breaking into their lifeworld and challenging the views and practices of their time.

Finally, the Bible is also full of stories where characters are described as ironic (e.g. Peter denying Christ three times although he had been warned about it beforehand by Christ himself). Another example of the ironic mode would be Nicodemus who, after hearing from Christ that one has to be born again in order to see the Kingdom of God (John 3:3), 'ironically' asks Christ if it is possible for someone to go back into the womb of his mother and be born a second time (i.e. without any sense for figurative language). Just like in the high and the low mimetic modes, ironic characters lack spiritual vision in order to grasp the spiritual language of Christ. Their vision of the world as well as their language is 'natural'; founded on the principle that the literal is the descriptive and it implies a subject-object split where whatever is objectified in ordinary experience is 'there' (Frye, 1991:40). This vision rules out the possibility of 'bringing heaven and earth together' existentially and it does, in fact, remind us of the modern immanent, impersonal and rationally understandable order (cf. Taylor, 2007) which excludes transcendence and the possibility of experiencing the sacred.

5.3.4 Frye's fictional modes as basic (possible) narratives experienced by human beings

Although human beings do not encounter (a) God (or mythical characters) in the same sense in which they might encounter other people in their daily lives, millions of people have nevertheless given testimony of transformative intersubjective religious experiences (with God). Amongst them are prominent examples of such narratives, which Scruton aptly describes as those who claim to have found God always write or speak in those terms, as having found the intimacy of a personal encounter and a moment of trust. The great witnesses to this — Saint Teresa of Avila, Margery Kempe, Saint John of the Cross, Rumi, Pascal — surely persuade us that at least one part of the encounter with God lies in the irruption into consciousness of an intersubjective state of mind, but one that connects with no ordinary human subject. Included within that state of mind is also the sense of reciprocity: the sense of being targeted by the Other, I to I (Scruton, 2014:16).

Heroes (b) of the legendary type are well known to literature in stories of chivalry and knights or religious legends of saints. Both kinds of stories lean heavily on miraculous violations of natural law (Frey, 1957:34). While religious people might find it easier to relate to the spiritual

factuality of those stories, 'secular' or less religious people might find such stories improbable and even unbelievable. Nonetheless, even in our times, there is no doubt that the legendary mode is still at work, for instance in 'solemnized' rituals such as birth (and subsequent baptism), confirmation, marriage and death (Taylor, 2007). In other words, contemporary society (in general) still attributes *higher significance* to important liminal positions (including so-called turning points or threshold co-ordinates) and events of life-related narratives. The way this higher significance is narratively constructed and experienced can therefore be classified as belonging to the legendary mode, as experiences which bring alignment of different levels of meaning[65] in a manner that produces the effects of synchronicity (i.e. joining heaven and earth; order and chaos).

Frye has also indicated this tendency in realistic fiction, where the author seeks to establish an imaginative alignment between man and nature by means of 'solemn sympathy[66]', thereby giving his hero an overtone of the legendary or mythical mode (Frye, 1957:36). One can assume that although secularized human beings have become 'objectively' sceptical about religious narratives, they are still somehow 'subjectively' driven by them in the way in which they attribute meaning to their life-related narratives (e.g. like popular stories of superheroes which remain attractive and inspiring nowadays) (Campbell, 2004). If this is the case, one can rightly assume that human events and intersubjective relationships still have a legendary/prophetic dimension. In terms of contemporary spirituality one could therefore conclude that personal development and goals are the most fulfilling when alignment of meaning and synchronicity is achieved. In other words, it is possible for contemporary human beings to play legendary/prophetic roles in people's life-related narratives (including their own lives). Modern sceptics and/or rationalists would most probably object to this suggestion, but a plausible case can be made that they completely miss the point by sticking to pure objectivity and disregarding the emphasized subjective significance at stake. In fact, 'life itself' remains a mystery which cannot be controlled by human rationality and objectivity.

---

[65] Educands can be asked to author stories about events where they believe they have experienced synchronicity, where everything seems to align into a perfect moment of happiness. As a pedagogical device of inspiring responsible action, teacher-educators can ask their educands to author stories about what they believe would be an ideal future (life or situation). What could help them progress in order to achieve this goal? What could prevent them from becoming their best possible self (internal and external factors)? They can also be asked to write about a true or imaginative story where a person's life appears to be perfect but due to an unfortunate turn of events it becomes increasingly chaotic. What could the character do in order to rise up again or, at least, what can s/he do in order to survive in case suffering becomes unbearable? These are only a few examples to illustrate that the narrative typology that I am presenting can be a useful pedagogical device as it can connect all sorts of narratives with personal histories and help promoting a culture of committed, honest participation and authentic dialogue in the classroom while inspiring responsible action.

[66] Frye's term 'solemn sympathy' is synonymous to synchronicity and stands for the same alignment of meaning that takes place when a natural event 'converges' with a human event.

Characters of the (c) high mimetic type are superior in degree to other human beings but not to their natural environment. They have attributes (e.g. authority, passions, power of expression) greater than common human beings, but they are nonetheless subject to social criticism and the order of nature (Frye, 1957:32-33). Frye claims that the (continental) theological legacy of sharply distinguishing between divine and human natures has made a decisive contribution to the differentiation process that took place in literature, leading to the clear separation between the mythical, romantic/legendary/prophetic, high mimetic, low mimetic and ironic strands and to the development of a literary tradition where the (supra-temporal) divine and the (temporal) natural are clearly distinguished (Frye, 1957:35).

This suggests that the very distinction between the human and the divine has played a crucial phenomenological role in the development of our current sense of order. This sense of natural order is apparent in tragedies of the high mimetic type (e.g. fictions of the fall of a leader) where the hero falls and gets isolated from his society due to the supremacy of natural law. The hero's mortality is a natural fact and sign of his/her humanity whereas the lack of divine intervention has an ironic implication. The high mimetic hero is therefore positioned between godlike heroism and all-too human irony (Frye, 1957:37). One could infer that the high mimetic hero awakens the reader's expectations of transcendence although the supremacy of the natural order prevails at the end of the story. In everyday experience it is easy to relate to the high mimetic mode in terms of human beings' different talents and attributes, which are experienced as superior/inferior to one another in the most different situations and relationships. Paradoxically, the same (superior) talents and attributes which are advantageous in particular contexts can prove to be liabilities in another context. A well-known example from popular culture is to be found in stories of genius scientists lacking social competence. Although their skills might, for example, allow them access to prestigious academic positions, their lack of competence in human relationships might isolate them from other people and particular kinds of social activities.

It should not surprise us therefore that the high mimetic hero is so prominently featured in works of realistic fiction. By being balanced midway between godlike heroism and all-too human irony, high mimetic heroes capture the common human experience of having a sense of transcendence and at the same time being subjected to a world where situations can always (possibly) expose his/her vulnerability and mortality. This vulnerability is not necessarily a weakness: it can be simply a matter of being a strong character in an exposed position (Frye, 1957:38).

Heroes of the (d) low mimetic mode are usually presented as isolated by a weakness which appeals to the reader's sympathy because it is on their own level of experience (Frye,

1957:38). Readers respond to a sense of their common humanity and expect from the story the same canons of probability that they find in their own experience (Frye, 1957:33). A basic idea in such stories is the exclusion of the hero (on our level) from a group to which s/he tries to belong. A central tradition of this kind of story therefore explores how someone like ourselves can be broken by conflicts 'between the inner and the outer world, between imaginative reality and the sort of reality which is established by a social consensus' (Frye, 1957:39).

So, instead of narratives about the fall of the (high mimetic) leader and hero, narratives of the low mimetic mode will often focus on an individual's aspiration (and sometimes obsession) to rise in the world. This 'downward orientation' of the low mimetic mode can consequently be understood as the main feature distinguishing low mimetic heroes from the 'upward' orientation of the previous modes. Low mimetic narratives are therefore classified by Frye as being determined by *pathos* which is closely related to sensations and the mediocre incapability of absorbing and purging pity and fear into pleasures, as it is done in the other modes (Frye, 1957:38-40). The *pathos* of a narrative can be increased by the inarticulateness of the 'victim' (i.e. the suffering low mimetic subject) and it is easy for people to relate to it, because of our sense of common humanity and our own experience of sometimes being, acting and suffering in a way that makes us feel inadequate in given situations.

It can therefore be suggested that the low mimetic mode is commonplace of and to our experience given our flaws, limited human abilities and talents to cope with reality. Nonetheless, the reality of the previous modes in our lives, manifested in manifold encounters and events should not be forgotten, because they are also commonplace and experienced in moments of synchronicity. They inspire people not to focus too much on subjective sensations (as in the low mimetic mode) but to seek the bigger picture and to dig deeper, so that they might be able to explore their talents and highest possibilities in their own life-journey's pursuit of fullness of meaning and self-actualization.

Frye argues that heroes can be understood to belong to the (e) ironic mode, if they are perceived as being inferior either in power or intelligence compared to ourselves, so that we might experience a sense of looking down on a scene of bondage, frustration, or absurdity. This is still true even if the reader might feel as if s/he is (or might be) in the same situation, as the situation is being judged by the norms of a greater freedom (Frye, 1957:33).

In literature, ironic characters are presented through the technique of saying as little and meaning as much as possible. A pattern of words is chosen that turns away from direct statements and obvious meanings. The ironic fiction-writer pretends to know nothing (even that his character is (or might be) ironic) and makes use of (naïve) complete objectivity and the suppression of all explicit moral judgments, so that pity and fear are not raised in ironic art, but rather reflected to the reader from the story itself. This offers the reader the sense of looking down on the character and his inadequacy(-ies). Born from the low mimetic mode, irony takes life exactly as it finds it, without moralizing and by completely focusing on the subject.

Tragic irony consequently portrays the ironic hero only as someone who gets isolated from society and the central principle ruling such stories is that whatever exceptional happens to the hero is causal (i.e. due to natural laws) and out of line with his character (Frye, 1957:40-41). This means that irony isolates from the tragic situations the sense of the victim having been unlucky. The fate of the hero is thus experienced as a natural consequence of his/her being-in-the-world and/or his/her lack of ability. S/he is portrayed as innocent in the sense that what happens to him/her is greater than his/her own actions, but s/he is also guilty as a member of a guilty society where chaos and destructive behaviours are an inescapable part of existence (Frye, 1957:41). Frye points to the biblical story of Job as an example of a 'transitional story' between irony and myth, where the ironic hero unsuccessfully tries to justify himself as a victim of God. Frye uses Job's story to point out that irony has the tendency of beginning in realism and then steadily moving back towards myth, where the divine begins to reappear (Frye, 1957:42). Interestingly, the entire Bible portrays sin ironically, as a movement away from God, which results in disaster. The book of Judges is an example that accounts for the transition from the ironic to the mythical and legendary/prophetic mode. Therein, Israel is described as going through a series of disasters and restorations in light of their dramatic relationship with God (Frye, 2004:21-22). In fact, theologians have recognized the dramatic interplay between the ironic and the mythical as something characteristic of human existence, as Jenson explains in his classical work (Jenson, 1997:55):

> *Just so also our actions and with them our lives threaten to fall or be torn between past and future, to become fantastic or empty, unplotted sequences of occurrence that merely happen to befall certain otherwise constituted entities. Human life is possible only if past and future are somehow bracketed by reality that reconciles them in present meaning, so that sequences of events have plot and can be narrated. Personal life posits an embrace around created time, to clasp its doings and sufferings in dramatic coherence.*

This means that the interplay between the (human) ironic and the (divine) mythical is mediated through dramatic narrative. Jenson even claims that God's self-identity lies in dramatic coherence and sees this proposition as mandatory for those who wish to worship the biblical God, as the history of Israel exemplifies (Jenson, 1997:64):

> *Even Israel's ability to conceive a continuity of her own history through the discontinuities of her fate, and, for centuries, to interpret and re-interpret that history theologically to produce the Scripture the church received, did not result from continuous ability to synthesize the religious and conceptual deposit to date, but depended on her antecedent and repeatedly re-own conviction that IHWH in his personal identity had been and would be the protagonist of her doings and sufferings, however apparently discontinuous; the scriptural narrative is thus itself Israel's sole construal of the Lord's self-identity.*

In other words, the drama of human existence is characterized by the all-too human ambivalent (i.e. oftentimes ironic) orientation in the world, positioned between sin and repentance, idolatry and faith, malevolence and benevolence, low passions and higher aspirations. The human condition that is portrayed therein, can therefore be viewed as ironic because it relates to our common experience, because of the human inability of being constantly good, and even more so because of the human being's tendency to cultivate patterns of behaviour that s/he knows will ultimately lead to chaos and disaster.

A symbolic interpretation of these biblical patterns therefore points to God as the principle of ultimate constancy as well as the promise of restoration (i.e. positive change) in the midst of a contingent world where chaos and ambivalent human behaviour threatens human existence and society. Consequently, literal interpretations of disasters as being God's fault completely miss the point, because they attempt to interpret ultimate reality according to (i.e. contingent) human standards whereas such an orientation prevents human beings from seeing God's narrative function as that which enables restoration (of present and future), beginning by and with one's own orientation. In other words, God is narratively the ultimate force in bringing alignment of meaning and synchronicity into our ambiguous human existence, which is full of ironic moments where people live below their potential and struggle to rise up.

5.3.5 Frye's fictional modes and postmodernism

In the previous section of this chapter I have demonstrated how useful Frye's typology of fictional modes can be in the interpretation of the biblical as well as life-related human narratives. Regardless of one's ultimate convictions, there should be no doubt that Frye's traditional narrative schematization offers interesting narrative possibilities of understanding and interacting with the world from the perspective of an individual's (narrative) power of action. What is more, Frye's literary approach can also be used to classify postmodernism

within the traditional framework from which it emerged. As mentioned before, Frye's narrative approach does not justify itself by its (rational) coherence or its deductive virtues, but by its transhistorical capacity for providing an account of our cultural heritage, by means of an open, inductive process (Ricœur, 1984:15). Since my endeavour is to elaborate a (Christian) confessional narrative approach to philosophy of education in a postmodern age, it makes sense to study how Frye's typology relates to postmodernism.

When applied (i.e. to the history of philosophy), Frye's narrative typology suggests that (b) there's a legendary type of philosophy with a maximally possible approximation to wisdom (e.g. Socrates, Plato, Aristotle), (c) a high mimetic type of philosophy which is intellectually outstanding but still cannot reach true wisdom, (d) a low mimetic type which gets stuck and lost in the midst of everyday problems and (e) an ironic type of philosophy which positions itself as a reflection of its own incapacity and cognitive impotence (cf. De Carvalho, 2002:31).

While it could be disputed which philosophies might qualify as legendary, the enduring legacies of the above mentioned Greek fathers over thousands of years represent strong evidence for the transformative power and adaptability of their philosophies. A possible religious explanation for this longevity has to do with the alignment between the basic Greek notions of form and matter and ancient cosmology's notions of heaven and earth as a basic (symbolic) paradigm for finding orientation in a world that is constituted by the interplay of order and chaos and the responsibility of the individual as a mediator between them. This paradigm is fundamental for a narrative and confessional approach of reality, and consequently it serves as the backdrop for a confessional and narrative philosophy of education.

Conversely, nihilistic postmodern philosophy has explicitly waged war on totality and as a consequence it openly rebels against the very possibility of 'joining heaven and earth':

> *We have paid a high enough price for the nostalgia of the whole and the one, for the reconciliation of the concept and the sensible, of the transparent and the communicable experience… Let us wage war on totality; let us be witnesses to the unpresentable; let us activate the differences and save the honor of the name* (Lyotard, 1984:81-82).

In symbolic terms, Lyotard's rebellion against *the reconciliation of the concept and the sensible* signifies nothing more than a rebellion against the reconciliation of heaven and earth in ancient cosmology. In other words, there is no room left for higher significance within this nihilistic framework. In terms of Frye's typology, this immanent inclination of nihilistic

postmodernism is characterized by the same 'downward' orientation to be found in the low mimetic and ironic modes and their mediocre incapability (Frye, 1957:38-40) of transcending a pathetic outlook on the world[67]. Consequently, nihilistic postmodernism also qualifies as an ironic type of philosophy which positions itself as a reflection of its own incapacity and cognitive impotence (cf. De Carvalho, 2002:31). A few examples should suffice to substantiate this claim.

Take, as an example, the postmodern condemnation of every appeal to transcendent metadiscourses as being patriarchal, western, colonial, etc. (Kellner, 1988:253). This view leads to inevitable performative contradictions, since postmodernism proposes its own metadiscourse to transcend experienced struggles, favouring particular ideas while excluding other options from the outset.

One could also consider Baudrillard's take on the technological revolution and hyperreality[68] as reflecting an intellectual incapacity of coping with radical changes in our lifeworld. The fact that there are radical changes underway does not imply that there is no way of facing the challenges within the realm of human possibilities and the commonly shared and evolving symbolic network. What is more, there is an ironic spin in the postmodern scepticism with regard to rational objectivity and the rejection of the modern narrative of continual progress of sciences and techniques (Baudrillard, 1987:65-66), because it does not lead to the general realization that the modern (autonomous) ideal of rationality, which gives primacy to subjective reason, should be rejected as well. By failing to do so, nihilistic postmodernism ends up (ironically) attacking the very possibility of truth while at the same time suggesting to be proclaiming *the* 'truth'.

Nonetheless, although the above-mentioned inclination towards the ironic and the low mimetic modes are predominant in nihilistic postmodernism, there are moments where the postmodern narrative is presented with a mythical and legendary overtone in much the same way as realistic fiction is accomplished when the author seeks to establish an imaginative alignment between man and nature by means of 'solemn sympathy', thereby offering his hero an overtone of the legendary or mythical mode (Frye, 1957:36). Nietzsche, who is arguably the first postmodernist and who remains a highly influential source of inspiration for

---

[67] Pathetic, in a literary context, simply refers to the individual's sensations.

[68] For Baudrillard (1988) the postmodern condition is more than just a rebellion against the logic of modernism. The technological revolution gave rise to hyperreality and it has become very hard to distinguish between reality and simulations. Society is saturated by mass media and an infinite proliferation of meanings and signs. Also referring to the changes caused by technology, more specifically to knowledge in computerized societies, Lyotard (1984:3) stresses that the new forms of social life not only undermine old habits, bonds and social practices of modernity, but that the conditions of knowledge have been changing due to technological transformations.

postmodern philosophy (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2016) and his doctrine of the Super(hu)man probably represent the best example (Dooyeweerd, 2012:11) of an attempt to redefine human existence atheistically by using religious language as an artifice.

Notably, Nietzsche has also tried, functionally, to attain the effects of synchronicity of the legendary and mythical modes and to compensate his rejection of transcendent religion by celebrating the transfigurative nature of music (cf. Lütkehaus, 2006:102). In fact, in 'The Birth of Tragedy out of the Spirit of Music' (*Die Geburt der Tragödie aus dem Geiste der Musik*) Nietzsche elevates music to metaphysical status (Bowie, 2010:74) and bluntly confesses his belief that human existence and the world only find 'eternal justification as an aesthetic phenomenon' (Nietzsche, 1998:17). This is important because it underlines Frye's literary critique that the ironic mode eventually leads back to the legendary and the mythical and to the reappearance of the divine. More importantly, this interpretation of Nietzsche as a precursor of postmodernism also strengthens the previously elaborated claim that the legendary and mythical modes, and consequently religion, remain fundamental to human existence and life-related narratives in spite of nihilistic postmodern attempts to redefine the world without it, because even rebellion against religion relies on its poetic function.

5.4 Conclusions for philosophy of education

It was my intention in this chapter to present Frye's narrative typology as a confessional and narrative alternative to the postmodern emphasis on group identity. Frye's fictional modes offer a traditionally codified schematism which accounts for the basic types of narratives experienced by human beings. Consequently, a confessional narrative approach does not have to dispense with master narratives because of the decline of the modern narrative of progress; it is suggested by nihilistic postmodernism. Instead of giving up tradition altogether and seeking refuge in irreconcilable chaos and group identity, a confessional and narrative approach appeals to traditionally codified patterns of human experience and behaviour, as a symbolic network to be built upon and constantly reformed by responsible human beings.

Natural changes and the human strive for innovation are seen by a confessional and narrative framework as necessary constituents of human experience. They do not, however, happen at the cost of constancy and order. Order and chaos are correlatives and irreducible to each other. In other words, neither order nor chaos is absolute and only the individual is able to mediate between the two. This ancient viewpoint is of fundamental importance for a confessional and narrative approach which positions human beings between heaven and earth, as creatures which are destined for an (individual) spiritual journey, to make a specific (individual) difference in the world by positively participating in the life of their communities and actualizing the symbolic context that they happen to form part of.

The confessional and narrative framework therefore shares the postmodern concern for change and openness towards the future, although it does so without forgetting the past or giving up on constancy. By introducing Frye's fictional modes and relating them to life-related narratives, the biblical narrative and also to postmodernism, my main goal was to present an alternative to the postmodern emphasis of group identity at the cost of individual responsibility. I believe that Frye's narrative typology can capture their imaginations and provide a basic guide for teacher-educators[69], their educands, as well as for ordinary human beings who might be searching for meaning and orientation in and for their own life-journeys. By appealing to basic narratives experienced by human beings and by pointing out how religious narratives continue to play a fundamental role in human beings' pursuit of synchronicity, the goal of this particular chapter has been accomplished, which was to account for the individual's power of action through traditionally codified narrative patterns

This is what I have attempted to accomplish in this chapter: after justifying my approach historically and elaborating how the work of narrative can be combined with the biblical narrative, I have explored the narrative landscape of the pilgrim as a religious archetype to be embodied in a postmodern age where certainties are questioned. I have dealt with ways by which narrative re-configures our temporal experience and pointed out how nihilistic postmodernism tends to overemphasize chaos at the cost of order and group identity at the cost of individual responsibility. This appeared to be problematic from the perspective of philosophy of education and the goal of education *per se*, which is to guide educands toward responsible citizenship and fully-integrated, ethical and honourable adulthood. In response to these resulting dilemmas, I have attempted to present Frye's narrative typology of fictional modes as narrative possibilities which could help to empower individuals and to enable them (including teacher-educators and their educands) to actualize their potential without forgetting the cultural background and symbolic network they are embedded in.

---

[69] By highlighting the individual's power of action within a traditional context a balanced view of individual and community can be promoted in education, thereby avoiding the postmodern nihilistic inclination of overemphasizing group identity at the cost of individual responsibility.

Chapter 6: Guidelines for a confessional and narrative educational praxis – re-enchanting the classroom spiritually through (confessed) faith and narrative

6.1 Provisional conclusions – preparing to introduce guidelines for a confessional and narrative educational praxis

Throughout the course of this thesis, a narrative and confessional approach to philosophy of education has been developing in light of postmodern sensibilities and dilemmas whereby (a) the necessity of education and its central role in individual and cultural formation has been emphasized, (b) confessional and narrative possibilities for individual and communal empowerment have been elaborated and illustrated, inter alia, through narrative exercises while (c) a wide range of contemporary challenges have been linked to fundamental philosophical questions concerning the relationship between education and topics such as religion, order and chaos, narrative identity and the historical position of postmodernism, divisive ideologies, difference, narrative schematism, tradition or Being Human.

In this current, penultimate chapter of this thesis, guidelines for a confessional and narrative approach to philosophy of education will be developed, based on the narrative exercises previously suggested. In contrast to the previous chapters where the practical relevance has been restricted to illustrations of arguments while narrative exercises have been mostly suggested in footnotes, the main focus of the guidelines will be to expand on the previously presented narrative exercises and elucidate its practical relevance. Besides providing an overview of previously suggested exercises to be implemented in classroom situations by teacher-educators, the guidelines will also serve to summarize the relevance that a confessional and narrative approach to philosophy of education can have, not only in terms of providing a vision for teacher-educators, but also in terms of the underlying rationale which can be of long-term significance for education's contribution to individual and cultural formation. Moreover, the following elaborations will mainly draw conclusions from what has been established previously in the course of the thesis and therefore it will merely include a few new references. The reader is consequently advised to read attentively through the entire thesis in order to comprehend accurately the reasoning behind the following presentation[70].

---

[70] This is not meant to be a presumptuous statement, because fundamentally speaking, the proposed approach is not an invention snatched from the sky above. Instead, simplifying it to an extreme, it merely represents an innovative synthesis involving postmodern sensibilities, traditional (pre-modern) Christian and (reformational) thinking, the symbolic network of the old (continental) world and

6.1.1 Philosophy of Education - moving from modernity to postmodernity

Postmodernism has affected philosophy of education. After the universality of reason had been questioned and the modern narrative of progress had lost its credibility, not only did the rising (postmodern) multiplicity of viewpoints challenge philosophers of education (Chambliss, 2009:235), but also a point of no return *was* arguably reached. Besides viewing the history of philosophy and the history of education as mutually dependent parts of the same historical process, including the common appeal to an increased interdisciplinary focus (including, inter alia, psychology, sociology and history), there seems to be little agreement among philosophers of education regarding the nature and goals of philosophy of education or even regarding the relationship between philosophy and education. According to Chambliss, what therefore unites philosophers of education seems to be their interest in philosophical reflection on educational problems. There is a (postmodern) haunting sense of a variety of options and routes that might possibly be construed and followed, without anyone necessarily having to commit to either one of these approaches (Chambliss, 2009:250-251). In other words, postmodernism has affected philosophy of education to the extent where no theoretical consensus seems to be in sight.

Fortunately, the apparent lack of certitude does not necessarily have to be a definite problem. Instead, it can be seen as part of a process of re-orientation in the aftermath of modern rationalism. Narratively speaking, our lifeworld and landscape have changed to the extent where unity is probably better sought in a common interest or aspiration, in a kind of vision of a better future, and not necessarily in rational-instrumental viewpoints. Theoretical viewpoints are, by definition, almost always reductive and presuppose the human use of techniques (i.e. tools). The human lifeworld and landscape itself are, however, always infinitely more complex than such reductions. Since the modern utopia of rational dominion lost its credibility in a postmodern age, scientific endeavors might finally have come into their own[71] by simply becoming the fragile human deepening of experience articulated through the

---

narrative theory (especially Ricœur's philosophy which deeply reflects on the relationship between *Narrative* and *Time* as the title of his Magnus Opus suggests).

[71] The recognition of the limits of scientific discourse should lead to the revaluation of the significance of religious discourse, as Peterson aptly points out (i.e. 'former' stands for pre-modern religious discourse and 'latter' for modern scientific discourse): 'The former manner of interpretation – more primordial, and less clearly understood – finds its expression in the arts or humanities, in ritual, drama, literature, and mythology. The world as forum for action is a place of value, a place where all things have meaning. This meaning, which is shaped as a consequence of social interaction, is implication for action, or – at a higher level of analysis – implication for the configuration of the interpretive schema that produces or guides action. The latter manner of interpretation – the world as place of things – finds its formal expression in the methods and theories of science. Science allows for increasingly precise determination of the consensually-validatable properties of things, and for efficient utilization of precisely-determined things as tools, once the direction such use is to take has been determined, through application of more fundamental narrative processes (Peterson, 1999:15).' Similarly, Krüger (2018:31) also points out how contemporary scientific discourse transcends its own

creation of a configuration framed by sets of premises and hypotheses and leading to ever more refined, but nevertheless mainly provisional, conclusions through observations and tests (Peterson, 1999; Krüger, 2018).

The postmodern recognition of the limits of science consequently re-opens the world towards its pre-rational foundations by means of the rediscovery of the primacy of narrative (Braun & Potgieter, 2019:1a). Considering that scientific determinations presuppose the application of narrative processes (Peterson, 1999:15), it makes sense to re-describe the *Sitz im Leben* of science narratively.

6.1.2 The limits of science, tools and the journey

This sub-section specifically cross-references with e.g. pp. 27, 30, 38, 39, 47, 48, 52, 54, 55, 56 and 77. In narrative terms, any scientific exploration can be metaphorically represented as a 'journey' and the scientific method(s) applied, can be represented as 'the set of tools used to proceed on this specific journey'. The (postmodern) lack of theoretical agreement can therefore be seen as a necessary move away from the presumption that (modern) instrumental rationality can possibly represent reality accurately and totally. One can conclude that, in essence, nothing has changed, for science was always about the exploration of specific cosmic (i.e. temporal/natural) phenomena through the intentional and/or random creation of a verification path (i.e. journey), while life itself has always been about a journey to a Promised Land (i.e. desired future) taking place in the same cosmos. Science should not be understood or viewed as a religious route to redemption, just as religion should not be understood or viewed as a route to immediate redemption. While religion is about a journey to the Promised Land, only to be fully discovered through union with God in the afterlife, science is about a journey of exploration of specific phenomena and cosmic meanings[72], never to be fully disclosed during temporal existence due to the reductive nature of human viewpoints.

domain by asking ultimate (religious) questions: The scientific picture of nature implies questions reaching outside the domain of science itself. Such questions concern not only fact, number, empirical chains of cause and effect and explanatory models and theories, but stir on the edge of contemporary natural science' asking questions such as: 'What' 'was' 'before' the beginning?; How absolute was the beginning?; Will the universe utterly end?; If so, 'what' will 'be' 'after' the end?; Is the universe spatially finite or infinite?; Are there more universes than one, existing simultaneously and sequentially?; What is the relationship between 'matter' and 'life'?, Is the world process-driven, or led, by anything else, anything more, than physicality? What are the forces driving evolution?'

[72] Human viewpoints are always human constructions and therefore situated perspectives which presuppose the use of tools/instruments. They can therefore only offer reductionistic viewpoints. Philosopher of technology, Don Ihde, illustrates this point by referring to Galileo's telescope and its 'mode of seeing' which enhances the stars on the one hand and at the same time narrows down the rest of the world (Ihde, 1990:34-50). Don Ihde's phenomenology presupposes Heidegger's discovery, against common assumptions, that modern science was a creation of modern technology (Heidegger, 1962:20-23). On the other hand, religion as a (narrative) journey to the promised Land (including God and afterlife) is presupposed by believers or rejected by unbelievers although it cannot be scientifically confirmed or refuted.

Science cannot replace religion. Scientific investigations have the structure of a journey, where cosmic phenomena are investigated through intentionality and a constructed verification path. It remains, however, just a journey that has been created and explored by human beings and therefore it is, and always will be, reductive in scope. Life on the other hand can also be represented as a journey, but it is infinitely more complex than what human beings might happen to think or understand about it at any given set of co-ordinates in space-time.

The point of no return, which I mentioned earlier in this chapter, therefore refers to the modern scientific ideal which has failed to replace religion as a means to relate to the absolute. A return to such a modern presumptuous aspiration seems unlikely any time soon. As already affirmed at the start of this thesis, postmodernity has re-opened the world towards its pre-theoretical foundations, pointing to the limits of reason and the primacy of narrative over reason. The act of trusting theoretical reason has therefore always been religious at its core, although this can be easily overlooked, because it implies the belief in the universality of reason. This is why the shift from modernity to postmodernity is fundamentally religious in orientation.

For philosophy of education to be migrating from modernity to postmodernity therefore implies to give up the modern belief in the universality of reason and to open up to the (human) world's pre-theoretical foundations.

Human beings have always been surrounded by the mysteries of a world they do not really understand, struggling to survive through, amongst others, the creation of fragile structures of order. Moreover, a vision of a Promised Land (i.e. desired future) has also been there since ancient times[73] so that hope for a better future can remain vivid, as well as the conviction that the journey of life does have meaning. It is this (pre-theoretical) underlying meaning which should drive philosophers of education and teacher-educators in their philosophical interrogation of the nature, aims and problems of education, in matters related to:

- the aims and guiding ideals of education,

- the appropriate criteria for evaluating educational efforts, practices and products,

- dealing with problems related to the authority of the state and of teacher-educators,

- the rights of educands and parents/caregivers,

- undesirable phenomena such as indoctrination,

---

[73] At least for over 2000 years since the Abrahamic religion(s) was/were widespread.

- the importance of critical thinking

- or explorations into moral education.

All these issues concerning education (Siegel, 2009:1-2) are fundamentally related to education's ultimate goal which I have been stressing throughout the thesis: 'to equip individuals with the necessary skills and substantial knowledge that will allow them to understand, define and pursue their own life-goals as well as to participate with integrity in the life of their community as fully-fledged, responsible citizens' (cf. Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2016).

6.1.3 Philosophy of education and religion

This sub-section specifically cross-references with e.g. pp. 19,20, 32, 35, 36, 38 39, 54, 56, 57 and 60. Human beings are surrounded by mysteries because the complexity of the world goes beyond human comprehension. Religion (Christian) provides hope and a vision for a desired future and its main presupposition is that everything has meaning and purpose; everything in the cosmos is somehow interconnected. Religion offers philosophy of education a very basic presupposition, namely that everything has ultimate meaning[74] (Krüger, 2018:7). Inspired by hope and a vision for a desired future, human beings develop fragile structures of order in their earthly attempts to cope with reality. Human beings are finite and therefore have limited knowledge and resources. For this reason, human viewpoints can and should be constantly updated. These are important features of the narrative landscape that human beings have to negotiate with. In order to guide human beings so that they become responsible human beings and develop their full potential, teacher-educators would, furthermore, benefit from recognizing religion's role of providing hope and meaning. However, unlike modern presumptions, a postmodern (religious) vision suggests that meaning and hope are to be found in a journey (e.g. portrayed in religious and life-related narratives connecting human beings to themselves, to one another, to God and to the world) and not in presumed theoretical certainties.

6.1.4 The ultimate goal of education and difference

This sub-section specifically cross-references with e.g. pp. 31, 49, 50, 51, 57, 59, 60, 72, 75 and 90. Notably, the defined ultimate goal not only allows for differences in (and even of) opinion. It demands it, in a sense which implies that a person can only truly become him-

---

[74] Krüger uses the term spirituality in a synonymous sense to the way religion has been used in this thesis: '*Spirituality is generally used as a generic concept, representing the whole range of a person's or a social group's orientation in the world with reference to a transcendent source of meaning*' (Krüger, 2018:7).

/herself by establishing and pursuing his/her own life-goals. This definition also emphasizes communal participation and responsible citizenship, because human beings socialize and are called upon to participate in the process of cultural formation where values, norms and laws are constantly being actualized through human beings' interactions with one another and the world. This is why it is important for teacher-educators to create a culture of honest, committed participation and authentic dialogue in the classroom, so that educands can be prepared for their own, future, responsible adult lives by interacting with one another in a context (e.g. classroom) where some of their future responsibilities are reciprocally anticipated and explored. According to a narrative and confessional approach to philosophy of education, there is an indissoluble link between individual and culture that should be respected and promoted by all teacher-educators. By constantly elucidating this balance between individual and communal responsibility and through leading by example (i.e. embodiment of affirmed convictions), teacher-educators can, indeed, be (and remain) central role-players in the long-term goal of moving away from divisive ideologies and towards the creation of societies where there is unity in diversity.

Education in a postmodern age should be about individual and cultural formation in the face of difference. It should be about developing individuals who can deal with different viewpoints and people without trying to impose their views on others. It should be about participating in one another's lives and searching for opportunities to engage honestly and openly in authentic dialogue. Through honest, committed participation and authentic dialogue new syntheses can be created and herein probably lies postmodernity's greatest potential for education. By moving away from the modern rationalist focus on theoretical certainty, it therefore becomes even more important to act according to one's convictions and to learn to do so in such a way that enables communion with others (including those who might hold different beliefs and convictions).

In this way, postmodernity and the rediscovery of narrative shift our attention to patterns of behaviour and action. These patterns are traditionally codified and therefore they connect our present to our past. However, unlike modern rationalistic assumptions, a (postmodern) confessional and narrative approach recognizes that these patterns can and should be constantly updated. In other words, a narrative and confessional philosophy of education emphasizes human responsibility in terms of individual and cultural formation in a manner which can be discussed and explored by all kinds of people, especially in classroom-based contexts between teacher-educators and their educands. The classroom can thus be viewed as a practice ground of and for future society, because it is a site where future citizens are formed and prepared for their future lives and arguably, especially in tribalistic contexts, also the place where people from different backgrounds spend most of their time together.

Outside the classroom one's time is possibly predominantly spent, apart from work, within one's own culture(s) (e.g. family, ethnicity, friends, church) and sub-cultures (e.g. affiliations such as a sports club, book club, games, arts club/events, youth culture, church, etc.). Church was mentioned within both because it is not necessarily part of a person's 'inner circle' as casual visitors might only sporadically attend services and events.

6.1.5 Education, difference and the creation of a culture of honest and committed participation and authentic dialogue

This sub-section specifically cross-references with e.g. pp. 27, 36, 58, 59, 60, 68, 72, 73 and 76. The postmodern emphasis on difference converges with the ultimate goal of education of forming self-standing, fully-fledged, autonomous and (individually and culturally) responsible human beings. Accordingly, the claim that theoretical unity is not an universal ideal or even desirable in our age due to the specified multifaceted differences between human beings, naturally leads to the assumption that it would be far more desirable to overcome divisions and strive for more unity in diversity through the creation of a culture of honest, committed participation and authentic dialogue where individuals are allowed the opportunity of pursuing their own goals and developing their full potential, consequently contributing to the well-being of one another and their communities through the best possible development of their own abilities.

6.1.6 Education, theory and responsible action

This sub-section specifically cross-references with e.g. pp. 39, 40, 53, 55, 56, 65, 66 and 75. Following the postmodern assumption that theoretical convergence is less important than unity in terms of honest, committed participation and authentic dialogue, the proposed narrative and confessional approach suggest that responsible action should be the ultimate goal of any theory involving the education of human beings and that theoretical (scientific) knowledge about Being Human is relatively meaningless when it does not inspire responsible action. This does not imply that theoretical knowledge is not important. Instead, it implies that it should serve the purpose of helping to transform human beings into their best possible selves. Educational problems and questions are therefore not primarily located in the realm of ideas and teacher-educators should take great care not to treat human beings as mere thinking machines (Smith 2009:24). What they should be doing, instead, is to use Gilligan's (1982) and Noddings' (1984) notion of (a) caring as a 'relational human experience', (b) Waghid and Davids' (2018) notion of 'democratic citizenship', Waghid *et al.*'s notion of Ubuntu (2018), as well as (d) Waghid's (2019) notion of a 'pedagogy of care' to make use of theoretical knowledge as a means to inspire responsible action.

6.1.7 Formative pedagogy, worldview and the limits of reason

This sub-section specifically cross-references with e.g. pp. 7, 8, 15, 16, 17, 20, 21, 31, 32, 38, 40, 56 and 68. Assuming that education is fundamentally about individual and cultural formation, the emphasis on honest, committed participation and authentic dialogue is also in line with a formative pedagogy that addresses the human heart in order to shape habits, desires and affections in order to support human beings' basic orientation to their world (including their relationships to others) so that they might develop:

- their own vision of the good life (Smith, 2009:25),

- in a balanced way,

- which integrates individuality and community so as to empower and capacitate them

- to advance confidently in and along their journey to their own, personal Promised Land (i.e. desired futures),

- without absolutizing their own human viewpoints, but constantly learning from difference instead.

The fact that a confessional and narrative approach inspires the rejection of the modern ideal of universal reason or even suggests that the pursuit of theoretical unity amongst all people would be detrimental to true unity in diversity should, nonetheless, not be confused with relativism. The reason is that the rejection of universal reason simply means that we approach the absolute primarily through faith, and that reason merely (i.e. subsequently) reflects on what we (pre-theoretically) believe. In other words, reason is always inspired by a specific worldview, and the formative essence of education demands that teacher-educators, as well as their educands, be made aware of their beliefs and openly confess these instead of keeping the modern myth of rational neutrality alive. Accordingly, a confessional and narrative vision for education emphasizes that critical thinking should merely be a means of assisting people to develop a vision and consciously act upon what they believe (Smith, 2013:6), while at the same time learning to participate honestly and with focused commitment through the medium of, *inter alia*, authentic dialogue in people's lives despite differences of viewpoints. This does not mean that viewpoints are not questionable and that they should never be interrogated. It means, instead, that in order to become self-standing, fully-fledged, autonomous and (individually and culturally) responsible human beings in a postmodern age, our convictions should not be absolutized. They should, instead, be tested in dialogically safe contexts and embodied in a relational, caring, democratic and reciprocally humanitarian, loving pedagogy which contributes towards new syntheses and communion between pilgrims as 'foreigners' and 'strangers' (Derrida, 2001:16-17; Fewell, 2016:347; Ricœur, 1984:ix-x; Waghid, 2019:82; Noddings, 2007:372-

376).

In the following section, I draw a number of conclusions from the narrative exercises suggested during the course of this thesis. Besides commenting on them, complementary ideas and connections will also be presented in order to elucidate further how narrative and confessional strategies could best be implemented in the classroom in such a pedagogical manner that it would enable teacher-educators to own this approach and adapt it according to their own context and competence.

6.2 Implementing the guidelines for a narrative and confessional educational praxis

This sub-section specifically cross-references with e.g. pp. 39, 44, 59, 60, 73 and 75. A narrative and confessional approach should not be mismanaged as a dogmatic and inflexible method but should, instead, assist in providing a bridge between grounding narratives, confessed beliefs, individual life histories and practical philosophical reasoning for the sake of contributing to education's formative role in individual and cultural formation. Just like it has been emphasized throughout this thesis that it remains the individual's responsibility to bring forth a (narrative) synthesis, a plot, which brings together scattered events, goals, chances and causes into the whole of a complete story (Ricœur, 1984:ix-x), it also remains the responsibility of teacher-educators and educands to create their own syntheses so that they can advance in their life journeys in a manner that pays attention and responds to the specific dynamics and needs of their personal and cultural contexts.

The following section contains three sub-sections. Each one of them will consist of a recapitulation of and further comments with regard to the narrative exercises presented in the respective chapters. Besides providing an overview of exercises which can possibly be implemented in the classroom, conclusions will be drawn as to how these exercises relate to the rationale of a narrative and confessional vision for philosophy of education. Basically, all such exercises can be seen as bridges between grounding (religious) narratives, confessed beliefs and individual life histories, of which the main goal is to contribute towards the creation of a culture of honest, committed participation and authentic dialogue, and ultimately also to education's role in individual and cultural formation. The narrative function of dialogue, as pointed out previously, is the creation of new syntheses and it presupposes a person's openness to learn from/about the Other as stranger, foreigner and pilgrim (see chapter 3.)

6.3 Conclusions based on exercises from 'the worldview of the pilgrim and the foundation of a confessional and narrative philosophy of education'

6.3.1. Ultimate questions and worldview

This specific exercise cross-references with p. 46. Narrative exercises can be implemented in pedagogical activities, e.g. in multicultural and interreligious contexts in order to discuss how different (i.e. personal and communal) visions are built in terms of their presuppositions, both to enhance one's understanding of other people's worldviews as well as to develop a better understanding on how existential questions and challenges can possibly be dealt with practically according to such viewpoints. This does not mean that narrative would automatically solve all problems of society, but it could be a step towards increasing mutual tolerance and cooperation between people from different backgrounds in the formation of a normative consensus and the unification of society. Narrative exercises can help in this process, for instance by repositioning the participants in a manner where voices are equally heard, thereby allowing for greater personal empowerment and agency (Stephens, 2014:23).

This kind of exercise represents a practical attempt at creating a culture of honest, committed participation and authentic dialogue. Its application can be adapted to specific needs and situations and it does not aim at criticizing worldviews or establishing which one might be right or wrong. Instead, participants are called to share their thoughts and experiences with worldviews. The main goal would then be to understand how particular worldviews frame and practically respond to existential questions and challenges such as:

- What is the meaning of life and its relationships?

- What is a person's and/or other creatures' value and ultimate goal?

- Is there a God and what kind of response does the divine require from human beings?

- Are all human beings essentially equal despite specific differences (e.g. gender, race, culture, creed, social status, etc.)?

6.3.2 Ethical dilemmas and worldview

This specific exercise cross-references with p.46. Narrative exercises can be used by presenting the educands with a particular ethical dilemma (see example below) and then requesting them to imagine how they could meaningfully engage with, explore, explain, understand and even solve this dilemma based on a particular worldview's presuppositions, for instance atheistic nihilism:

'*If there is no ultimate purpose in life, why should someone carry on with his/her life after*

*s/he loses all his/her loved ones and all his/her possessions (*i.e. *the biblical story of Job)?'*

This exercise focuses on the possible consequences that a person might suffer when embracing a particular worldview. In contrast to a modern rationalist approach in which logic would have the final word, a narrative and confessional approach explores, however, the plausibility and applicability of worldviews through imaginative and/or practical exercises related to spiritual visions. In other words, teacher-educators can either create imaginative situations or draw on personal experience.

Similar ethical dilemmas can be formulated in order to explore specific qualities of other worldviews. The goal is, however, not to establish logically if a worldview is right or wrong, but rather to inspire responsible action. Accordingly, although a person might still be willing to stick to, for example, a nihilistic atheistic worldview s/he should nevertheless be made aware of the worldview's underlying presuppositions and how it would (or could) affect his/her life and relationships. Only after becoming conscious of his/her own beliefs will s/he be able to take full responsibility for his/her actions and truly advance in his/her life's journey amidst individual and cultural responsibilities.

6.3.3 Existential struggles and worldview

This specific exercise cross-references with p.52. Educands can be asked to author stories, based on personal experiences or on the stories of others (e.g. friends, family members, news, historical figures, etc.) dealing with unpredictable events and situations (e.g. death, sickness, crime, break-ups, financial struggles, etc.). Pedagogically, two relevant questions in this regard would typically include:

- What long and short-term strategies would these educands use to survive and keep trying to progress?

- What role might love, hope and faith play in such situations?

There are infinite possibilities for writing such stories which could result in an abundance of pedagogically justifiable material for classroom interactions between teacher-educators and educands.

This kind of exercise deals with very personal existential questions. While questions on ethical dilemmas or the ultimate meaning of life can be answered more easily from a disengaged rational perspective, without exposing one's vulnerabilities, narrative exercises dealing with actual life struggles have the advantage of cutting much deeper. Nonetheless, the freedom to author about other people's experiences and/or about imaginatively created stories, allow participants to share their opinions and experiences with one another without

having to expose themselves by, for example, explicitly revealing personal and/or family struggles. Narrative thus provides a promising avenue of interaction for education (including intercultural contexts) by allowing different experiences and viewpoints to be shared and hopefully creating stronger connections between different people which would converge with education's desirable goal of overcoming divisions and contributing towards the creation of realistically unified societies.

6.3.4 Narrative and vocation

This specific exercise cross-references with p.54. Educands can be asked to author stories about possible professional careers and thereby imagine what talents, personality traits and skillsets they should have or would have to access and master in order to become effective and productive professionals in their respective fields of endeavour. By imagining and writing about multiple roles and professions, educands can imaginatively explore their own interests and possibly find out more about themselves. Later on in life, they could also try to explore the interconnection between different professional fields in terms of skillset and requirements, so that they can increase their chances of getting into one field or the other instead of investing everything into a single career path. The development of interdisciplinary skills can later create a significant difference when they compete with others for a position, because versatility increases one's suitability for different tasks and duties. An advantage of the digital age to be explored by teacher-educators when interacting on such exercises with their educands, could be the integration of popular arts and games into the tasks, be it in the form of tasks that could include games or popular movies/shows, or as a vehicle for illustration. The immersive power of games and popular arts has drastically increased in our digital age, allowing gamers and viewers a greater participation and internal experience of the worlds thereby projected. Carefully selected games and popular art works[75] could be suitable pedagogical tools in narrative exercises.

This kind of exercise underlines narrative's capacity of creating configurations through the work of the imagination. In other words, narrative provides a 'virtual' space-time portal where possibilities can be explored. Instead of merely rationalizing about possibilities, realistic situations and contexts can, furthermore, be imagined in a way that includes a person's

---

[75] Amongst the four types of human-technology relations distinguished by Don Ihde in his phenomenology of technology (Ihde, 1990:72-111) there is the alterity relation. Videogames are good examples thereof. Although games are simulations, people do perceive them as quasi-real. Consider for instance fantasy games, where people can be immersed into different social roles, having to learn and apply specific skills to be successful in the given role (e.g. war strategies in war games or managing skills in sports manager games). Similarly, popular arts (i.e. movies and shows) have the same immersive power, providing simulations of events and of inter-subjective relations, shaping and actualizing the human self through the inner experiences thereby projected. Consequently, considering the popularity of games and popular culture, as a language understood by common people (including young people), it makes sense for teacher-educators to consider using them.

response or re/action (i.e. embodiment) in order to test possible outcomes of specific behaviour and action.

6.3.5 Narrative and resilience/anti-fragility

This specific exercise cross-references with p.55. Similar to the narrative exercise on trial and error[76] (see pp.51-52), when dealing with anti-fragility, educands could author stories about tragedies and all sorts of possible sufferings and heartbreaks that human beings might typically encounter in life, by drawing on personal experience and known stories from others. Hardships can be related to primordial needs and finances but might also include heartbreaks in relationships, unfulfilled dreams or losses of different kinds. They can ask themselves while imaginatively positioning themselves and/or others in such situations, what course of action one could possible take to benefit from the chaos that has been caused by those events, and also to become stronger as a result. This could, for example, be accomplished by learning how to care for others in grief after the loss of a loved one. It could also be accomplished by learning how to accompany and support someone in terms of survival strategies to deal with all sorts of heartbreak, learning to deal with risky situations and how to rise up again after one's vulnerability has been exposed by difficult situations. Similarly, it could also be a done by imaginatively exploring rituals, discipline and strategies on how to become a better person through engaging with life's challenges.

This kind of exercise focuses on establishing a personal connection with others to promote honest, committed participation and authentic dialogue. Its goal is to help participants to become resilient/anti-fragile (i.e. profiting from chaos, getting stronger through struggles, getting better through engaging with bad experiences, etc.). Throughout the thesis there has been a strong emphasis on individual responsibility, both for oneself as well as for one's culture(s). When dealing with past injustices, such as racism, tribalism and similar questions, it has specifically been pointed out that a (Christian) confessional and narrative vision should, for example, reject the marginalized vs. privileged narrative because it promotes a victim mentality which justifies 'marginalized' human beings not taking full responsibility for their own actions and their own life journeys. Such a victim mentality would diametrically oppose education's ultimate goal of guiding human beings to achieve their full potential and to become the best possible version of themselves. It is for this reason, that this kind of exercise (i.e. where life strategies and practical solutions offer a viable alternative and pedagogically justifiable path to be pursued), should be seriously considered by teacher-educators. Not only can educands be thereby prepared for life's challenges and struggles,

---

[76] Alternatively, Braun, G. J. & Potgieter, F.J. 2019b. The worldview of the pilgrim and the foundation of a confessional and narrative philosophy of education. *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies*, 75(4). (Forthcoming).

but (given the particular classroom-context) these exercises can also offer them a safe space-time portal where they are allowed the opportunity to express their fears and heartbreaks (including racism, abuse, authoritarianism, tribalism, etc.). It can, indeed, provide for 'a pedagogic sanctuary that is intentionally designed and maintained to provide multilogical refuge to both teacher-educators and their educands; a contextualised portal where they may all experience authentic and pedagogically justifiable conversational safety from pursuit, persecution, disrespect, ridicule or any other danger or form of personal embarrassment or indignity' (cf. Potgieter, 2015:54). In other words, although a narrative and confessional vision for philosophy of education should lead to a rejection of the marginalized vs. privileged narrative, it nevertheless provides for a contextualised, pedagogic sanctuary where these issues can be safely explored and where suffering voices can be heard in an authentic, transparent, honest and caring environment.

6.3.6 Narrative and biographies

This specific exercise cross-references with p.46. One possible way of introducing narrative in the classroom could be, for example, through the study of biographies of historical figures in subjects such as religion, history or ethics as well as through the medium of imaginative exercises where educands are asked to re-author life histories (including their own) and/or stories where, for example, ethical dilemmas might present themselves. As studies have shown, such re-authoring exercises allow for greater personal empowerment and agency (Graven 2012). In contrast to the rationalistic tendency of taking a 'neutral' birds-eye viewpoint, narrative comes closer to life's existential drama and allows for greater personal involvement through work of the productive imagination. Narrative activates the imagination and involves the whole person in a world where a story unfolds (Smith, 1996:46).

This exercise specifically takes biographies of historical figures into consideration instead of focusing only on personal life histories. This exercise can be applied to subjects such as ethics, history and religion. For the most part, the study of biographies as sources of inspiration is not something new. One might think of the ancient Christian tradition of devotion to saints. Narratively speaking, the stories of saints have (traditionally) fulfilled precisely the function of inspiring responsible action by portraying the lives of extraordinary human beings whose patterns of action/behaviour reflected what Christ could or would have done in similar situations. In a similar fashion, the study of biographies in general can fulfill the same function by providing stories of people whose behaviour and actions should or should not be imitated. The ethical dilemmas faced and/or decisions made by characters can easily be connected, by analogy, to the lives of participants. This can include similarities in different levels of experience (i.e. how to deal with sickness, death, injustices, betrayal, enmity, temptations, charity, care, friendship, forgiveness, personal growth, sacrifices,

discipline, patience, etc.)

6.3.7 Narrative and the pilgrim as a basic archetype of the human condition

The notion of the pilgrim as a basic archetype of the human condition has, for example, been elaborated in pp. 47, 49, 51, 56 and 58.

A narrative way of teaching these presuppositions, again, could be to ask educands to rethink their own life story or episodes from it, based on these presuppositions, as if they were pilgrims, walking with God, on the way to their own Promised Land (i.e. their ultimate life goal or dream). This exercise can help them bridge individual stories of experience and social/cultural meanings associated with the archetypical embodiment of the pilgrim (Stephens, 2014:22). Alternatively, they could also author a story where there is no Promised Land and no God and ask themselves where they would ultimately be going and why, if everything appears to be happening randomly. Would they not have to assume 'true meaning' when moving from A to B and why should C be their final, desired destination if all possibilities are equally random anyway? Why should what they do, think and feel matter if not because of the ultimate meaningfulness of life's journey (cf. Barrat, 2006)?

The starting point of this exercise is the human condition which has been connected to the archetype of the pilgrim in this thesis because of human beings' limitations and journey-like unfolding of life histories. Moreover, this exercise is intended to make participants aware of the embedded meaning and function of religion for pilgrim-like human beings on their journey towards their desired future. In other words, it is suggested according to a narrative and confessional vision that religion constitutes an essential feature of the human nature although awareness of it can either be conscious or unconscious to varied degrees. Consequently, this exercise serves to revalue the fundamental place of religion in education. This does not mean that human beings should be forced to adopt a specific kind of religion, but it reminds participants that reason and opinions are not neutral and it also inspires them to acknowledge and confess which worldview guides him/her in their own, personal life's journey.

6.4 Conclusions based on exercises from 'Confessional and narrative perspectives on Being Human - Philosophy of education in a post-Apartheid (postmodern) age in the tension between maximal and minimal reconciliation'

6.4.1 Narrative and discrimination

This specific exercise cross-references with p. 69. A main problem caused by Neo-Marxism in education is that it seems to prioritize the reversal of power relations between privileged and marginalized groups instead of unity. It also seems to fail in its efforts to unite people

from different groups (e.g. black and white, man and woman, rich and poor, familiar and stranger, believer and unbeliever, etc.). While the intention might often be to counterbalance past injustices, it legitimates the continuation of a privileged vs marginalized narrative which might easily lead to further injustices against people of good will who cannot be blamed for their ancestors' behaviour. In order to bring this insight to the classroom, educands could be given the task to study stories of people who have opposed totalitarian regimes in spite of their 'privileged background'. This kind of task could enhance the sense that people should not be ultimately judged based on their background and status, but on their character and behaviour instead, which are most clearly manifested in challenging situations. While Neo-Marxists might argue that this could threaten their intended balancing of power, I am convinced that it is always important to create a portal for integrating people of good will from even the most different backgrounds.

This exercise specifically focuses on stories of people whose lives opposed the marginalized vs privileged narrative through ethical conduct and love for humanity in general, transcending group identity and reflecting what it means to be human in a religious sense which unites people from different backgrounds as equal(s) before God. While Neo-Marxism played an important role in foregrounding marginalized voices and questioning privileges based on group identity, its focus on group identity leads to new forms of discrimination which can prove to be detrimental to education's role of providing a balanced view on individual and cultural formation.

It is clear, then, that this exercise helps dealing with polarizing tendencies and that it does not only relate to the marginalized vs. privileged narrative but to any context where there might be discrimination based on group identity. Discrimination has been haunting societies for too long[77], not only in South Africa, but also in Europe, North America and South America. It does not seem to matter whether it manifests in terms of rich vs. poor, female vs. male or natives vs. immigrants. In the long run all similar kinds of binary oppositions are detrimental to the development of self-standing human beings who ought to learn how to take full responsibility for themselves and their communities and also how to develop a love for humanity where character and conduct are much more important than membership of a specific group.

---

[77] Having spent 13 years of my life residing in Brazil, 15 years in Germany, 4 years in South Africa and having several friends and relatives who have lived in other South American or European and North American countries for years, it is fair to say that I know about enough cases of discrimination to assume that it is a transcultural phenomenon. I confess that this 'evidence' might be judged to be merely anecdotal. It is nevertheless deliberately mentioned here because it is not only aligned with the notions of both *narrative* and *confession*, but it also happens to reflect more comprehensibly the practical application and potential agogic value of confession in/and narrative.

6.4.2 The biblical narrative of Being Human and divisive ideology

This specific exercise cross-references with p.73. A narrative and confessional way of addressing divisive ideologies such as Apartheid in the classroom could also be through the use of narrative exercises. One possibility of creating a counter-narrative can be derived from the biblical narrative itself, where believers are described as being one in Christ despite of their ethnical background (Gal 3:28), a vision that stands in diametrical opposition to the Afrikaners' mythologisation of early settlement and idealised identification with the true Israel. A possible narrative exercise for a classroom would be for educands to imagine and author stories on how South Africa could possibly have developed if the forefathers had recognized that God has children from every tribe (Rev 7:9) and consequently they are not the only 'chosen ones'. Alternatively, educands could also author stories on how the future of South Africa could be if everyone would truly embrace the vision of unity in Christ (Gal 3:28) and recognize the fact that they really do happen to have brothers and sisters from every tribe (Rev 7:9). Mere peaceful co-existence would then become untenable and a true rainbow nation would become a reality.

This exercise specifically focuses on the Apartheid ideology. It could, however, also be applied to other divisive ideologies and social contexts. Besides imagining ways of how things could have been in the past and still can be in the future, this exercise aims at creating a sense of community based on Being Human and consequently transcending group identity.

6.5 Conclusions based on exercises from 'Complementing the foundations of a (Christian) confessional and narrative approach to philosophy of education: applying Frye's narrative typology of fictional modes to life-related narratives of everyday experience and postmodernism'

6.5.1 Narrative and sensible subjects

This specific exercise cross-references with p.80. Narratives can be used by teacher-educators who would like to address sensitive subjects in a classroom but who might not be pedagogically sure how educands might react. By prescribing texts to be read and responded to, or even suggesting to educands to author texts on specific subjects, narrative offers a more immersive, less imposing and exposing route of interaction by inviting the reader to participate in terms of his/her own experience and the kind of associations that s/he might relate to a given text.

This exercise is almost self-explanatory. Narrative exercises can be used to address subjects which otherwise would be left unmentioned in particular classroom contexts. Due to narrative's ability to create an imaginary space-time portal where people can freely

participate without exposing themselves, these exercises can be useful sites where teacher-educators and educands can explore all kinds of events and patterns of behaviour and where they are also free to enter into authentic dialogue on different possibilities of action that human beings might have at their disposal in different situations.

6.5.2 Narrative typology and action

This specific exercise cross-references with p. 81. After being presented with an overview of the characteristics of each one of the five types of characters, educands can be given tasks of classifying the characters from different stories. After identifying the five types in different stories, educands could also be asked to imagine what the characters would have to do in order to be classified differently. Such exercises of classifying characters entail the classification of action/behaviour and they can therefore serve to inspire and/or question action/behaviour as well. By imagining how situations can possibly play out through the behaviour/actions of characters, educands and their teacher-educators can engage in open discussions about all kinds of imaginable subjects.

The implementation of this kind of exercise demands more preparation on the side of the educands because they would need to become familiar with Frye's narrative typology which has been introduced in chapter 5. A long term advantage of this kind of exercise is that instead of focusing on personal and/or well-known life histories, greater attention would be paid to traditionally codified (i.e. culturally persistent) patterns of action and behaviour. By better understanding such transhistorical patterns and how they can be embodied, educands might be able to improve their skills of discernment in terms of how they could and/or should behave in different contexts. Most importantly, however, is the fact that they can gain a better understanding of their talents, possibilities and abilities and also find relevant support in and with respect to their decision-making processes.

6.5.3 Narrative and synchronicity

This exercise specifically cross-references with p.83. Educands can be asked to author stories about events where they believe they have experienced synchronicity; where everything seemed to align into a perfect moment of happiness. As a pedagogical tool of inspiring responsible action, teacher-educators can ask educands to author stories about what they believe would be an ideal future (life or situation). What could help them progress in order to achieve this goal? What could prevent them from becoming their best possible self (internal and external factors)? They can also be asked to write about a true or imaginative story where an individual's life appeared to be perfect but, due to an unfortunate turn of events, it became increasingly chaotic. What could the character do in order to rise up again? Alternatively, educands could also be asked what the character could, can and

should consider doing in order to survive in case his/her suffering becomes unbearable? These are only a few examples to illustrate that the narrative typology which I am proffering can be a useful pedagogical device as it can connect all kinds of narratives with personal histories. It can also help to promote a culture of honest, committed participation and authentic dialogue in the classroom while inspiring responsible action. This exercise can be seen as the apex of all the exercises mentioned above because it not only deals with the ultimate goal of education in descriptive terms (i.e. individual and cultural responsibility), but also with the personal experience of finding purpose and sensing fullness of meaning. The exercise suggests some questions to be asked by educands in self-examination. However, the proposed task is arguably one for life so that teacher-educators might only be able to provide some signposts to help capture and build on moments of experienced synchronicity so that their educands can be inspired to initiate or continue their journey to their desired future where they can get a sense of fulfilling their potential and destinies. The journey itself can nevertheless only be undertaken by the self and the educator should be satisfied by being no more than a helpful, paracletic companion in the educand's process of discovery and formation.

6.6 Conclusions

This chapter started by briefly indicating how philosophy of education, as an academic and scientific discipline, has been moving from modernity to postmodernity, although its main focus has been to point out ways of coping with this transition in terms of a trajectory that entails (a) recognition of the limits and journey-like structure of science, (b) the role of religion in philosophy of education, (c) the goal of education and difference, (d) education and the creation of a culture of honest and committed participation and authentic dialogue, (e) education, theory and responsible action and (f) formative pedagogy, worldview and the limits of reason (see overpage):
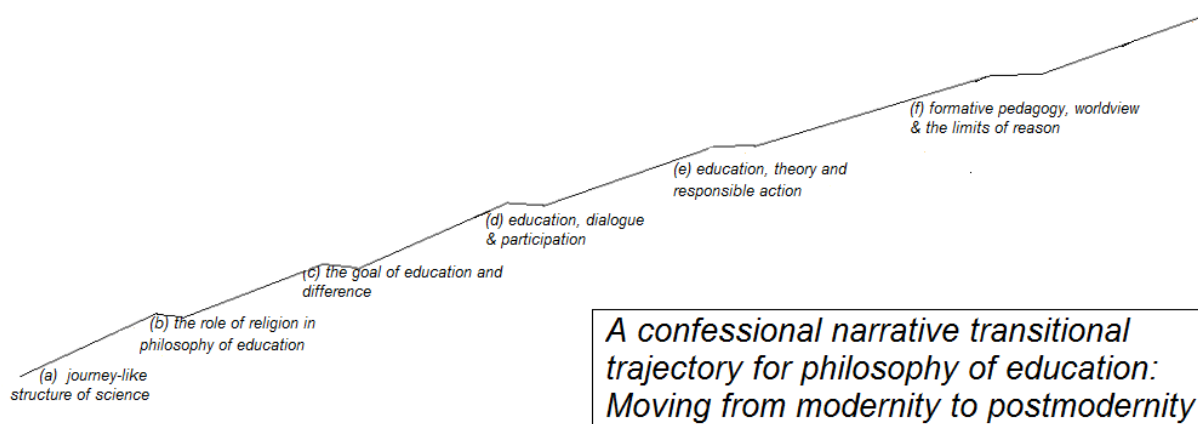
(a) journey-like structure of science

(b) the role of religion in philosophy of education

(c) the goal of education and difference

(d) education, dialogue & participation

(e) education, theory and responsible action

(f) formative pedagogy, worldview & the limits of reason

A confessional narrative transitional trajectory for philosophy of education: Moving from modernity to postmodernity

Figure 1: A confessional narrative transitional trajectory for philosophy of education[78]: Moving from modernity to postmodernity

In the last section of this chapter, an overview of previously suggested narrative exercises was provided and further conclusions were drawn in order to summarize the practical relevance, including, for example, the possible classroom-applicability of a confessional and narrative approach to philosophy of education in its defined long term goal of contributing towards individual and cultural formation. Accordingly, the narrative exercises cover a wide range of interrelated subjects: (1) ultimate questions and worldview, (2) ethical dilemmas and worldview, (3) existential struggles and worldview, (4) narrative and vocation, (5) narrative and resilience/anti-fragility, (6) narrative and biographies, (7) narrative and the pilgrim as a

---

[78] The pursued trajectory of this chapter is illustrated by this graphic figure. In a nutshell, this (simplified) trajectory elucidates the design structure of the entire thesis. The chapter started with: (a) the postmodern questioning of the limits of science, motivating the (b) the revaluation of religion in philosophy of education and leading to (c) a confessional narrative treatment, in light of Apartheid and community ideology, of the problem of difference which has become a central topic in postmodernity. As a result, (d) honest, committed participation and authentic dialogue has emerged as the central (confessional narrative) educational strategy and response to the problem of difference. In order to implement this strategy in educational praxis, in light of the developed confessional narrative rationale, (e) the centrality of responsible action has been highlighted as the primary purpose of every theory related to education. The emphasis on responsible action aptly captures the essence of how (confessed) faith and narrative ultimately inspires education, namely through the actual embodiment of transformative narratives and beliefs in the hope of a (better) desired future. Consequently, according to a confessional and narrative approach to philosophy of education, (f) the formative role of education should be recognized in connection to worldview and the limits of human knowledge. The emphasis on limits of theoretical knowledge is to be understood as a response to persisting modern assumptions regarding the supremacy of scientific knowledge, while the formative role of education and the centrality of worldview/s are fundamentally related to the human (mortal and changing) condition and are therefore arguably able to survive all tests of time. Consequently, this chapter ended with the explanation of narrative exercises as a way of exploring existential life questions related to worldview and the limits of science in terms of a confessional narrative formative pedagogy.

basic archetype of the human condition, (8) narrative and discrimination, (9) the biblical narrative of Being Human and divisive ideology, (10) narrative and sensible subjects, (11) narrative typology and action and (12) narrative and synchronicity. All these exercises represent practical ways of implementing a confessional and narrative approach to philosophy of education in educational contexts (including the classroom), as well as dealing with the problems and subjects which have been explored throughout this thesis.

All things considered, philosophers of education, as well as teacher-educators should be encouraged to own this approach, create their own syntheses, adapt exercises and create new ones according to the needs of their own pedagogical contexts and their own abilities. In other words, a confessional and narrative vision should remain directed towards the future and open to constant updates without forgetting the past and the symbolic connections of their own cultural and religious context.

Chapter 7: Conclusions and future work from: 'A confessional postmodern approach to philosophy of education: towards narrative possibilities for educational praxis'
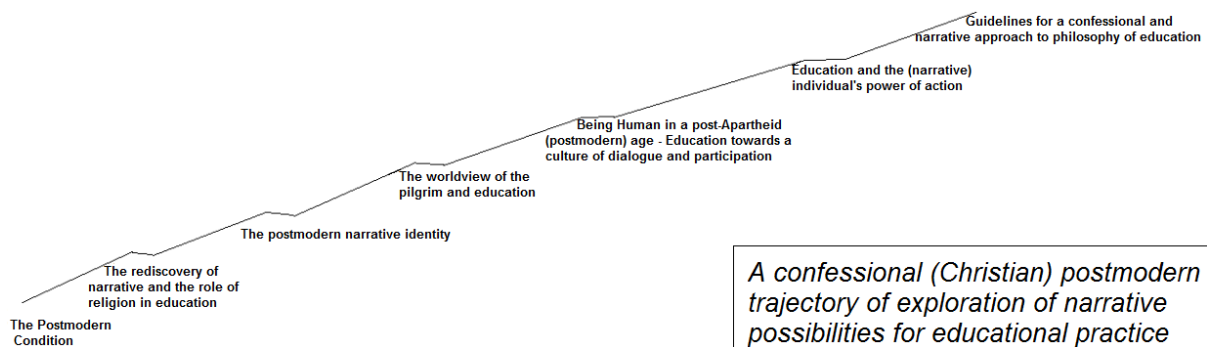

Figure 2: A confessional (Christian) postmodern trajectory[79] of exploration of narrative possibilities for educational practice

The graphic figure above visually recapitulates the research trajectory pursued in this thesis.

7.1 Overview of the study

The starting point of this thesis was the assumption that postmodern critique of rationality offers a promising avenue for a confessional and narrative approach to philosophy of education, which avoids both ideological totalitarianism as well as religious relativism. In the course of the thesis it has become clear that a 'confessional and narrative' approach translates into creating a culture of 'honest, committed participation and authentic dialogue' when applied by teacher-educators in their cultural-formative role.

A confessional approach to philosophy of education thence does not legitimate itself by an appeal to universal, scientific reason. Instead, it proclaims a narrative vision that appeals to honest, committed participation and authentic dialogue for the sake of unity in diversity in individual and cultural formation.

Before arriving at this conclusion (i.e. honest, committed participation and authentic dialogue) in the course of the thesis, a configuration had, however, to be created in order to situate the proposed approach (i) historically and (ii) existentially.

---

[79] Similar to the previous figure, the upwards orientation of the trajectory symbolically stands for the religious aspiration of finding fullness of meaning, as captured in the ancient (biblical) motive of joining heaven and earth (see chapter 3). The upwards orientation circumscribes the human aspiration of achieving his/her full potential. This symbolical interpretation is also presupposed by Frye's fictional modes which were introduced in chapter 5.

Accordingly, the second chapter dealt extensively with the postmodern narrative identity in order to elucidate the viability of a (Christian) religious approach in a postmodern age. Besides discerning between two versions of postmodernity (i.e. nihilisitic and Christian), the second chapter pointed out that the postmodern narrative identity consists of a tension between the immanent frame derived from modernity (including the rejection of transcendent religion) and the pre-modern Christian vision. By establishing postmodernity as symbolically inseparable form Christianity, although in a deviant form, it was argued that the (nihilistic) rejection of (Christian) religion is based on modern background assumptions and thence it was pointed out that the rediscovery of narrative should lead to a more consistent rejection of modern rationality and also to the revaluation of religion.

After the historical justification from chapter 2, every chapter was developed with the intention to situate the approach existentially. The third chapter, which deals with the worldview of the pilgrim, explored the pilgrim archetype, which aptly portrays the drama of human existence in terms of contemporary (i.e. uncertain) conditions of knowledge. The pilgrim archetype has helped elaborating a narrative landscape which represents human existence as a journey to a Promised Land (i.e. desired future) and human beings as mediators between heaven and earth (i.e. order and chaos, nature and culture), besides offering a vantage point which enabled explorations on interrelated subjects such as epistemology, ethics, religious symbolism, hospitality and practical life strategies from a narrative perspective. Most importantly, a spiritual vision and practical life strategies were developed in connection to the defined goal of education 'to equip individuals with skills and substantial knowledge that allow them to understand, define and pursue their own life-goals as well as to participate with integrity in the life of their community as fully-fledged, responsible citizens (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2016).

The portrayed worldview of the pilgrim has provided important foundations in terms of the limits of human knowledge as fallible strategies of coping with reality. By situating human beings as pilgrims and strangers in the world's narrative landscape, the (postmodern) perceived problems of otherness and difference became even more significant. In order to approach such problems more deeply, the fourth chapter of the thesis focused on ideological developments in the South African context. The choice of a context involving tribal and culture wars was important because its historical and life-related narratives aptly illustrate the heartbreaking and divisive consequences of the failure to learn how to deal with difference and otherness. From a (Christian) religious point of view, it was pointed out how the biblical narrative of Being Human can provide a vision for a (i.e. better) unified South African, and for other societies as well where group identity is valued higher than Being Human.

The explorations of the fourth chapter have led to the assumption that an overemphasis of group identity at the cost of individual responsibility is a major problem for education in its role of contributing towards individual and cultural formation by guiding individuals to explore their full potential and become responsible individuals. Consequently, the fifth chapter of the thesis presented a narrative schematism as a transhistorical framework (i.e. based on traditionally codified patterns) that helps understanding and interacting with the world from a perspective that narratively accounts for the individual's power of action in such a way that allows human beings to remain open to future innovations without disconnecting from their traditional symbolic network. Accordingly, the fifth chapter offered an alternative to (nihilistic) postmodern overemphasis on group identity at the cost of individual responsibility by appealing to traditionally codified patterns of human experience and behaviour, as a symbolic network to be built upon and constantly reformed by responsible human beings who are nonetheless called to pursue an authentic existence. In other words, a confessional and narrative philosophy of education was presented as sharing the postmodern openness for the future, but without disregarding the importance of the past.

The guidelines offered in chapter six firstly present brief provisional conclusions on the thesis' rationale and secondly, it aims at justifying the application of the proposed approach to philosophy of education by providing an overview of previously suggested narrative exercises and by expanding on its practical significance.

7.2 A personal account on the limitations of the study

This PhD thesis does not only hold implications for classroom-based teacher-educators, but also for pedagogic counsellors, pedagogic social workers, guidance counsellors, andragogic and agogic support services, psychotherapists, education psychologists and even religious and/or spiritual therapists. Since my own professional experience so far has, however, been mainly in the academic community and classroom-based contexts, I felt compelled to restrict myself to my own domain of occupation. This does not mean, however, that other professionals and interested persons cannot adapt and apply a confessional and narrative approach of philosophy of education to their own field of competence. It does, however, mean that I recognize the limitation of my study with regard to the wide range of further implications that this particular study might hold.

Connected to the above-mentioned restriction is the fundamental fact that human beings only have limited time and resources at their disposal; they are forced to be selective and to prioritise their own preferences and needs over other important issues. This PhD thesis therefore had to prioritize particular sources and methods, inevitably leaving out important explorations and sometimes not dealing extensively enough with the approached subjects.

Narratively speaking, when I think about the presented study as a journey which took more than ten years to reach this point (including, of course, the years of research prior to this particular PhD-study), it is easy to perceive the sources used in the process of elaboration as companions in and of this journey. Moreover, just like in real life, human beings never get to spend an equal amount of time with each one of his/her fellow human beings, similarly, life's challenges usually receive the same kind of treatment due to people's diverse coping strategies, selective perceptions and envisioned desired future. In other words, due to a lack of time and limited (i.e. selective) knowledge, the configuration of this study had to be designed in a such a manner that it could support the desired destination, namely that of presenting a confessional and narrative approach to philosophy of education in a postmodern age, and exploring narrative possibilities for educational practice.

More specifically, the PhD title already presupposed that I would need to elucidate (at least) profound relationships which in themselves would suffice for entire theses, (1a) how does (confessed) faith relate (1a) to narrative, (1b) to philosophy, (1c) to education, (1d) to the postmodern age and (1e) to educational practice.

Accordingly, the design structure of this particular thesis is a configuration which reflects my own personal journey of philosophical explorations. Simplifying to an extreme, this journey can be described as follows: after spending my childhood in Brazil, being educated with Roman Catholic values in a multicultural society, I moved to Germany as a teenager where I became acquainted with the Protestant theological tradition and the German philosophical tradition. The combination of my Christian faith with German (Kantian transcendental) philosophy led me to become interested in the Dutch reformed/reformational philosophical tradition, especially Dooyeweerds' transcendental critique, from which was developed his religious (Christian) transcendental critique. The discovery of the Dutch reformed tradition ultimately inspired my master's thesis on the relationship between reformed apologetics and reformational philosophy, but this tradition did not satisfy my curiosity with regard to the contemporary role of narrative, technology and popular culture. As a result, I was compelled to explore the latter subjects in my first PhD, mainly dealing with German philosophical sources as it may pertain to philosophies of technology and of music.

Finally then, these explorations of my first PhD led me to the postmodern French sources which became of central importance for the current thesis. During my explorations of Christian intellectual accounts on the just mentioned subjects related to the postmodern age, I came across the works of Taylor, Smith and Ricœur, which not only interacted with narrative and postmodernity, but also with the German and continental (including the reformational) philosophical tradition (e.g. Ricœur's *Time and Narrative* can be read as a

philosophy of time in response to Heidegger's *Sein und Zeit*). While Smith's and most other theological accounts on postmodernity might not have dealt specifically enough with the philosophical foundations of postmodernity, faith and narrative, Ricœur's philosophy – in my opinion – provided the most profound accounts on the relationship between narrative and time, showing how narrative configures our pre-understanding and re-configures it, by transforming our experience of time through narrative time. Besides offering those important philosophical insights, Ricœur's account also appeared to connect well with pre-modern (patristic) theology and archetypal theory (including the approaches of C.G. Jung and Frye, which were frequently used in this thesis). Ultimately, however, on a practical (pedagogical) level I was facing postmodern dilemmas which forced me to 'use' many of the insights which I have gained during this exploratory journey in order to respond to the perceived threatening impact of postmodern nihilism upon the people and culture around me. My professional occupation as theological counsellor, philosophical speaker and educational lecturer therefore compelled me to direct my research to main concerns which I was experiencing regarding philosophy of education. Basically then, what I am confessing, is that the configuration of this study reflects my own, personal exploratory journey in more ways than one.

7.3 Suggestions for further research

Due to limited time and a focused scope I could not deal more thoroughly with sources of inspiration which ended up functioning as background assumptions, such as (a) Heidegger's and Ihde's philosophies of technology, (b) De Lubac's (De Lubac, 1998, 2000) and Balthasar's (Balthasar, 2003) accounts on patristic theology or the relationship between Jung's deep psychological account on archetypes and premodern (Christian) patristic theology.

I would therefore suggest that the mentioned sources and interrelated subjects could lead to meaningful results and that it could enrich philosophy of education in a postmodern age. Here are two of the main reasons why I hold this opinion:

(a) The technological changes of the last decades have already had a great impact upon society and human relationships (including the way in which human beings perceive themselves and the world) and every teacher-educator is arguably aware of the central role that technology plays in the lives of his/her educands. It therefore makes sense to keep on exploring the human-technology relationships in the context of education. Rapid, unprecedented changes caused by technological revolution cannot be ignored or underestimated and should be a main concern of teacher-educators.

(b) The rediscovery of narrative re-opened the world to its pre-theoretical foundations. In other words, narrative leads to the rediscovery of 'a symbolic world', consisting of very ancient (archetypal) patterns of stories and behaviours which are intrinsically part of our being and culture/s. The mentioned sources are merely three out of arguably thousands of sources which could inspire researchers in the sub-discipline of philosophy of education and people of interest to dive into the world of symbols and archetypal stories (i.e. including an almost infinite amount of archetypal characters and events). This thesis could refer to some archetypal narratives (e.g. from the Bible, popular culture, literature) and its rationale can help 'apprentices' of the symbolic world in their contemplation and exploration of symbolic patters. More importantly, the study of the language of symbols and narratives can become a task for life and teacher-educators would definitely profit from it, *inter alia* because of the widespread prominence of narrative through popular culture as a central source of inspiration for people nowadays (including young people). Consequently, the study of the symbolic world (including archetypes and archetypal events) alone could arguably inspire an almost infinite amount of research projects.

7.4 Epilogue

The trajectory of this PhD thesis has come to an end, but this does not mean that the journey has ended. As life in a postmodern age goes on, narratives continue to unfold and mortal human beings keep on striving to survive and to rise up in the midst of existential struggles and in the hope of a desired future, a promised Land.

By exploring the primacy of narrative knowledge and a narrative view of rationality, a deeply personal and confessional (Christian) alternative to philosophy of education has emerged in the process. In order to justify itself (i) historically and (ii) existentially, a number of detours were taken along the way:

While (i) its historical justification has been explored in terms of the relationship between the postmodern narrative identity, modernity and (Christian) premodernity, its (ii) existential relevance had to be established through a number of problematic topics related to postmodernism and education (e.g. nihilism and spirituality, relativism, hospitality, order and chaos, difference, tribalism, community ideology) but also through a positive connection to traditional knowledge (e.g. religious symbolism, the symbolic network, individual and cultural formation, Frye's narrative-transhistorical schematism and the individual's power of action).

In fact, each chapter of this thesis is directly inspired by contemporary existential challenges from a having (postmodern) age where the human lifeworld (including the conditions of knowledge) has been rapidly changing and teacher-educators need to be best equipped to guide educands in their journey to adulthood. It has therefore been a main concern of this

thesis to provide as many theoretical and practical signposts as possible to help teacher-educators, and consequently educands, to develop a strong spiritual vision towards a desired future in order to navigate in the current postmodern age.

8 BIBLIOGRAPHY

Alston, W. 2002. The Church of the Living God: A Reformed Perspective. Westminster: John Knox Press.

Andaya, L. 2006. The Stranger-King Complex in Bugis-Makassar Society. (Unpublished paper presented at the Stranger-Kings in Southeast Asia and Elsewhere Workshop, Jakarta, Indonesia, 5−7 June.)

Ashley, M. 1989. Ideologies and schooling in South Africa. Rondebosch: South African Teachers Association.

Atkins, G., ed., 2016. Making and Remaking Saints in Nineteenth-Century Britain. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Baloyi, M.E. 2018. A continued racial character of some of the Gereformeerde Kerke in South Africa: Strategic moves evading reconciliation and unity of churches in post-apartheid South Africa. *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies*, *74(1)*.

Balthasar, H. 1998-1999. The Theo-Drama: Theological Dramatic Theory. San Fransisco: Ignatius Press.

Balthasar, H. 2003. Cosmic Liturgy: The Universe According to Maximus the Confessor. San Fransisco: Ignatius Press.

Baudrillard, J. 1987. Modernity. *Canadian journal of Political and Social Theory*, *77(3)*:63-72.

Bauer, G. 1982. Adolescence and the origins of ideological thinking. *South African Journal of Education*, 2(4):199-202.

Beaver, P. 2017. Bibliothecan Missionum, vol. 21. Freiburg: Herder.

Bell, T. & Ntsebeza, D.B. 2001. Unfinished Business: South Africa, Apartheid and Truth. Muizenberg: RedWerks.

Boraine, A.1990. Legacy of apartheid cruellest in education. *Pretoria News*: 4, 30 Mar.

Bowie, A. 2010. German Philosophy: A Very Short Introduction. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Braun, G.J. & Potgieter, F.J. 2019a. A Confessional and Narrative Vision for Philosophy of Education: Justification and Basic Presuppositions of a Postmodern Approach. *Christian Higher Education*, *18(4)*:276-293.

Braun, G.J. & Potgieter, F.J. 2019b. The worldview of the pilgrim and the foundation of a confessional and narrative philosophy of education. *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies*, 75(4) (In press).

Braun, G.J. & Potgieter, F.J. 2019c. Complementing the foundations of a (Christian) confessional and narrative approach to philosophy of education: applying Frye's narrative typology of fictional modes to life-related narratives of everyday experience and postmodernism. (Unpublished).

Braun, G.J. & Potgieter, F.J. 2019d. Confessional and narrative perspectives on Being Human - Philosophy of education in a post-Apartheid (postmodern) age in the tension between maximal and minimal reconciliation. (Unpublished).

Burbules, N.C. & Raybeck, N. 2002. Philosophy of Education: Current Trends. (*In* Guthrie, J.W., *ed.*, Encyclopedia of Education. New York: Macmillan Press, p.1880-1884).

Campbell, J. 2004. The Hero with a Thousand Faces. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Chambliss, J.J. 2009. Philosophy of Education Today. *Educational Theory*, *59(2)*:233-251.

Chikane, F. 2015. A prayer for a divided SA to heal the wounds of the past. Sunday Times: 21, 13 Dec.

Danaher, W.J. 2010. Music that will bring back the dead?: Resurrection, reconciliation, and restorative justice in post-apartheid South Africa. *Journal of Religious Ethics*, *38(1)*:115-141.

De Carvalho, O. 2002. Coleção História Essencial da Filosofia, 32 volumes. São Paulo: É Realizações.

De Lubac, H. 1998. Medieval Exegesis: The Four Senses of Scripture, volume 1. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

De Lubac, H. 2000. Medieval Exegesis: The Four Senses of Scripture, volume 2. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

Derrida, J.1973. Speech and Phenomena. Evanston: Northwestern University.

Derrida, J. 1974. Of Grammatology. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Derrida, J. 2001. On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness. London: Routledge.

Diedericks, M. 2015. Guidelines for the development of religious tolerance praxis in monoreligious education institutions. Potchefstroom.

Dobosova, J. 2009. Calvinism in the Context of the Afrikaner Nationalist Ideology. *Asian and Afrikan Studies*, *18(2)*:305-323.

Dooyeweerd, H. 1963. Roots of Western Culture: Pagan, Secular and Christian Options. Grand Rapids: Paidea Press.

Dooyeweerd, H. 2012. In the Twilight of Western Thought. Grand Rapids: Paidea Press.

Du Plooy, J.I., Griessel, G.J. & Oberholzer, M.O. 1983: Fundamental Pedagogies for Advanced Students. Pretoria: HAUM.

Eliade, M. 1978. A History of Religious Ideas, volume 1: From the Stone Age to the Eleusinian Mysteries. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Enslin, P. 1987. The state of pedagogics. *Perspectives in Education*, *10(1)*:67-74.

Enslin, P. 1990. Science and doctrine: Theoretical discourse in South African teacher education. (*In* Nkomo, M., *ed.*, Pedagogy of domination. New Jersey: Africa World Press, p. 63-72).

Enslin, P. 1992. The political mythology of childhood in South African teacher education. *Discourse, 13(1)*:36-48.

Enslin, P.1984. Apartheid ideology in South African education. *The Philosophical Forum*, *XVIII(2-3)*:105-114.

Eshak, Y.E. 1987. Authority in Christian national education and fundamental pedagogics. Johannesburg: University of Witwatersrand.

Fewell, D.N., *ed.* 2016. The Oxford Handbook of Biblical Narrative. New York: Oxford University Press.

Fouché, F. 1982. Pedagogics: A philosophic model or parasitic ideology? *South African Journal of Education*, *2(4)*:159-166.

Frye, N. 1957. Anatomy of Criticism. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Frye, N. 1991. The Double Vision: Language and Meaning in Religion. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Frye, N. 2004. Biblical and Classical Myths: The Mythological Framework of Western Culture. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Gilligan, C. 1982. In a different voice: Psychological theory and women's development. Harvard, MA: Harvard University Press.

Gluckman, H. 1981. The extent to which Calvinism and Christian national education have influenced pedagogical findings in South Africa. (*In* Beard, P.G.N. & Morrow, W.E., *eds.*, Problem of pedagogics: Pedagogics and the study of education in South Africa. Durban: Butterworths, p. 94-104).

Gonzalez, J.L. 1970-1975. A History of Christian Thought, volume 2: From Augustine to the eve of the Reformation. Nashville: Abingdon Press.

Haase, F.A. 2008. Comparison of the Hebrew Writings and Bible (Genesis 37-42) with Quranic Sura Yusuf as Example for Cultural Adaption: A Study of a Cross-Cultural Differentiation Process of Textual and Oral Traditions for Religious Writings Under the Historical Conditions of Middle East Societies. *Journal of Religious Culture/Journal für Religionskultur*, *105*:1-13.

Habermas, J. 1987. The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Heidegger, M. 1962. Being and Time. San Francisco: Harper & Row.

Heidegger, M. 1962. Die Technik und die Kehre. Pfullingen: Verlag Guenther Neske.

Higgs, P. 1994a. Towards a paradigm shift in fundamental pedagogics. *South African Journal of Education*, *14(1)*:13-21.

Higgs, P. 1994b. Towards a new theoretical discourse in South African education. *Perspectives in Education*, *15(2)*:299-312.

Higgs, P. 1995. The nature of philosophy of education re-considered. *South African Journal of Philosophy*, *14(2)*:41-47.

Higgs, P. 1997. Curriculum design and implementation for courses in philosophy of education at the undergraduate and postgradual level. Centre for Scientific Development Report. Pretoria: HSRC.

Higgs, P. 1998. A Reconstruction of South African Philosophy of Education. *Interchange*, *30(2)*:121-142.

Horner, P.A. 1977. Science and values in fundamental pedagogics. Johannesburg: University of Witwatersrand.

Ihde, D. 1990. Technology and the lifeword: From garden to earth. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Jameson, F. 1991. Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism. London: Verso.

Jenson, R. 1997. Systematic Theology, volume 1: The Triune God. New York: Oxford University Press.

Jung, C.G. 1976. Symbols of Transformation, An Analysis of the Prelude To a Case of Schizophrenia. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Jung, C.G. 1980. The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious. Princeton, NJ: Princeton

University Press.

Kahnemann, D. 2011. Thinking, Fast and Slow. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

Kallaway, P. 1983. Meta what? *Perspectives in Education*, *7(3)*:162-165.

Kearney, C.A. 2011.Silence is not golden: Strategies for helping the shy child. New York: Oxford University Press.

Kellner, D. 1988. Postmodernism as Social Theory: Some Challenges and Problems. *Theory, Culture and Society*, *5(2-3)*:239-269.

Khan, B.A.L. 2016. Reclaiming Hawwa' in Islamic Civilization and Discourse. Proceedings: ARICIS (Ar-Raniry International Conference on Islamic Studies), 1:11-25.

Kierkegaard, S. 1962. The Present Age. New York: Harper & Row.

Kinghorn, J. 1994. Social Cosmology, Religion and Afrikaner Ethnicity. *Journal of Southern African Studies*, *20(3)*:394-404.

Klaasen, J.S. 2018. Khosian Identity: A Contribution towards Reconciliation in Post-Apartheid South Africa. *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae*, *44(2)*:14.

Krüger, J.S. 2018. Signposts to Silence - Metaphysical Mysticism: theoretical map and historical pilgrimages, HTS Religion and Society Series, volume 2. AOSIS: Durbanville, Cape Town.

Kuhn, T. 1996. The Structure of Scientific Revolutions. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Langbehn, J. 1890. Rembrandt als Erzieher – Von einem Deutschen. Leipzig: C.L. Hirschfeld.

Lawrence, M. 1984. Fundamental pedagogics: It's not what they say so much but who says what and why. *Perspectives in Education*, *8(2)*:80-93.

Löns, H. 1910. Der Wehrwolf. Eine Bauernchronik. Jena: Eugen Diederichs.

Loughlin, G. 1996. Telling God's Story: Bible, Church and Narrative Theology. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lütkehaus, L. 2006. The Will as World and Music: Arthur Schopenhauer's Philosophy of Music. (*In*: Hermand, J. and Richter, G., *eds*. Sound Figures of Modernity, German Music and Philosophy. Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, p. 92-106).

Lyotard, J. 1984. The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Lyotard, J. 1992. The Postmodern Explained to Children: Correspondence 1982-1985.Translated by Julian Pefanis and Morgan Thomas. London: Turnaround.

McKay, V. I. 1990. A sociological study of 'People's Education' in South Africa: A humanist evaluation. Pretoria: University of South Africa.

Meiring, P.J.G. 2015. Boenhoeffer and costly reconciliation in South Africa - through the lens of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Milbank, J. 1990. Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Milbank, J. 1999. Radical orthodoxy: A new theology. London, UK: Routledge.

Milbank, J. 2003. Being reconciled, ontology and pardon. London, UK: Routledge.

Milbank, J. 2013. Beyond secular order: The representation of being and the representation of the people. West Sussex, UK: John Wiley.

Millar, C.J. 1979. Adult education: Action and theory. University of Cape Town.

Mills, W.G. (n.d.) The Great Trek. http://smu-facweb.smu.ca/~wmills/course322/6Great_Trek.html. Date of access: 26 Oct. 2019.

Morrow, W.E. 1989. Chains of thought: Philosophical essays in South African education. Johannesburg: Southern.

Mosse, G.L. 1964. The Crisis of German Ideology. New York: Grosset & Dunlap.

Nel, B.F. 1967. Editorial. *Suid-Afrikaanse Tydskrif die Pedagogiek*, *1(1)*:i-ii.

Nel, B.F. 1980. From fundamental pedagogics to educology: A solution or substitution? *SAAAE Monograph*, *4*:1-12.

Nel, B.F. 1984. Education: A social science. *South African Journal of Education*, *4(4)*:1-11.

Nicolls, G. 1990. Particular perspectives on fundamental pedagogics. *University of Durban-Westville Bulletin for Academic Staff*, 11(1):24-42.

Nietzsche, F. 1967. The Birth of Tragedy and The Case of Wagner. New York: Random House.

Nietzsche, F. 1988, Geburt der Tragödie. (*In* Band 1 der Kritischen Studienausgabe (KSA). Muenchen: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag).

Noddings, N. 1984. Caring: A feminine approach to ethics and moral education. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Nutt, R.G. 2017, What You Look At, You Make: Menstruation and Fertility in Italian Renaissance Art. Undergraduate thesis. University of Vermont: College of Arts and Science College Honors. https://scholarworks.uvm.edu/castheses/38 Date of access: 14 August 2019.

Pageou, M. 2018. The Language of Creation, Cosmic Symbolism in Genesis: A Commentary. CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform.

Penny, A. 1988. Afrikaner identity and educational policy in South Africa. (*In* Tulasiewicz, W. & Brooks, C., *eds.* Christianity and educational provision in international perspective. London: Routledge).

Peterson, J. 1999. Maps of Meaning: The Architecture of Belief. London: Routledge.

Potgieter, F.J. & Van der Walt, J.L. 2014. Is religious fundamentalism our default spirituality: implications for teacher education? *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies*, *70(1)*:1-9.

Potgieter, F.J. & Van der Walt, J.L. 2015. Postmodern relativism and the challenge to overcome the 'value-vacuum'. *Stellenbosch Theological Journal*, *1(1)*:235-254.

Potgieter, F.J. 2015. Beyond tolerance: educating for religious respect and hospitality in pedagogic multilogical sanctuaries. (*In* Popov, N., Wolhuter, C., Ermenc, K.S., Hilton, G., Ogunleye, J. & Niemczyk, E. Quality, Social Justice and Accountability in Education Worldwide. *BCES Conference Books*, *13(1)*. Sofia: Bulgarian Comparative Education Society [BCES], p. 53-59).

Potgieter, F.J., Van der Walt, J.L. & Wolhuter, C.C. 2014. Towards understanding (religious) (in)tolerance in education. *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies*, *70(3)*:1-8.

Price, F.W. 2018 Two years of the literature of missions: a Review of the period from the Spring of 1954 to the Spring of 1956. (*In* Danielson, A. & Fenrick, D.E., *eds*. Early Proceedings of The Association of Professors of Mission. Wilmore, Kentucky: First Fruits Publishers, p. 148-159).

Randall, P. 1989, Historico-pedagogics and teacher education in South Africa. *Perspectives in Education*, *11(2)*:37-46.

Reagan, T. 1990. Philosophy of education in the service of apartheid: The role of fundamental pedagogics in South African education. *Educational Foundations*, *4(2)*:59-71.

Ricœur, P. 1984. Time and Narrative, volume 1. Chicago: The Chicago University Press.

Ricœur, P. 1988. Time and Narrative, volume 3. Chicago: The Chicago University Press.

Riehl, W. 1863. Land und Leute. Stuttgart: Cotta.

Saunders, S. 1992. The future of education. *Academic Standard*, *1(1)*:6.

Scruton, R. 2014. The Soul of the World. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Segal, S. 1996. Dialogue with fundamental pedagogics. *Open Learning through Distance Education*, *2(3)*:1-13.

Simon, R.L. 2015. Internalism and Sport. (*In* McNamee, M. & Morgan, W.J., eds. Routledge

Handbook of the Philosophy of Sport. London: Taylor & Francis Group).

Slamat, J.A. 1993. Can the view of persons and society that is presupposed by Higgs' account of fundamental pedagogics be compatible with a concept of democratic education? Bellville: University of the Western Cape.

Smith, J.K.A. 2006. Who's Afraid of Postmodernism? Taking Derrida, Lyotard and Foucault to Church. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic.

Smith, J.K.A. 2009. Desiring the Kingdom, Worship, Worldview and Cultural Formation, volume 1 of Cultural Liturgies. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic.

Smith, J.K.A.2013. Imagining the Kingdom, How Worship Works, volume 2 of Cultural Liturgies. Grand Rapids, Baker Academic.

South African History Online. (n.d.) Religion: The Afrikaner's Religious Experience. https://www.sahistory.org.za/article/afrikaner Date of access: 26 Oct.2019.

Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. 2016. Philosophy of Education. https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/education-philosophy Date of access: 25 October 2019.

Stephens, D. 2014. Reconceptualising the Role of Narrative in Education and Development in Africa: Lessons from the Field. *International Journal of Educational Development in Africa*, *1(1)*:19-30.

Stoker, H.G. 2007b. Calvinistiese Didaktiek (Onderrigkunde) en Vakdidaktiek. (In Stoker, H.G. CD Uit, deur en tot God is alle dinge, 2.1.11.7. Werke van Prof Dr. H.G. Stoker, Potchefstroom).

Strauss, D.F.M. 1998. Being Human in God's World. Bloemfontein: University Press.

Strauss, D.F.M. 2009. Philosophy Discipline of the Disciplines. Grand Rapids: Paideia Press.

Taleb, N. 2007. The Black Swan: The Impact of The Highly Improbable. New York: Random House.

Taleb, N. 2012. Antifragile: Things That Gain from Disorder. New York: Random House.

Taylor, C. 2007. A Secular Age. London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

Taylor, N. 1993. Future directions for faculties of education in South Africa. Pretoria: University of South Africa.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa Report, 1999. Government Commission Report. New York: Grove Dictionaries.

Tutu, D. 1999. No Future Without Forgiveness. New York: Doubleday.

Tzoref, S. 2018. Knowing the Heart of the Stranger: Empathy, Remembrance, and Narrative in Jewish Reception of Exodus 22:21, Deuteronomy 10:19 and Parallels. *Interpretation: A Journal of Bible and Theology*, *72(2)*:119–131.

Vanhoozer, J. 2005. The Drama of Doctrine: A Canonical-Linguistic Approach to Christian Theology. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press.

Vanhoozer, K. 1990. Biblical Narrative in the Philosophy of Paul Ricœur: A Study in Hermeneutics and Theology. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Vanhoozer, K. 2003. Theology and the condition of postmodernity: a report on knowledge (of God). (*In* Vanhoozer, K. *ed.* The Cambridge Companion to Postmodern Theology. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 3-25).

Visker, R. 1994. Transcultural vibrations. *Ethical Perspectives*, *1*:89.

Von Polenz, W. 1895. Der Büttnerbauer. Berlin: Fontane.

Waghid, Y. & Davids, N., *eds.* 2018. African democratic citizenship education revisited. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Waghid, Y. 2019. Towards a Philosophy of Caring in Higher Education: Pedagogy and Nuances of Care. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan.

Waghid, Y., Waghid, F. & Waghid, Z. 2018. Rupturing African teaching and learning: Ubuntu, justice and education. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

ADDENDUM A: PROOF THAT THE FOLLOWING STUDY DOES NOT REQUIRE ETHICAL APPROVAL

Private Bag X6001, Potchefstroom
South Africa 2520

Tel: 018 299-1111/2222
Web: http://www.nwu.ac.za

Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Education (EduREC)

Faculty of Education

Tel: 018 285 2078
Email: Jako.Olivier@nwu.ac.za

4 September 2019

Dear Prof Ferdinand Potgieter

PROOF THAT THE FOLLOWING STUDY DOES NOT REQUIRE ETHICAL APPROVAL

Study title: A confessional postmodern approach to philosophy of education: towards narrative possibilities for educational praxis
Promoter: Prof Ferdinand Potgieter
Student: GJ Braun (studentnr 24735884)

Ethics number: NWU-01601-19-A2

On 21 August 2019 the Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Education (EduREC) reviewed the aforementioned study, as approved by the Faculty of Education M&D Programme Committee on 11 August 2016, after which it was confirmed that no ethical approval was required as this study does not involve any human participants or their data/information.

Yours sincerely

Prof JAK Olivier
Chairperson: Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Education (EduREC)

1