

**ROB FREATHY AND STEPHEN G. PARKER**

## **Introduction**

### **Abstract**

This introductory chapter seeks to provoke reflection on the concepts that provide the theme for the volume overall: history, remembrance and religious education. It begins by setting out some epistemological and methodological questions concerning the writing of history, and demonstrates their ethical significance, specifically with regard to the Holocaust. It then exemplifies some historiographical considerations of pertinence to the present volume by drawing upon archival, oral life history and published documentary data collected during research into the history of Religious Education in England. Recent public pronouncements from David Bell, Richard J. Evans and Michael Gove are then discussed to highlight issues pertaining to the acts of remembrance concerning the 100<sup>th</sup> and 70<sup>th</sup> anniversaries of the start of the First World War in 1914 and the passing of the Butler Education Act (England and Wales) in 1944 respectively. It is argued that we have a moral obligation to engage with historical discourses and to participate in acts of remembrance. Lastly, the chapter outlines the contents of the remainder of the volume and summarises the various ways in which the contributing authors have addressed the theme of ‘History, Remembrance and Religious Education’.

### **In defence of history**

What is history? Is it a series of events or phenomena in the past, the narration or representation of such events or phenomena in the present, and/or a branch of academic knowledge associated with a discrete subject or discipline? What is the relationship between

the language, symbols and signs that constitute historical sources and accounts on the one hand, and the past realities to which they pertain on the other? Is it possible to discover *the* meaning of historical texts? Can one develop criteria by which to judge historical truth and falsity that are not reflective of their situatedness (e.g. authorial interests or paradigmatic preferences)? Does a lack of scholarly consensus about inferences, explanations and evaluations mean that historical research is inherently subjective, being determined by the beliefs, norms and values of historians and the contexts in which they write? When the historical event under scrutiny is as cataclysmic as the Holocaust, there is a moral imperative to answer epistemological and methodological questions such as these.

Professor Sir Richard J. Evans, a British academic historian, came to public attention in 2000 as an expert witness in the ultimately successful defence of Deborah Lipstadt. She was being sued for libel by David Irving after referring to him as a ‘Holocaust denier’ and ‘an ardent follower of Adolf Hitler’, as well as for accusing him of distorting and misrepresenting historical evidence to reach untenable conclusions (Lipstadt, 1993; Evans, 2001). In his earlier book, *In Defence of History* (1997), in which he had controversially linked postmodern historiography to Holocaust denial (Purkiss, 1999), Evans had argued that epistemological relativism with regard to historical research is unjustified. The language and grammar utilized in historical sources are not arbitrary, but have evolved through contact with an ‘extra-textual reality’ that is not entirely created, constructed or negotiated, and that therefore limits the reconstructions and interpretations that historians can legitimately make. Whilst the ‘real world’ of the past does not exist, historians can piece together an interpretation of it by studying the traces it has left behind in the form of primary sources (Evans, 1997, 126). For him, a text is always written for a readership and framed according to the writers’ expectations of how the intended readers will take it. During the act of reading, therefore, the reader should be mindful of the purposes and intentions of the writer (Evans,

1997, 104). Authorial intentions do limit language and preclude an infinity of interpretations. At the same time, Evans (1997) recognized that all historical writing is guided by literary models, social science theories, moral and political beliefs, aesthetic sense, and unconscious assumptions and desires, no matter how much historians engage reflexively. This means that other historians can and will tell historical stories differently. This does not make them untrue, because at the very least the truth they tell will be their own (Evans, 1997, 249-50). Consequently, the validity of historical writing must be assessed on the understanding that history is a science in the weak sense. It cannot frame general laws or predict the future, but it does constitute an organized body of knowledge, acquired through disciplined research, carried out according to generally-agreed methods, presented in published reports, and subject to rigorous and painstaking peer review (Evans, 1997, 73). By these means, historians ensure that their provisional constructions of past reality are constrained by, and dependent upon, the traces of the 'extra-textual reality' that have been left behind. In the case of 'David Irving v. Penguin Books Limited and Deborah E. Lipstat' (Irving v. Penguin Books, 2000), and partly on the basis of the evidence submitted by Evans to that trial, Irving was judged to have fallen far short of this standard of scholarship, systematically distorting the historical record of the Second World War.

The epistemological and methodological questions raised by the above pertain as much to global histories of epoch-changing political catastrophes as they do to local studies of the evolution of particular social phenomena, such as the history of education, schooling and/or the curriculum. A patch-work quilt of archival, oral life history and published documentary data, collected during our own experiences of researching the history of Religious Education in England, are used in the following sections to exemplify some of these and other historiographical considerations of pertinence to the present volume.

### **A serendipitous archival discovery**

History is often written by the victors. They are in the position not only to determine what of the present should be retained for the future, but also how the traces of the past should be reconstructed and interpreted in the present. Previously-hidden history can be revealed through the discovery of unknown primary sources or the utilization of known, but neglected, primary sources. These can disclose events, phenomena or people that have been forgotten, and/or shed light on why others have been remembered.

The controversial British media and social campaigner Mary Whitehouse (1910-2001) was renowned for establishing the ‘Clean-up TV’ campaign in 1964, and the National Viewers’ and Listeners’ Association in 1965. Less well known are her campaigns, in the mid-1970s, to defend the clauses of the 1944 Education Act governing the provision of Religious Instruction and Collective Worship in English and Welsh schools. She believed these were under threat from the campaigns of secularists and humanists who sought to abolish, reform or replace Religious Instruction (Freathy & Parker, 2013), and those academics and practitioners who were promoting the secularization and pluralization of Religious Instruction, for example, through the inclusion of non-religious stances for living, such as Humanism and Communism, in the curriculum (City of Birmingham Education Committee, 1975). In response to these threats, on 27 January 1976, Whitehouse launched the ‘Save Religious Education in State Schools’ campaign. This has hitherto been neglected in the historiography of Religious Education in England, thereby potentially exemplifying a selective amnesia within the relevant academic and professional communities (Freathy & Parker, 2012). Its rediscovery is important because it evidences the existence of lobbying, and a coalescence of political support and public debate about the reassertion of the Christian identity of Britain through a return to ‘confessional’ Religious Education, as opposed to ‘non-confessional’ multi-faith teaching, at least a decade earlier than has previously been

suggested (Parsons, 1994, 183). It has also led to the disclosure of an intriguing historical detail.

On 23 January, 1976, just days before the launch of Whitehouse's campaign, a 16-year-old school boy from Knightswood Secondary School in Glasgow sent her a letter. It contained 'Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ!' and the belief that 'the Lord is using ... to his advantage' the pupil's position, as a 'school prefect' and senior member of the school's Christian Fellowship, in petitioning teachers and fellow pupils on behalf of Whitehouse's cause. The pupil admitted, however, that this was encountering 'a fair bit of opposition' from 'predictable sources, the Ultra Left and Ultra Right' and 'particularly the male staff room'. Offering a personal perspective, our protagonist thought 'social politics' and (non-Christian) 'religious philosophies' *should* be taught in schools, just not within 'Religious Education', which should really be 'Christian education ... preaching the true gospel of Christ' through which 'young people ... will see Christ as the *only* answer to the problems of life'. The letter's valediction and signature read, 'Yours in Christ, David Bell' (National Viewers' and Listeners' Association Collection, n.d.).

The archive of the National Viewers' and Listeners' Association at the University of Essex, Colchester Campus, in which this letter was found, covers the period 1964 to 1991 and consists of 144 boxes of publications, committee papers, television monitoring reports and surveys, newspaper cuttings and a plethora of correspondence. The name of this letter's author jogged a memory in the researcher's mind, unlike the hundreds of other authors' names that had been passed over in ignorance as to their potential significance. To use an English colloquialism as a pun, this author's name 'rang a bell' that resonated with the researcher's prior knowledge and experience. It was the same name of the then Permanent Secretary to the Department of Education: the most senior civil servant with responsibility for education within the UK Government. An instantaneous internet search revealed the high

probability, which was later confirmed through personal correspondence, that the boy whose letter had been serendipitously encountered and recognized in the archive was indeed the same David Bell.

After leaving school, Bell had studied History and Philosophy at the University of Glasgow, followed by a teacher training qualification at Jordanhill College of Education. After that, his career took the following path: primary school teacher, deputy headteacher and headteacher (1982-88); university lecturer (1988-90); Assistant Director of Education, Chief Education Officer and Director of Education and Libraries at Newcastle City Council (1990-2000); Chief Executive of Bedfordshire County Council (2000-02); Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools, Office for Standards in Education (2002-06); Permanent Secretary of the Department for Education and Skills, Department for Children, Schools and Families and Department for Education (2006-12); and currently, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Reading (2012-).

In the consciousness of those who study the interface of religion and education, David Bell first became well known, as Chief Inspector of Schools, when calling for the removal of the legal obligation upon English schools to provide a daily act of Collective Worship. On the basis that 76 percent of secondary schools were already non-compliant, Bell suggested that the requirement should be for weekly or even monthly worship, and that this reduced frequency had the potential to make it more meaningful. His comments, made in a speech in the House of Commons on 21 April 2004, marked the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1944 Education Act, which had introduced statutory Religious Instruction and Collective Worship (Bell, 2004). It was this provision that Mary Whitehouse's culturally-conservative campaign, supported by the teenage Bell, had sought to defend almost thirty years earlier. Bell was now arguing that, when the Act was passed, the duty upon schools to provide for the 'spiritual development' of pupils 'was probably considered to be synonymous with the daily act of

Christian worship ... But, with the broadening of Britain's religious and cultural identity, spirituality has come into its own as encapsulating those very qualities that make us human' (Bell, 2004). 'Are we right', he asked, 'to be requiring from our young people levels of observance that are not matched even by the Christian faithful?' Instead, he wondered if it would be preferable 'to encourage an interest in matters of a spiritual and religious nature, which fitted better into the [multi-cultural] society of which the schools and the pupils are a part' (Bell, 2004). Such questions, about the appropriateness of the legal framework governing Collective Worship in the light of profound social and cultural changes, remain just as relevant a decade later, as we mark the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1944 Education Act, more aware than ever before of the extent to which that legislation was the product of a very particular religious and spiritual environment in the context of the Second World War (Freathy, 2008; Parker, 2012).

### **Oral life history**

To discover, metaphorically, the boy who became this prominent educational policy-maker, in such a relatively obscure archive, and expressing support for one of Britain's most contentious public figures over the last half-century, stimulated an irresistible urge to find out more about his involvement in the 'Save Religious Education in State Schools' campaign, as well as how his conception of Religious Education had changed and continued throughout his professional life. Subsequently, on 12 August 2010, a face-to-face interview was undertaken with Bell at the Department of Education, Sanctuary Buildings, in London, utilizing a bespoke semi-structured interview schedule. Some of the findings from this interview are presented below.

David Bell grew up on the Knightswood council estate in the west of Glasgow and in the evangelical and strict, but not oppressive, Scottish Baptist tradition of his church-going,

‘respectable working-class’, father and mother. He underwent ‘religious conversion’ at around the age of 9 or 10, which ‘shaped ... a lot of [his] thinking all the way through [his] teenage years’. At primary school, Religious Education was not ignored, but it was a ‘remarkably modest part of the school curriculum ... maybe a weekly occurrence’. At secondary school, Religious Education was part of the timetable, albeit taught by ‘non-specialists’, certainly until the age of 16, and not at all ‘oppressive’. Thus, ‘right throughout [his] school career, Religious Education neither felt as if it had a hugely prominent place on the curriculum, but nor did it feel that there was somehow some conspiracy to kick it out of schools’.

On the matter of the letter discovered in the archive of the National Viewers’ and Listeners’ Association (known as VALA), Bell neither remembers what he was campaigning for or against, nor how and why he became interested in the campaign:

You think back to your past, there are some things that are really vivid, you almost can picture where you sat at a particular meeting, ... as a teenager, as a child, ... when you sent the letter through, and you read it ... I cannot remember what that was about ... I had a really happy time at school, and particularly in the last two years. I remember so much of it. And this, I just can’t. You might say that is psychological ... I couldn’t remember the campaign, I couldn’t remember the petition ... I had completely forgotten [the letter] ... I read it, and said ‘my goodness’. (David Bell, personal interview, 12 August 2010)

Bell does recall that his parents were members of VALA, his church was affiliated to it, and one member of the congregation was its ‘sort of Scottish co-ordinator’. For him, it was

an ‘influential and powerful movement’ that ‘played into much of the evangelical concern ... about secularism’.

Bell retained his faith ‘probably right up until ... [he] had gone through university and started to be a bit more questioning and then really detached [himself] from religious belief and the church by the age of 21-22’. He says:

I became increasingly uncomfortable at what I saw as an intolerance within the evangelical tradition, and ... my anxieties about the certainties of religion ... however I’ve always been quite anxious ... not to be disparaging about what I used to believe, and certainly not to be disparaging towards people who do hold a faith ... I am ... a very liberal person ... I do believe that actually one of the great benefits of British society ... we actually are a pretty open, free, tolerant society that allows a cacophony of views. And maybe that was a belief system that was emerging as I went to university and beyond, and I was finding it increasingly hard to put that tolerance and liberalism alongside what I thought was a rather closed system of evangelical thinking. (David Bell, personal interview, 12 August 2010)

Nevertheless, despite losing his faith, Bell has ‘always felt quite strongly about the case for the teaching of Religious Education, and also ... for the Christian predominance within Religious Education’ because, even though it should be ‘a discipline of education’ and not about ‘proselytization’, it should still ‘reflect the orientation of our history and culture towards Christianity’ without which ‘you cannot understand Britain today’.

Looking back over his career as a whole, and the controversies that arise regarding the position of Religious Education in the curriculum, Bell believes the subject ‘is going to have a particular place, partly because of the history of this country, partly because of the fact that

we have a very strong established faith system in our state school system and partly because of some of the historic battles and one might say compromises over the place of faith':

the voices of the Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church are almost bound to be more influential [than those of professional groups], and ... properly so, because of our tradition and our history, and also because of our parliamentary system ... the House of Lords ... within that context, they will have a lot of influence, and I can imagine that Secretaries of State ... time immemorial, certainly since '44, have always had in the back of their minds, 'How do we manage the churches?', 'How do we manage the bishops?' ... There has never been a great wish or desire ... to take on the churches ... I don't think that is just because politicians are afraid of the reaction, I think there is a kind of political consensus in this country that Religious Education ... should have a particular place in the curriculum and should have a particular orientation ... Is that still the national consensus? ... Even though the country has changed quite dramatically in its religious composition, I don't get a sense that that has changed people's attitudes one way or the other massively on Religious Education ... My hunch would be that if politicians were ever going to go back into this arena, they are more likely to try to do something about Religious Education ... than they are ... to touch Collective Worship ... because I think one can make ... a rational, intellectual and probably also a sort of religious case for re-orientating Religious Education somewhat, to reflect the fact that we are a different country, without losing the essential Christian dimension, whereas on the Collective Worship, I think there is something deep in the psyche about that. ... Politicians have only got a limited amount of political capital to expend. Is this the sort of thing you are going to expend it on? (David Bell, personal interview, 12 August 2010)

The discovery of Bell's letter in the VALA archive, and the subsequent oral life history interview with him, as well as the findings we can glean from both sets of data, provoke reflections on the traces of the past that are bequeathed to us; the fortuitousness of data collection and analysis; the partiality and unreliability of memories; the extent to which our identities, beliefs and values are constructed and reconstructed throughout our lifetimes; the inter-relationship between our personal and professional lives; the role of schools and their curricula in perpetuating history, heritage and tradition; and finally, as will be discussed further in the next section, the political nature of knowledge and curriculum formation.

### **The politics of history and remembrance**

Sir David Bell KCB, as he is now, has a reputation as an authoritative, balanced, measured, diplomatic and hard-working public servant (Wilby, 2012), yet when he left the Department of Education in 2012 there were unconfirmed 'reports of tensions' between him and the then Secretary of State for Education, Michael Gove (Conservative Member of Parliament). Although Bell has always denied that there was 'a difficult relationship' (Wilby, 2012), he was one of four senior officials in the Department to resign from the civil service at the same time, which inevitably fuelled 'speculation of a rift between them and their Tory or coalition masters' (Garner, 2012). The suggestion was eminently plausible: as Secretary of State for Education, Michael Gove was a divisive figure who was strongly criticized by teaching professionals in the UK. Votes of no confidence in his abilities and/or policies were passed by the Association of Teachers and Lecturers (March 2013), the National Union of Teachers (April 2013) and the National Association of Head Teachers (May 2013).

The contentiousness of Gove's educational policies can be illustrated not least by the controversies that followed the launch of a new draft National Curriculum for History (5-14 year olds) on 7 February 2013. At this point we need to return to Richard J. Evans as he has

become Gove's leading intellectual adversary in public discourse. For a number of reasons, as Evans (2013a) notes, the new History curriculum was 'greeted with dismay by History teachers at every level, from primary schools to universities, and from every part of the political spectrum'. First, it promoted the 'learning of names, dates and facts strung together to form a celebratory, patriotic national narrative' rather than equipping 'pupils to think critically, weigh evidence, sift arguments and develop perspective and judgement'. Second, the emphasis was 'exclusively on British history' and 'European and world history [were] included only where they [were] relevant to Britain'. Third, historical individuals were selected on the basis of whether they were 'heroes or heroines to be admired' rather than 'presented as subjects for historical inquiry'. Fourth, the chronological presentation of 'dense factual' curriculum content would lead to the learning of superficial, decontextualized and age-inappropriate knowledge. Last, the curriculum side-lined economic, social, cultural and other kinds of history in favour of a traditional political narrative. Evans concludes:

Gove wants the teaching of history to give pupils a positive sense of national identity and pride. Yet history isn't a form of instruction in citizenship. It's an academic subject in its own right. If he really wants more rigour in education, Gove should tear up his amateurish new curriculum and start listening to the professionals. (Evans, 2013a)

In response to some of the criticisms above, a revised draft of the new History National Curriculum was published in July 2013. According to Evans (2013b), it no longer sought 'to impart a patriotic sense of national identity through the uncritical hero-worship of great men and women from the British past'. Moreover, by recognizing the histories of Scotland and Ireland, it represented a victory for the opponents of Gove's 'narrow, tub-

thumping jingoism’ and ‘English nationalism’, and came closer to recognizing the interconnectedness and relative autonomy of past events in England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland, which together form the story of Britain’s ‘multicultural society’. Nevertheless, despite referring to ‘British, local and world history’, the revised curriculum still did not mention ‘European history’ except insofar as it has influenced the history of Britain.

For Evans (2013b), underlying these curriculum reforms was a ‘patriotic British – or for the most part English – historical narrative [which] envisions mainland Europe largely as the scene of British triumphs over evil foreigners’. The First World War, for which 2014 represents the centenary of its start, is depicted incorrectly as ending with a victory for Britain over an ‘authoritarian, militarist, expansionist enemy’ that sought to subjugate ‘a large part of Europe to the political and economic domination of the Reich’. In fact, nobody has been able ‘to demonstrate convincingly that the German government went to war in August 1914 with these aims in mind ... every country had its strategic and ideological reasons’. Moreover, the end of the war represented ‘a victory for no one’ because all the major issues were left unresolved and from them sprang ‘all the evils that plagued Europe in the following decades’ (i.e. ‘fascism, communism, racism, anti-Semitism, dictatorship, extreme violence, mass murder, genocide and the wholesale abandonment of civilized values’). According to Evans, ‘[t]he men who enlisted may have thought they were fighting for civilization, a better world, a war to end all wars, a war to defend freedom: they were wrong’ and ‘[p]ropagating inaccurate myths about alleged British victories is no way to create a solid national identity’. This raises questions, for Evans, about the kind of national identity we want:

Do we want a narrow, partisan, isolationist national identity where foreigners and immigrants are regarded with hostility or suspicion, other countries treated as inferior, and triumphalist historical myths are drummed into our children? Or do we

want ... a modern, multi-ethnic and multicultural nation [based on] a view of British history that emphasises its open, tolerant, multicultural aspects[?] (Evans, 2013b)

On 2 January 2014, Michael Gove retaliated, arguing that it is important:

we don't succumb to some of the myths which have grown up about the [First World War]. Our understanding of the war has been overlaid by misunderstandings, and misrepresentations which reflect an, at best, ambiguous attitude to this country and, at worst, an unhappy compulsion on the part of some to denigrate virtues such as patriotism, honour and courage. (Gove, 2014)

These myths were fed by 'Left-wing academics' such as Richard J. Evans whose arguments were deemed as 'more reflective of the attitude of an undergraduate cynic playing to the gallery in a Cambridge Footlights revue rather than a sober academic contributing to a proper historical debate'. For Gove, the First World War was a 'just war', 'a noble cause', and fought by men who were 'conscious believers in king and country, committed to defending the western liberal order'. For all our mistakes as a nation, he maintains, 'Britain's role in the world has also been marked by nobility and courage' and

whatever each of us takes from these acts of remembrance ... it is always worth remembering that the freedom to draw our own conclusions ... is a direct consequence of the bravery of men and women who fought for, and believed in, Britain's special tradition of liberty. (Gove, 2014)

For Evans (2014), this was further proof of Gove's 'ignorance of history' and 'preference for mythmaking over scholarship' as demonstrated by the following points. One of Britain's two main allies was Russia, which was ruled by the - far from liberal - Tsar Nicholas II. In contrast to Germany, only 40 percent of adult males in Britain had the right to vote, that is, until the Fourth Reform Act of 1918. The largest political party in Germany, the Social Democrats, opposed annexations and had long been critical of militarism. Moreover, in contrast to Gove's attempts to represent these contrary historical interpretations as a 'left versus right' political debate, many of those who have 'convicted Britain and its leaders either of making the wrong decision in 1914 or of turning the war effort into a "misbegotten shambles"' are right-wing historians and politicians. Thus, in conclusion, Evans argues that Gove should be ashamed of his defamation of those 'who think and write critically about Britain's role in the First World War'.

The argument above takes us back to the epistemological and methodological debates with which we began this chapter, concerning the relationship between historical sources and accounts on the one hand, and the past realities to which they pertain on the other, and whether it is possible to discover *the* meaning of historical texts, events or phenomena or to develop sufficiently rigorous criteria by which to judge historical truth and falsity. When the issues at stake are as profound as those associated with the horrors and atrocities of the First and Second World Wars, we have a moral obligation both to engage with historical discourses and to participate in acts of remembrance. Either, alone, is insufficient.

### **History, Remembrance and Religious Education**

The eighteenth session of the International Seminar on Religious Education and Values, convened at the Turku Christian Institute, Finland, in late July 2012. This volume on

*History, Remembrance and Religious Education* draws together some of the key work stimulated and nurtured by that meeting.

The International Seminar on Religious Education and Values was formed at Birmingham University, England, in 1978 and has continued to meet every other year across Europe and North America. The Seminar now draws together over 200 leading researchers in religious education from approximately 40 countries. It embraces a variety of religious and secular traditions concerned with many different aspects of religious education relevant both to secular schools and to faith communities. Such informed diversity brought a rich range of perspectives to the theme of *History, Remembrance and Religious Education*. These are captured, at least partially, in the three parts that constitute the present volume: Part 1 – Fostering a culture of remembrance; Part 2 - Historical perspectives on religious education; and Part 3 - History, tradition, memory and identity.

The first part on ‘fostering a culture of remembrance’ draws together four detailed and informed discussions from Germany, Switzerland and Israel. From Germany, with regard to the Holocaust as a catastrophic contextual standpoint, Reinhold Boschki explores the concept of a ‘culture of remembrance’ on both theoretical and empirical levels, calling for solidarity with the victims of Auschwitz in the present, and promoting the teaching of religion and history in schools so as to awaken ‘historical consciousness’ or ‘awareness’, and human rights learning in the context of remembrance. Also from Germany, Elisabeth Naurath discusses pedagogical, didactic and methodological issues concerning a project in primary schools that seeks to confront 9- to 10-year-old children with the Holocaust in the context of learning about Judaism. In doing so, she raises questions about at what age it is appropriate to confront children with knowledge of the annihilation of Jews in the Third Reich. From Switzerland, Thomas Schlag, drawing upon educational policy analysis and quantitative data derived from a questionnaire survey of 15- to 16-year-old pupils in the Canton of Zurich,

argues for Holocaust remembrance and human rights education to be a task for religious and interreligious education. Last, from Israel, Zehavit Gross analyses the role of memory in the Jewish religious tradition and the memory of the Holocaust in Israel's public sphere, including its implications for how (religious) education is conceived. She concludes by calling for the Holocaust not to be viewed as a unique historical event relating to a specific nation, but as posing moral and spiritual dilemmas suitable for in-depth exploration within Religious Education.

The second part on 'historical perspectives on religious education' draws together eight discussions articulated by religious educators from England, Norway, Germany and Canada. From England, Rob Freathy, Stephen Parker and Jonathan Doney report on their search for the 'hidden history' of Religious Education in English schools in the 1960s and 1970s, discussing their main methodological and substantive findings, before briefly setting out an agenda for future historical research. In the next chapter, Jonathan Doney introduces his methodologically-innovative research on the overlooked ecumenical background, at a supranational level, to the development of world religions teaching in Religious Education in England in the 1960s and 1970s. The last English perspective is provided by Lynn Revell, who presents her analysis of the representation of Islam through text and images in seventy-two Religious Education textbooks published between 1968 and 2012. In doing so, she provides a critique of Orientalism as a discursive lens in the representation of Islam, and of liberalism as a theoretical framework for Religious Education. From Norway, Oddrun Bråten discusses what it means to take an international comparative perspective on the history of Religious Education in England (1870-1988) and Norway (1739-1997), focusing upon the intertwined relationship between Religious Education and the school system in both countries, and their different reactions – reflecting different national imaginaries – to supranational challenges such as increased cultural plurality. Also from Norway, Elisabet

Haakedal presents a comparison of a number of pupils' texts from a substantial Religious Education workbook collection over 50 years, in order to explore explicit and implicit ideas of Holiness in Norwegian primary schools. She concludes that the 1997 school reform constituted the most substantial change of profile in Norwegian Religious Education. From Germany, Bernd Schroder explores historical links and present challenges concerning Religious Education and organized Christian mission, focusing in particular on remembering and reconstructing German 'missionary' engagement in Palestine from the nineteenth century until today. Penultimately, Lorna Bowman provides the first of two Canadian contributions. Her chapter focuses on the efforts of the federal government of Canada to assimilate Aboriginal people through the establishment of residential schools for First Nations children living on reserves, as well as Inuit and Métis children living in defined communities, and through the involvement of many Christian religious groups. Last, Myrtle Power illuminates the paradigmatic shift that has occurred in Religious Education in Catholic schools in Canada over the past fifty years, specifically in relation to the instrumental work of Françoise Darcy-Berubé and Christiane Brusselmans who promoted a more inclusive, comprehensive and holistic understanding of the curriculum and teaching. Overall, the eight chapters that constitute this part of the book provide a powerful reminder of significant changes and continuities in Religious Education, utilizing a diversity of sources ranging from pupils' texts to policy documents, and make clear the extent to which the subject is influenced by a multiplicity of national, international and supranational historical contexts.

The third part on 'history, tradition, memory and identity' draws together five disparate discussions from Germany, Norway, South Africa, England and Finland. From Germany, Ulrich Schwab utilizes four fundamental principles about human nature drawn from the biblical liberation tradition, in combination with the work of Dorothee Söelle, to outline a theology-based theory of *Bildung* founded upon love and work as the cornerstones

for a humane life. From Norway, Geir Skeie provides a comparative and cross-disciplinary investigation into History and Religious Education in Norway and Sweden, focusing particularly on the concepts of memory and heritage, and exploring the relationship between learning about and learning from in the context of Holocaust education. From South Africa, Glynis Parker discusses the importance of traditional beliefs and practices in the New South Africa, since the abolition of Apartheid in 1994, and the implementation of the new Constitution in 1997. Her questionnaire survey of black South Africans in the Johannesburg, Gauteng, area reveals tradition and culture to be very important parts of the social identity of her participants. From England, Bill Gent draws upon his own ethnographic fieldwork within a boys' *Hifz* class and then, later, amongst a group of contemporary *Huffaz* living in Britain to provide a detailed analysis of the origins and significance of *Qur'ānic* memorization and recitation, as a mode of learning, within the Islamic tradition. Last, from Finland, Hannele Niemi explores the extent to which Viktor E. Frankl's existential analysis and Jürgen Habermas' critical theory could be applied in curriculum construction when promoting religious and value literacy, and to support students' identity formation, specifically in Religious Education. Together, these chapters provide international perspectives on various forms of (religious) identity formation, and the role of memory, history, heritage and tradition within that.

Overall, this volume represents the reflections of a vibrant international community of scholars who recognize the inter-relationship between history, remembrance and religious education. They highlight the contribution of narratives, stories and memories to the formation and reformation of personal, social, ethnic, religious and national identities (Reed, Freathy, Cornwall, & Davis, 2013). For this reason, the history and traditions transmitted by educational institutions and curriculum subjects are contested political issues, as evidenced in

this volume by the debates concerning changes and continuities in the nature and purpose of religious education internationally.

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