Exploring how teaching and learning practices and Hindu and Buddhist rituals can contribute to social cohesion in a multicultural classroom

by

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DECLARATION

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Abstract

This study explored how ritual practices form part of everyday teaching and learning and how Hindu and Buddhist rituals can further contribute to social cohesion in a multicultural classroom. The investigation of the Waldorf education system is a link to how one could incorporate ritual practices from other cultures into mainstream education. Theoretical frameworks of Hinduism, Buddhism, ritual, Waldorf education, multiculturalism and social cohesion were used to inform this research.

The research design was in the form of a case study. Qualitative data collection techniques, quota and non-probability sampling were used. The sampling for this study entailed an art intervention, observation, interviews and questionnaires among learners and educators from one mainstream high school and one private high school, including representatives from both Hinduism and Buddhism. Grade 8 learners from a mainstream school participated in five one-hour sessions, where they were involved in a ritual practice of walking the labyrinth common to both Hinduism and Buddhism. After observation, 10 learners were interviewed. Two educators completed questionnaires regarding ritual practices. In the Waldorf school, 15 learners from grades 9 to 13 participated in face-to-face interviews. Four educators completed questionnaires and one educator opted for an interview. Two representatives from Hinduism completed questionnaires and one representative participated in a face-to-face interview. Two representatives from Buddhism completed a questionnaire. Inductive content analysis was conducted to interpret the data.

The findings based on the data and conclusions reflect the contribution of incorporating ritual practices in schools. Although this study was limited to Hinduism and Buddhism, it reflects that ritual practices from all cultures could be beneficial in enhancing social cohesion between learners and can contribute to teaching and learning in a positive way in multicultural classrooms. The divisiveness among people in the world today does not serve humanity. One way of overcoming this division is by introducing positive ritual practices from all cultures to educate and inform people about the similarities that exist among humans. Understanding ritual and ritual practices from different cultures, including Hindu and Buddhist rituals could have a positive impact on education in South Africa.

Opsomming

Hierdie studie het ondersoek ingestel na hoe rituele praktyke deel van daaglikse onderrig en leer vorm en hoe Hindoe- en Boeddhistiese rituele verder tot sosiale samehang in 'n multikulturele klaskamer kan bydra. Die ondersoek na die Waldorf-onderwysstelsel is 'n skakel na die manier waarop rituele praktyke van ander kulture in hoofstroom-onderwys geïnkorporeer kan word. Teoretiese perspektiewe van Hindoeïsme, Boeddhisme, rituele, Waldorf-onderwys, multikulturalisme en sosiale samehang is gebruik om hierdie navorsing te rig.

Die navorsingsontwerp was in die vorm van 'n gevallestudie. Kwalitatiewe data-insamelingstegnieke, kwota en niewaarskynlikheidsteekproefneming is gebruik. Die steekproefneming vir hierdie studie het 'n kunsintervensie, waarneming, onderhoude en vraelyste onder leerders en onderwysers van een hoofstroom-hoërskool en een Waldorfskool, insluitende verteenwoordigers van sowel Hindoeïsme as Boeddhisme, behels. Graad 8-leerders van 'n hoofstroom-skool het aan vyf eenuur-sessies deelgeneem, waartydens hulle betrokke was by 'n rituele praktyk om die labirint van Hindoeïsme en Boeddhisme te stap. Ná waarneming is onderhoude met tien leerders gevoer. Twee onderwysers het vraelyste oor rituele praktyke ingevul. In die Waldorfskool is persoonlike onderhoude met 15 leerders van Graad 9 tot 13 gevoer. Vier onderwysers het vraelyste ingevul en een onderwyser het 'n onderhoud verkies. Twee verteenwoordigers van Hindoeïsme het vraelyste ingevul en een verteenwoordiger het 'n persoonlike onderhoud toegestaan. Twee verteenwoordigers van Boeddhisme het 'n vraelys ingevul.

Die bevindinge op grond van die versamelde data en gevolgtrekkings weerspieël die belang van die insluiting van rituele praktyke in skole. Alhoewel hierdie studie beperk was tot Hindoeïsme en Boeddhisme, weerspieël dit dat rituele praktyke uit alle kulture voordelig sal wees om sosiale samehang tussen leerders te versterk en dat dit op 'n positiewe manier tot onderrig en leer in multikulturele klaskamers kan bydra. Die verdeeldheid onder mense in die wêreld vandag dien nie die mensdom nie. Een manier om hierdie verdeeldheid te oorkom, is deur positiewe rituele praktyke van alle kulture, insluitend Hindoe- en Boeddhistiese rituele, in te voer om mense op te voed en in te lig oor die ooreenkomste onder die mensdom. Implikasies op grond van die bevindinge en gevolgtrekkings uit die kunsintervensie, onderhoude en vraelyste deur die leerders, onderwysers en verteenwoordigers word aangebied. Begrip van rituele en rituele praktyke uit verskillende kulture en die positiewe impak wat dit op mense kan hê, kan gevolglik 'n positiewe uitwerking op onderwys in Suid Afrika hê.

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CHAPTER 1: ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

1.1   Introduction and background

"He who experiences the unity of life sees his own self in all beings." Gautama Buddha

Through investigation and exploration, the aim of this study was to make sense of how the practice of ritual can influence teaching and learning in South Africa. Ritual in this context relates to the repetition of human actions and the reasons therefore. According to Axel Michaels (2016:4), performing rituals means "to enact the claim of unchangeability, that is, the claim that the same is acted out again and again or that it is mimetically repeated". Our daily actions can in effect be viewed as rituals; from brushing our teeth and an early-morning jog to sitting down for breakfast. These are types of actions that some people repeat daily as a form of discipline. While rituals may narrowly be perceived as having a religious framework, when viewed contextually, it is not religious per se. Rituals for the purpose of this study can be distinguished as repeated actions or behaviours. Through this study, I endeavoured to understand how the practice of rituals can enhance teaching and learning by examining various texts, specifically from Hinduism and Buddhism, to inform my study. I have chosen Hinduism and Buddhism because they are familiar to me and I can relate to their ritual practices. I further explored the existing approaches to rituals in one mainstream and one private school.

The method of research was qualitative and took the form of a case study by means of focus group discussions, interviews, participation, observation, analysis and interpretation. Information was gathered from texts, educators, learners and spiritual scholars in both Hinduism and Buddhism. Narratives, rituals and symbolisms were compared with the aim to address ritual practices as contributing and enhancing social cohesion in the education system in the South African context. Social cohesion has several definitions, but for the purpose of this study social cohesion means to have "a sense of belonging that translates […] a common identity […] inclusiveness, tolerance, respect for individuals [and] mutual trust" (Mekoa & Busari, 2018:108). Although the research focused on the value of ritual practices and their positive contribution to education systems in a South African context, it also explored how the sharing of rituals from the Hindu and Buddhist cultures can contribute to social cohesion.

I have come to learn that people in the world tend to divide, separate or group to understand factors around them, be it cultures, religions or gender, as if a dichotomy is mandatory. Being an artist and having to communicate through my artworks, I am curious about how people think, how and what

they believe, and how rituals create identities and shape the way people view themselves and the world. I am particularly interested in how rituals and certain narratives within rituals have created foundations for people's behaviour.

Having been introduced to Hindu scriptures and rituals from a young age and embracing these values in my lifestyle, I have come to identify myself with Hindu culture. Hindu tales have also taught me that ritual is core to living societies. This is the main reason I have chosen Hinduism and Buddhism (which is a branch of Hinduism) as a starting point for this study. In *A survey of Hinduism* (1989:1), Klaus Klostermaier states that "Hinduism is the oldest living major tradition on earth, with roots reaching back into the prehistory of humankind". Hinduism, while advocating unity, views nature and all living beings as a whole. For this reason I deemed it meaningful to explore Hindu and Buddhist rituals against the backdrop of the current ritualistic activities in two schools: one private and one public.

Although this study attempted to unveil the value of ritual practices that have already been explored by several theorists, it was undeniably beyond the bounds of this study to offer a complete investigation and exploration into the topic of ritual practices. Notwithstanding, I was determined to contribute to the works of many by pursuing this field of research.

1.2   Ritual practices in South African education

There are various discussions, theories, opinions and debates on the use of the term 'ritual', what it signifies and its possible meanings (Bell, 1997:10). It materialises that ritual practices or even the term 'ritual' in our contemporary world still springs religious connotations in the minds of many. Bell (1997) makes her readers aware that the term 'ritual practice' is often loosely used such that its true meaning is overlooked, as its relationship with religion and culture prevails over other concurrent definitions. Many people are not always aware of their daily actions and how these may contribute to their lifestyles in a positive or negative way. This could also be a result of the prominent Western 'rituals' by which we are all unwittingly conditioned.

Within the theoretical framework of this study, the concepts of ritual, Hinduism, Buddhism, Waldorf education, education within a multicultural society and social justice are included. All these concepts portray the importance of ritual practices in enhancing teaching and learning in a South African context. In this study, I investigated how Grade 8 learners from various cultural backgrounds, from a public school, interact with a ritual practice known as a 'labyrinth', common to Buddhism and Hinduism. Further recorded interviewers were conducted with learners in grades 9 to 13 as well as

educators from a Waldorf school, which already practiced the ritual of walking a labyrinth as part of their curriculum.

1.3   Problem statement

Acts of othering, moral and cultural imperialism, inequality, ignorance, fear, lack of confidence and a refusal to adapt to or change are still prevalent in today's post-apartheid South Africa. This study of rituals practices therefore attempted to establish the extent to which Hinduism and Buddhism in particular can contribute to mainstream high school curricula with the aim to enhance social cohesion in a multicultural class situation. The Waldorf education system was considered, since its curricula is shaped to produce learners "who are able, in and of themselves, to impart meaning to their lives", with the purpose to educate "the whole child, head, heart and hands" (Creeger, 1994:29).

This primary research question was therefore formulated as follows: How teaching and learning practices and Hindu and Buddhist rituals can contribute to social cohesion in a multicultural classroom?

The secondary research questions were as follows:

- What are current practices of rituals at a mainstream and a Waldorf school?
- Which rituals in Hinduism and Buddhism can be identified as beneficial to enhance social cohesion in a multicultural classroom?

The objective was therefore to gather information and address the research questions in order to understand the value of rituals of Hinduism and Buddhism, in this instance, within the context of merely two schools: one public and one private.

This was conducted by:

- investigating current ritual practices (if any) that exist in a mainstream and a Waldorf school; and
- exploring how rituals within Hinduism and Buddhism can be beneficial to enhance social cohesion in the multicultural classroom.

1.4   Overview of the research methodology

This study was an empirical study and used a qualitative research methodology to collect data. A case study research design as proposed by Creswell (2003) was used to conduct the research. Creswell (2014:294) describes this as involving "emerging questions and procedures; collecting data in the participants' setting; analysing the data inductively, building from particulars to general themes; and making interpretations of the meaning of the data resulting in the final written report having a

flexible writing structure". I explored a selected ritual practice common to Hinduism and Buddhism at two high schools in South Africa – one private and one public – where I conducted a case study with recorded interviews, participation, observation, analysis and interpretation.

The research problem was addressed by collecting the relevant data from recorded interviews conducted at these two South African high schools and with religious leaders and scholars. The data collected included voice recordings, written notes and a ritual practice art intervention completed by the Grade 8 participants from the public school chosen for this study. Three representatives from Hinduism and two from Buddhism participated in the study. All participants from the private and public school and parents of learners signed consent forms. Ethical clearance was obtained from the Research Ethics Committee: Social, Behavioural and Education Research of Stellenbosch University. A more detailed description of the methodology is given in Chapter 4.

1.5   Boundaries and limitations of the study

The term 'ritual' was well explained to the participants in advance. In case of apparent uneasiness, questions were reposed in a way that did not intimidate the participants. Possible limitations were the following:

- The term 'ritual' appeared intimidating to many participants who gave it a religious connotation. Some educators and even spiritual scholars suggested I change the word 'ritual' to fit in with their understanding, instead of first understanding the scope of this study.

- Complying with the administrative nature of having to read, understand and complete consent forms was extremely frustrating to many. In consequence, some adults opted out of this study, especially those who did not have a letterhead, as required by the Research Ethics committee.

- Some participants may have been reluctant to share their daily rituals or engage in a discussion about the role these played in society and the changing modern world. In such instances I prompted the participants by sharing and briefly explaining my own rituals to create a safe space, reassuring them that the data collected from the interviews will only be seen by me and my supervisor and instead of names using codes.

- Conducting the interviews via online platforms due to circumstantial and travel restrictions posed challenges. Some participants did not have the software or internet access to participate in the study. In this case, face-to-face interviews were conducted, taking full cognisance of Covid-19 regulations at all times.

- As researcher, my familiarity with Hinduism and Buddhism may have posed as a limitation to the study, as the research questions may have been influenced by my own subjective

worldview and biases. As such, I treaded with full awareness of and sensitivity to the nature of this study.

- The rise in Covid-19 cases in the private and public schools resulted in many learners and educators self-isolating. As a result, therefore, data collected from the mainstream school were limited.

1.6   Background

For myself, the transition from a Waldorf school into Stellenbosch University was perplexing. It was different from the culture of my upbringing and the culture of my school. Since my first year as a Fine Arts student at Stellenbosch University, I have pondered over the aloofness among many students and even some lecturers. In time, I discovered that this aloofness was awkwardness due to something as basic as language. The 'language barrier' between many Afrikaans- and English-speaking students was obviously unpleasant, preventing a camaraderie among the students and some lecturers. The result thereof was division, which inevitably and unintentionally created divergence as a ritual. The noise made by minority groups to be heard fell on deaf ears. On reflection and observation, it became obvious to me that there was a much larger dichotomy at play. This was clearly a divide between genders, culture and religion. This divide made me feel misplaced for the first time, especially because the sense of belonging in my Waldorf school was very strong. As a result, I naturally questioned the roots that formed the culture of Stellenbosch University.

Consequently, my fifth year of studying in an honours in Illustration aimed to make sense of a multicultural society and the social approaches that allow for such a co-existence in South Africa and the world today. My focus rested on multiculturalism, rituals and Hindu stories. The research centred on the way myth, ritual and material storytelling may impact upon and subvert the constructed nature of our ongoing experiences of reality as conditioned by dominant Western and Eurocentric thinking. Hinduism is the oldest religion and has been advocating beliefs of togetherness as well as being one with all of creation, regardless of caste or creed, since time immemorial. Klostermaier (1989:14) states that "Hinduism is not a 'case' to be studied and to be brought within performed, present categories (taken from Western culture), but an expression of human nature and culture every bit as original and to be accepted on its own terms". The intention of my honours study was to share my existing knowledge and experience as a Hindu woman and to engage in positive dialogue with others. During my research I found that ritual is much deeper than the religious background to which it is tied. I realised that ritual is an extremely important aspect to the framework required for the people we become. My honours research endeavoured to create a space where different stories, people and cultures may co-exist to becoming one or whole. I explored this through linking cultures,

identities and subjectivities via Hindu narratives. This attempted to inspire tolerance and understanding in terms of differences across religions and cultural groups so that we can move beyond essentialism and stably fixed identities towards an inclusive, yet diverse multicultural society.

Although Hinduism is one of the oldest, largest and most pragmatic religions in the world, being a young Hindu woman in South Africa, and even more so – being a female Hindu student at Stellenbosch University – the act of 'othering', marginalising and belonging to a minority group among the mainstream student body was real and concerning. While Stellenbosch University is not a Christian university per se, the post-apartheid campus occasionally still reveals its historical roots as being white, Afrikaans and Christian.

Having been introduced to Hindu scriptures from a young age and growing up with many tales about Hindu deities, and later witnessing immoral conduct such as rape and various other forms of crime that present themselves within the world today, I have come to identify myself with the unity that Hindu culture prescribes. It is for this reason that ritual practices from Buddhism and Hinduism were chosen specifically for this study. Recently, the mayor of the city of Dallas in Texas acknowledged the important contributions Hindu residents made in the city socially, economically, politically and culturally by proclaiming the month of October 2021 as Hindu heritage month (Mardikar, 2021). If it stems from their Hindu ritual practices and culture, then perhaps it could be adapted and incorporated into South African education systems.

While Hinduism was explored to contribute to teaching and learning, I was cautious not to idealise Hinduism. Hinduism has been under the spotlight and criticised for the many wrongful acts of many Indian people. One example is the caste system, which originated in India, causing social groupings for decades among Hindus. Although Hinduism itself does not prescribe or tolerate divisions among its people, many primitive mindsets have perpetuated the caste systems for personal gain. This has been highlighted particularly in the film industries, creating awareness of divisions and discords caused by the caste system. Many scholars have tried to understand the origins of the caste system, while some hold that it could be a result of Hinduism being "an ethnic religion unlike other faiths [or] a key element in defining the Indian diaspora, and arguably this key element can be discerned as caste" (Teltumbde, 2010:11). The caste system marginalised certain types of Indian people who were described as "untouchables, Dalits or Pariahs" (Viswanath, 2014:29). With jobs such as undertakers or waste collectors, Dalits created the slums outside villages in India. These individuals were not only Hindus, but included people from other religions too. Anand Teltumbde (2010:16) states that "caste in India is far from restricted solely to the Hindu population – it has infiltrated the country's practice

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of Islam, Christianity, Buddhism and Sikihism". A good example of how the caste system is fast fading is the story of Malala Yousafzai, a young Pakistani activist for female education, who broke away from oppression and highlights the importance of world peace and girls' right to education. Although many laws abolished this caste system, in some areas of India it still persists. Similar to apartheid in South Africa, the segregation in India was not the dividing of races, but rather status and division between rich and poor Indian people.

In South Africa, caste characteristics are not dominant, although there may be a restrained sense of caste that manifests in some parts of Africa (Teltumbde, 2010:11). This could mean that the caste system fell away, and there was more togetherness among people to fight a common cause, which was apartheid. This resulted in a different take on Hinduism that promoted the development of the teachings of Hinduism, bringing about more unity and togetherness between all people, religions and cultures, as intended by the scriptures. I have been ingrained with teachings of unity and togetherness since a child. I may not be able to relate to the caste systems created by Hindus in India, but I share a connection to Hinduism that is present in South Africa today.

According to Rupa Viswanath (2014:28), Mahatma Gandhi played a role in fighting for the equal rights of the 'untouchables'[1] in India. Freedom fighters Ashwin Desai and Goolam Vahed (2016:19) discuss Mahatma Gandhi's work in South Africa, where he fought against colonialism and the independence of Indian people. Gandhi, being a Hindu himself, advocated non-violence and is well known for his passive fight against apartheid, colonialism and the caste system. His movement was known as Sathyagraha, which means non-violent resistance. His fight in South Africa was to gain the trust of South Africa's colonisers so they would in turn view Indian people as equals (Desai & Vahed, 2016:34). There was much criticism of this irony, as in the beginning of his life, Gandhi viewed black people as inferior to Indians. According to Desai and Vahed (2016:34), Gandhi expressed that black individuals were known for "hunting" with a "sole ambition to collect a certain number of cattle to buy a wife and then pass his life in indolence and nakedness". This statement is indicative of Ghandi's opinion of black people of South Africa. Even today, many South Africans disregard Ghandi's efforts in the struggle for freedom of Indian people, as his stance was hypocritical and did not reflect all the values enshrined in Hindu scriptures.

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[1] The 'untouchables' are known as individuals from the lower ranks in India. These people created the areas known as the slums in India.

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Despite criticisms of Hinduism, I aimed to investigate rituals and how ritual practice may contribute to social cohesion in a multicultural classroom, especially as my teachings of Hinduism encompassed social cohesion at every level.

Humanity has, since Descartes, mainly in European countries, created worlds around the opposition between nature and culture, mind and body, and subject and objects, which later spread through colonialism. The Cartesian subject is "embedded in a tradition of Western individualism in which minds are set over against a world that they quantify and master" (Colebrook, 2014:86). It has been argued that, through a process of othering, this duality is inextricably part of the alterity of colonised others (Spivak, 1985:252, 255) and that Eurocentrism is the "Western style for dominating, restructuring and having authority over the orient" (Said, 1978:3). Based on objective and universal values, Western science, art and other cultural and social practices assumed superiority over 'others', while practices of Christianity manifested through education and so-called civilising mission activities (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin, 2007:85).

As aforementioned, I am curious about people, cultures, beliefs and myths that make up our various selves, identities and subjectivities in South Africa. I am particularly interested in how ritual practices have created foundations for the different ways we think about ourselves, others and the world. I am also aware that the idea of an "integral, originary and unified identity" is being contested by anti-essentialist critique and post-Cartesian approaches; that the question of subjectivity and its various unconscious and social processes of formation has been developed within the discourse of cultural criticism (Hall & Du Gay, 2003:1), and that the self and identities are in constant flux and becoming.

1.7   Structure of the thesis

Chapter 1 explained the study and specified the research problem, research question, aims and objectives of the study, including its boundaries and limitations. Chapter 2 follows with an explanation of the theoretical framework of the study. The framework that influenced the study are discussed as rituals, Hinduism and Buddhism, Waldorf education, education within a multicultural society and social cohesion. The research methodology used is discussed in Chapter 3. Chapter 5 discusses the data collected and the discussion of findings. This chapter analyses the data and the themes that were identified in the study. In Chapter 5, the conclusions and implications recapitulate the research findings and discussions, why the research was chosen, what the research sought to discover and prove, the value of ritual practices from Hinduism and Buddhism, the boundaries of the research, its contribution to the field of research and concluding remarks.

CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

This research was guided by a theoretical framework drawn from various sources, which are discussed in this chapter. According to Vincent Anfara and Norma Mertz (2015:8), "the theoretical framework affects almost all aspects of a qualitative research study since it provides a lens for seeing and making sense of what to do in the design and conduct of the study". This theoretical framework distinctly defines key concepts that form part of the study. Ritual, Hinduism and Buddhism, Waldorf education, education within a multicultural society and social justice were the main theoretical perspectives used in this study. All aspects of the research process were guided by these theoretical frameworks, which took the form of exploring and understanding the purpose and goal of ritual practices within the education system in a South African context.

Catherine Bell (1992:72) explains that "a ritual is pre-eminently a form of communication composed of culturally normal acts that have become distinctive by being diverted to special functions where they are given magical efficacy". Ritual practices, by this definition, can be deemed as interaction between people, and possibly a means for further reconnection and social cohesion among individuals. Couldry (2003:37) interprets ritual practice as "a choice to be made between seeing rituals as the expression of something permanent and universal and seeing them as the articulation of contingent and historically specified patterns of power". Ritual practices are in essence a means of understanding and giving meaning to people and cultures different to one's own. This is done by enacting the "claim of unchangeability, such that the same is acted out continuously or that it is mimetically repeated" (Michaels, 2016:4).

2.2 Ritual

2.2.1 Understanding the concept

Theorising the term 'ritual' can be problematic, as it has many definitions and multiple meanings. In the article *"Reflections on ritual and on theorizing about ritual"* (1998), Elizabeth Collins (1998:1) looks at the criteria applied when defining a ritual. She draws on Wittgenstein's remarks that "there is no set characteristics that can be found" to define rituals. It is a concept with innumerable applications. She instead compares the similarities and differences in rituals on the Asian continent in order to contextualise its meaning. Research reveals that the term 'ritual' is interpreted differently by different people. It may be viewed as traditional, formulaic, symbolic, metaphoric, culturally meaningful, religious, repetitive, habitual or a pattern of behaviour. It could even be applied as meaningless, says Collins (1998:1) "as in the expression, 'It's just a ritual'".

Some rituals that are observed globally include birthday celebrations, special holidays, prayer and meditation, birth and death rituals, cultural customs and even moral acts stemming from traditional roots. In places such as Japan and Indonesia, rituals are mainly symbolic cultural or religious acts passed down from ancestors or elders, for example "the divine is […] associated with the sun or symbolized by light", and since God cannot be seen directly, it is "thought to be safer to approach its reflection" (Collins, 1998:3). The Balinese engage in the ritual of tooth filing. This is metaphoric and has a moral meaning, as the "six teeth to be filed are associated with the six vices of lust, anger, drunkenness, confusion, greed and jealousy" (Collins, 1998:1). This ritual helps one in self-discipline. The Japanese ritual of bowing teaches one respect, especially for traditional authority (Collins, 1998:3). In Europe and America, rituals appear to be both traditional and a way of life. Some examples are celebrating the 4th of July, tipping for services, working long hours, eating large portions of fast foods, celebrating special holidays such as Boxing Day or passing down heirlooms, whereas popular in Australia is barbecuing with friends (Penney & Teague, 2016:97). In Africa, rituals were primarily traditional, such as ancestor worship. After the removal of social and territorial segregation in South Africa, the country became multicultural and ethnically diverse, with 11 official languages.

The writings of theorists who have studied social and religious anthropology as well as the psychology of rituals were investigated. Emile Durkheim, who has impacted on several other theorists, stood out for me, as his focus is on social integration. Theorists such as Anne Heider and R. Stephen Warner, Erika Summer-Effler, Maurice Bloch and Andrew Mckinnon have all contemplated on and contrasted their work against Durkheim's. Durkheim's drive to understand religion and society is what led him to ritual theory. Olaveson (2001:91) explains, "he began to look at religion sociologically, and began working out a hypothesis of its inherently social genesis and function". In addition, Heider and Warner (2010:77) state, "for Durkheim ritual was a more potent source of social energy than belief because of its basis in the emotions aroused by collective action". This is a striking suggestion that ritual contributes to social cohesion. Through his investigations of religion, which he was fond of, and society, which fascinated him, Durkheim realised that ritual is indispensable in the study of culture and society. As mentioned, for the purpose of this study, I analysed rituals as repetitive acts distinguished as a way of behaviour. Various theorists interpret Durkheim's definition of ritual as a culturally standard, repetitive activity, essentially symbolic in character, aimed at guiding and influencing human circumstances, or at least allowing individuals to understand their place in society better. Durkheim expresses that religion was derived from ritual and not the other way around. He believes that ritual is essential to "create and motivate citizens to moral behaviour" (Olaveson, 2001:94). Moral behaviour in turn fosters togetherness, sharing and right conduct. Olaveson (2001:94) further quotes Durkheim referring to his theory of collective action, that suggests

that the true function of ritual is to "make us act and to help us live […] it is action that dominates religious life, for the very reason that society is its source". It appears that Olaveson is also of the opinion that ritual is the foundation of social cohesion.

In the *Handbook of the sociology of emotions*, Jan Stets and Jonathan Turner (2006) discuss ritual theory. Ritual theory, in this book, is discussed as a …

> … focussed interaction at the heart of all social dynamics [where] group emotions are linked to symbols, forming the basis for beliefs, thinking, morality, and culture. People use the capacity for thought, beliefs, and strategy to create emotion-generating interactions in the future. This cycle, interaction → emotions → symbols → interaction, forms patterns of interaction over time. These patterns are the most basic structural force that organises society. (Summer-Effler, year, cited in Stets & Turner, 2006:135)

This again links ritual as a salient aspect that organises society, which is further linked to Durkheim's theory of collective action discussed above. The above quote also suggests that society is not grounded on the inclination and ability of an individual, but rather the characteristics established in social interaction and then used by people (Stets & Turner, 2006:136). In this way, people learn and construct themselves as they interact with others.

According to François Berthomé and Michael Houseman (2010:69), who examined ritual and emotion, emotions are integral attributes to "ritual interactions themselves, reflecting and inflecting emotions in a variety of sensory, expressive, moral and strategic ways". Stets and Turner (2006:38) discuss David Franks on the neuroscience of emotions, which is believed to expand sociological theory. Contrastingly, Pascal Boyer and Pierre Liénard (2006:1) explored the topic of ritual and cognition from a scientific standpoint, where close attention is paid to ritual behaviour and the "action of ritualization", which they describe as a "psychological process". They clarify that ritualisation occurs in two cognitive systems. These are the 'hazard-precaution system', which is a motivational system steered towards identifying of and the response to probable threats one may experience, and the other is 'action parsing', which is concerned with dividing behaviour into significant components (Boyer & Liénard, 2006:1). The collaboration between these two systems could generate ritualised actions. According to Boyer and Liénard (2006:1), as human beings we create rituals in numerous ways. This can happen intuitively through constant repetition and can be established in "cultural rituals, religious rituals, nonreligious rituals, in the routines of many children, in the pathology of obsessive compulsive disorders and in normal adults around certain stages of the life-cycle" (Boyer & Liénard, 2006:1). Consequently, rituals are expressive or symbolic in the way they are conducted from person to person and ground us with a sense of steadiness and continuity in life.

Rituals are therefore revolutionary consequences of more conventional cognitive and behavioural attributes (Boyer & Liénard, 2006:2). This would influence one's foundation and sequentially the practice in which one interacts with other people.

Even though not much attention is paid to the value of rituals, it is an indispensable part of existence that serves as a way to observe the changes we can make in ourselves. It can also contribute to social cohesion in a multicultural classroom in South African high schools. Bell (1992:3) states that "there are sociobiologists, philosophers, and intellectual historians who have turned to ritual as a window on the cultural dynamics by which people make and remake their worlds". Like-minded viewpoints indicate that rituals can be a universal category of human experience. From my exploration, it becomes clear that although not spoken about, ritual is an essential aspect in understanding human behaviours, interests, abilities and personalities, while at the same time giving people a sense of continuity that could comfort and encourage people from changing to become better versions of themselves. As such, it is worth exploring, as it could become beneficial in enhancing teaching and learning in South Africa. Ritual activities are an effective way for defining reality and can be an "indispensable element in the creation of solidarity" (Bell, 1992:171).

Ritual practice has been strengthened as a sociological concept which impacts upon social cohesion and equilibrium, and has been interpreted in terms of other, seemingly more fundamental functions as symbolisation and social communication (Bell, 1992:15). It is both a behavioural pattern and an activity. It is also a way of communicating with others through language, as it is found in all actions or activities. Writings, artworks and practice, including what is practised in our homes and the outside world, come together to form a delineation of ritual practices.

In the early 19th century, theorists such as Edward Tylor, Marx Muller and Robertson Smith and phenomenologists Mircea Eliade and Jonathan Smith developed theories relating to the pedigrees of religion which examined ritual (Bell, 1997:7). Bell, in her books *Ritual: Perspectives and dimensions* (1997) and *Ritual theory, ritual practice* (1992), expands on these theorists. Bell explores the meaning of rituals: its value, nature, functions in everyday life, problems and importance in the world. Although this book presents one with suggestions attached to the term 'ritual' and the possibilities of such a word in society and different cultures, it also provides feasible shared opinions and understandings of the term 'ritual practice'. Bell (1992:7) writes that ritual has been comprehended as inattentive action divested of context and is more intriguingly recognised as a strategy or "culturally strategic way of acting in the world". In the course of our day, rituals may be viewed as gestures, actions, interactions, spoken words and objects we construct or utilise.

According to Bell (1997:9), ritual is not yet viewed as an essential, worldwide category or characteristic of human behaviour, but rather a cultural and historical structure that has been cripplingly used to distinguish numerous "styles and degrees of religiosity, rationality, and cultural determination". While certain rituals may exhibit a religious framework, they are however not religious in every sense. Michaels (2016:7) believes that "nearly all actions can be combined with the term ritual, greeting, eating, sitting, speaking, laughing, crying – all this and so much more can be ritualised and then become a ritual type". However, Meredith Rossenr and Mythily Meher (2014:4) state that, "in sociology, ritual theory is premised on the idea that meaning is generated in and by repeated social interactions" and is not necessarily small tasks or habits we repeat daily. Rituals may also be observed as a means of increasing social relationships and the connection to one's self. This could in turn strengthen education systems where the building blocks for an individual are activated.

Ritual practices could propose many positive attributes one cannot ignore, to the extent that they even deny any alteration and difference. This becomes evident in rituals that contribute negatively to one's lifestyle, such as building our lifestyles according to what is deemed as normal or socially accepted on social media. It is also presented in many hierarchical formations in society. In some ways, rituals force people to coexist in some relation of superiority and inferiority (Bell, 1992:173). Even though rituals can create 'othering' among cultures and disciplines, it also depends on how individual discernment and actions are socially appropriated or controlled. Ritual can also appear as though its rooted actions are not creating change, but rather remains constant so that we experience things as stable.

According to Bell (1992:172), "[r]itual controls by forestalling overt rebellion or other threats of social unity". While this statement may be valid, it is up to society or individuals to break away from rigid ritual practices, as this could be a cause of 'othering' that we experience in the education systems in South Africa and society. Theorists proclaim that ritual is important to preserve and maintain culture; it is essential to human life; it could even be a way we communicate with each other that keeps people connected unknowingly. Tapping into this space could bring about numerous changes. Michaels (2016:11) declares that "the west supplied the theories and methods that the rest of the world more or less had to accept". According to the needs of modernity, such as acculturation, migration, globalisation and social, political and cultural entanglements, this society is changing, but it is still broadly rooted in ancient ritualised forms of behaviour and communication (Michaels, 2016:5).

2.2.2 Rituals in a school context

Volumes of published articles reflect that people unknowingly communicate and interact through ritualistic actions in either a positive or a negative way that have an impact upon their lives. Yaser Arslan and Ufuk Saridede (2012:1175) cite Quartz and Magolda (1997), who state that "rituals are part of everyday life and they also appear in experiences in educational institutions". Arslan and Saridede (2012:1175) state that rituals are a "set of rules which determine people's behavioural attributes" and also shape the "social structure to connect community members". Within a teaching and learning context, it mainly takes the form of basic values such as greetings, wearing of school uniforms, raising hands before talking in class or raising a school flag. The object is primarily to shape minds, self-reflection and transformation, motivate learners and bring about order in the environment.

According to Matt Rossano (2009:12), the various elements of rituals place the focus on a specific "behavioural or sensory signal" and allow "social emotions and social bonding mechanisms time to operate". This could be present in certain gestures, actions or signals one would send when approaching someone, which also illustrates the significance of ritual practices within social groupings. Research in neuroscience reveals that certain parts of the brain are active when an individual engages in actions "such as consciously focussing attention or directing controlled behaviours, [which the practice of] ritual very likely activated in these brain areas" (Rossano, 2009:14). Rossano (2009:14) also cites Boyer and Liénard (2006), who state that a salient function of a ritual could be to engage "conscious control".

With numerous writings on ritual, it appears that there is an increasing curiosity about the term and how it impacts society and its individuals. This has impacted how rituals are also used in an educational setting. According to Bernstein, Elvin and Peters (1996:429), "[r]itual in humans refers to a relatively rigid pattern of acts specific to a situation which construct a framework of meaning beyond the specific situational meanings". These authors relate the representational purpose of rituals to an individual. This is done through ritualistic acts of social order, specifically those that enhance the acceptance of processes used to uphold "continuity, order and boundary and which control ambivalence towards the social order" (Bernstein et al., 1996:429). Bernstein et al. (1966:429) believe that these notions are related to education as a social form and analysed the effect of "changes in the function of the school on ritualising processes".

Rituals in education are grouped as "consensual and differentiating", which are intended to combine all individuals of a school "as a moral community, as a distinct collectivity [which gives schools] continuity [while relating to the] values and norms held by certain dominant groups in the non-school

society" (Bernstein et al., 1966:429). With these consensual rituals a particular identity is given to the school and they assist in reaching various goals of the school (Bernstein et al., 1966:429). Differentiating rituals are concerned with grouping within schools. These groupings can be by sex, age or social interactions of individuals. Differentiating rituals include standing in the classroom when the educator enters, school uniforms, raising one's hand before speaking, and even the distance between the educator and the learners' desks (Bernstein et al., 1966:430). Differentiating rituals also seem to exclude some groups from the school community, while other differentiating rituals enhance respect for the authority of the school (Arslan & Saridede, 2012:1177).

There are several ways to understand rituals and ritual practices; however, Yaser Arslan and Ufuk Saridede (2012:1176) in their article "Pre-service teachers' perceptions about rituals in education and rituals' functions" cites Meseci (2007), who affirms that rituals are representative and patterned "demonstrations and a set of symbols which not only constitute institutional unity and cooperation but also manage the differences like hierarchy, position, function and power". Stanley Tambiah (1985, cited in Collins, 1998:4) extends ritual to "saying something is also doing something". He relates ritual to the structure of human behaviour such as saying "I do" in a marriage ceremony or "I promise" (Tambiah, 1985, cited in Collins, 1998:4). By this he means that words uttered must be followed by the required action in order to be ritualistic. Rituals are somewhat similar throughout the world, with slight variations based on culture and tradition. Therefore, incorporating selected rituals from all cultures into school curricula may serve a diverse teaching and learning environment well.

2.3 Hinduism and Buddhism

The philosophy of Rabindranath Tagore (2005) by Kalyan Sen Gupta explains the writings of poet Rabindra Nath Tagore and his concepts on the unity between people and nature. Tagore was a poet, novelist, playwright and singer and the first Indian to be awarded the Nobel Prize for literature (Sharma, 2018:527). According to Gupta (2005:2), Tagore's life "exemplified a type of Indian spiritualism with its roots in the teachings of the Upanishads"[2]. This book was beneficial to my study, as it incorporates Hindu teachings, which articulate the spirit of unity and harmony, especially in education.

Although Tagore's writings questioned social issues, he was predominately interested in "educational innovation" (Gupta, 2005:6). Gupta (2005:6) states that Tagore had several tender occurrences during his schooling life and was sympathetic to those who were caught up in the "traditional, mechanical system of education, [which] inspired him to translate his pedagogic idea of truly creative

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[2] 'Upanishads' refer to the Sanskrit Vedic texts in Hindu philosophy.

education into practice". Tagore did this by establishing an institution named the "Visva Bharati",[3] which served as a "channel of communication between the East and the West representing the ideal cooperation, of the spiritual unity of man" (Gupta, 2005:6). Gupta questioned the true aim of education and how it could be achieved. He viewed education as a means of giving one "a sense of identity as a total man, to bring education in harmony with life and to think of ourselves as, before all else, human beings" (Gupta, 2005:29). Throughout his writings, Tagore conveys what it means to be human. He was a direct disciple of Gautama Buddha and therefore incorporated the teachings of Buddha into his work. He says how much the teachings of Buddha as well as the Upanishad had influenced him; "the verses of the Upanisads and the teaching of Buddha have ever been things of the spirit, endowed with boundless vital growth; and I have used them both in my own life and my preaching" (Sharma, 2018:527) According to Gupta (2005:10), the basic commitment for both the Upanishad seers and the Buddha is that "the good of others is grounded in an intellectual, philosophical understanding of the nature of reality" – the nature of reality being that we are all interconnected in the tapestry of life.

In *A survey of Hinduism* (1989), Klostermaier gives one a better understanding of Hinduism and the worldly beliefs that accompany it. Klostermaier (1989:1) states that "one is tempted to see not so much a parallel between Hinduism and other religions, but between Hinduism and what one could call for the moment, Europeanism or Americanism". Keeping definitions about Hinduism from the outside minimal, the book allows Hindus to speak for Hinduism so it could be understood from people who experience Hinduism. Klostermaier (1989:12) confirms that "Hinduism already forms a large and important part of human heritage and, as such, is of intrinsic interest to all who care to learn about humanity". Klostermaier (1989:12) further expresses that Hinduism is a branch of philosophy that examines the fundamental nature of reality. This became an important source in my writing, as it delves deeper into the Hindu principles and discusses the values of persons, oneness among people and social cohesion at large, which in reality is what make us human.

From experience, ritual plays an important role in the Hindu culture. I have been ingrained with Hindu philosophy since childhood, which has somewhat shaped my personality and grounded me in integrity. Ancient rituals continue to be executed in the formation of society, many of its laws, in its establishments and its popular cultural ideas (Klostermaier, 1989:3). Ritual practices are a way of life in many Hindu homes and as such have become rooted in Hindus consciousness since childhood. Bell (1992:14) maintains that "anthropologists have found ritual to be fundamental to the dynamics of culture". From experience, the importance of ritual takes precedence when it comes to Hindu

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[3] 'Visva Bharati', meaning the unity of the world with India, is a research institution located in India.

worship. Daily interactions, art and narratives can be viewed as a form of social activity. Some examples of these are epics such as the Ramayana, the Bhagavad Gita or the Mahabharata, all of which have created and represented the rituals, morals and values in Hinduism. Through ritual practices such as storytelling, yoga, affirmations, meditations, daily gratitude to the sun and elements of the earth, values and morals become instilled in individuals. Some of these morals are truth, righteousness, honouring the earth and all living beings, love, compassion and gratitude. In Hinduism, it is often through and within rituals that such inclusivity of other beliefs is practised and experienced. This dispenses itself as another reason as to why the rituals taught in the Hindu culture is worth considering as a contribution to teaching and learning in a South African context and why it could be beneficial in enhancing social cohesion in a multicultural classroom. Unlike other great faiths of the world, Hinduism is not confined to a single body of religious commandments. It is an all-embracing way of life.

The Ramayana: A modern retelling of the great Indian epic (2001) by Ramesh Menon discusses the Ramayana narrative as an important piece of literature to many Indians and a fundamental source in forming the basis of the value system. This book is a valuable source in understanding the practice of rituals and their benefits in Hindu narratives. It also depicts how rituals bring about order and commitment in role players. The concept of *dharma*, which means righteousness, is as ancient as the Indian tradition and is the continuous theme. It relates to such wide notions as duty, work, righteousness, morality, justice, cosmic law, harmony and eternal truth (Menon, 2001:11). The readings reflect how the value of positive rituals change thought patterns, creating foundations for good individuals, which in turn could generate respectable, broad-minded and forward-thinking global citizens.

Hinduism is distinguished by a means through which an individual's identity is encompassed and is reflected in how one communicates. It is often regulated through rituals throughout one's life. Many Hindus follow cultural patterns by going the ritual way in resolving individual or social problems. The term *dharma* is seen as a moral law in Hinduism and is connected to rituals such as practice of good speech and right conduct. *Dharma* is a principle in Hinduism that governs personal conduct. Gupta explains that Tagore felt that *dharma* was a way for "each one of us, in every day of our life, to bear the weight of our country, which would be our joy and our dharma, to stand united with others"[4]. George Williams (2003:25), in his book, *Handbook of Hindu mythology*, states, "dharma is one of the

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[4] The unrest in KwaZulu-Natal at the time of this study reflected how this statement could come alive and actually stand true. During this time, I have witnessed virtuous people of South Africa come together in solidarity to make the country a safe place without the help of government.

most pregnant notions in Hindu philosophy, mythology and religion […] it can be translated into English as virtue, truth, or duty".

Walpola Rahula, a Buddhist monk (1959), in the book *What the Buddha taught*, describes the teaching of the Buddha in the world today and the practices in Buddhism. He defines Buddhism as way of life more than a religion. Rahula (1959:46) states that there are eight practices taught in Buddhism, which are found in "Buddhist Scriptures [and termed] the Noble Eightfold Path". These eight teachings are aimed at fostering "ethical conduct, mental discipline and wisdom", which are also linked to "compassion" (Rahula, 1959:46). Similar to Hinduism, Buddhists practise "right speech, right action, right livelihood, right thought, right mindfulness, right effort, right concentration and right understanding" (Rahula, 1959:47). Another example of a ritual practice on which Buddhism places emphasis is meditation and conscious breathing. These are "well-known exercises, connected with the body, for mental development" (Rahula, 1959:48). Similarly, Steve Hagen states (1997:67) in his book *Buddhism plain and simple* that practising right speech can lead to recognising and paying attention to one's intentions, thoughts and actions. It can allow one to act with compassion and reverence for all people. I can relate to this, as I was taught from childhood not to be harsh in my speech. Hagen (1997:73) further states that in Buddhism …

> … the point of precepts is to see, to live in accordance with reality, not to follow rules blindly […] In seeing, your actions become like leaves that land in the natural spot on the lawn, this alone carries us to greater levels of moral development.

Teaching Buddhism: New insights on understanding and presenting the traditions (2017), edited by Lewis and DeAngelis, explores the values and teachings of Buddhism and how these may be beneficial to social, political, economic and educational realities. This book places emphasis on the Buddhist beliefs of diversity and mindfulness as well as the rituals that support this discipline. Lewis and DeAngelis (2017:362) maintain that social justice and Buddhism complement each other, as they can teach an individual the skills of community building and compassion, which is one way of enriching social justice.

In the book *Why Buddhism is true: The science and philosophy of meditation and enlightenment* (2017), Robert Wright discusses the ways Buddhism is able to transform people's view of themselves and the world. He makes reference to a movie called *The Matrix* to describe how one is born into the confines of one's mind and how the only way to understand or see this is for us to choose to step out of our limitations. Wright (2017:5) states that if one looks closer to feelings of anxiety, despair, hatred or greed, one is able to see that there are elements of delusion, and "if you think you would be better off, imagine how the world would be – if these basic sources of human suffering and

human cruelty are in large part the product of delusion, there is value in exposing this". Wright also discusses the importance of mindfulness in order to realise and become more aware of our surroundings. This relates to ritual and cognition as mentioned above and can well be linked to the ritual practices of Hinduism and Buddhism.

Like Hinduism, Buddhism also follows the act of *dharma*. Buddhists follow the teaching of impermanence; that nothing lasts, which is essential in understanding *dharma* or Buddha-*dharma*, which teaches Buddhists how to live a good life of compassion and integrity (Lewis & DeAngelis, 2017:13). Peter Hershock (2006:122) states that "all sentient beings are capable of developing and conducting themselves in accord with Dharma and that Buddha paid specific attention to the central importance of establishing societal conditions conducive to the practice of Dharma". These conditions became daily rituals that contribute to character building. Some of these ritual practices, as mentioned above, include right speech, right conduct, right actions, right concentration and right mindfulness.

According to Lewis and DeAngelis (2017:366), the incorporation of social justice and Buddhism into a classroom environment creates a devotion or reverence by and among learners and subject matter. They found that there was more of an effort to find examples of people who have 'stayed human', in the context of being humane, compassionate or civilised, during hardships they have faced. All of this was incorporated into their lessons and readings. An example of deep appreciation that they refer to is the incorporation of the Buddhist labyrinth, discussed in Chapter 5, which also forms part of the Waldorf education system discussed in the next section.

Albeit the ritual practices from Hinduism and Buddhism have spread through Western culture, they may or may not have been successfully recognised and "continue to exist concurrently, and indeed they still have a valued place in present day curricula" (Lewis & DeAngelis, 2017:10). The Waldorf education is an example where the ritual practices from Hinduism and Buddhism were included.

2.4 Waldorf education

Catherine Creeger (1994:11) discusses the work of Rudolf Steiner, the founder of Waldorf education. Waldorf education is the "largest non-sectarian school movement in the world today with the creation of new forms of organic agriculture, holistic medicine and education" (Creeger: 1994:11). Waldorf education places an emphasis on building children for life, developing the more humane characteristics of an individual and enabling learners to develop their unique abilities. This is done through interacting more with the environment through activities such as planting or even simply playing and physically interacting with the soil bare feet, or walking a labyrinth with or without shoes,

and participating in festivals that celebrate the seasons, giving thanks to the earth and the rebirth of better days ahead. These kinds of simplistic activities connect one to the elements of the earth, make one feel more grounded and bring about an appreciation for the world around us, which is not a common practice in most schools.

Another quality that the Waldorf education integrates is creative learning. This means making use of art in all academic subjects to enhance teaching and learning aiming to improve social cohesion through education. Examples are a Geometry lesson, where learners form groups and create 3D shapes using wool, while in a Botany lesson, learners would sit in the early mornings and draw every detail they see in a flower outside the classroom before the theory is explained. Creeger (1994:31) argues, "Steiner's conviction is that by discovering the deeper wellsprings of human existence, we will be able to heal in time the alienation that besets society today, to overcome those narrow perspectives that separate rather than unite".

Similar to Creeger, Gary Lachman (2007:12) in his book *Rudolf Steiner: An introduction to his life and work* (2007:12), states that the notions of "consciousness, the nature of thought", the link between one's mind and the "external world" by Steiner, were ground-breaking in that they brought about reconsideration of the history of "Western philosophy". Therefore, in many ways, the ritual practices that form part of the Waldorf education oppose that to which we are conditioned in mainstream education in a South African context.

In the book *Rudolf Steiner: The relevance of Waldorf education* (2017), Bo Dahlin explores the Waldorf curriculum as well as Steiner's thoughts on Waldorf philosophy and contemporary education. Dahlin (2017:5) recites Steiner as follows: "Waldorf education is not intended to be a neat system of educational ideas and principles, but an impulse of awakening". Dahlin (2017:2) makes it very clear that the Waldorf system of education "was to be directed towards that which is universally human in all people, regardless of ethnicity, class, religion, or gender", but rather a "school of humanity". My own experience at a Waldorf school, and the notions that Waldorf education promotes, gave me an understanding of how ritual practices can possibly contribute to mainstream teaching and learning or enhance the curriculum in a holistic context.

There seems to be several overruling premises when it comes to mainstream education systems, for example the analysis of "mainstream education as too intellectualistic and not considering the whole human being, [and] disregard of the needs and interests of the child, and the lack of understanding of children's development" that turn education into politics (Dahlin, 2017:5).

Steiner's book, *Theosophy: An introduction to the spiritual processes in human life and in the cosmos* (1994), deals with the discourse of the future of humanity. According to Robert McDermott (2009:20), Steiner contends that human evolution arises from thinking. This is similar to the ritual practices of Buddhism, where experience and thought are a person's best educator. The South African education system relies on textbooks as a foundation for learning, where experience becomes incidental learning. There are few opportunities for learners to explore and experience the world for themselves.

A link to Hinduism and education reveals itself in the book titled *The new essential Steiner: An introduction to Rudolf Steiner for the 21ˢᵗ century* (2009), by McDermott. He explains that Steiner regularly consulted the Bhagavad Gita to use some of the good conduct from the Bhagavad Gita scripture[5]. The Waldorf system of education is one example of how rituals in Hinduism and Buddhism may contribute to social cohesion in a multicultural classroom in South African schools.

Tony Christie is the author of the book *Labyrinth: Your path to self-discovery* (2018). Christie (2018) educates people about the symbolisms of the labyrinth, which he believes promote "oneness, interconnectedness of all existence" and a symbol of one's self. Christie (2018:n.p.) believes that the labyrinth is able to bring one into a space where one "feels more at one with yourself, and you begin doing things that you enjoy [and that] make you feel alive". A common problem felt with learners, speaking from experience when I was in school as well, is that they are not always sure of themselves and are distracted by all sorts of things around them. Making use of a labyrinth as a ritual practice allows an individual to seek meaning that is "greater than accumulating material possessions [because] the labyrinth helps you to fully experience yourself" (Christie, 2018:n.p.). There are several myths tied to the labyrinth, from a link to dance in Greek mythology to game playing in Troy adopted by the Romans from Etruscans, all during a time of "goddess-centred religions" (Christie, 2018:n.p.). Christie (2018:n.p.) states that the more he learns about the labyrinth, the harder it is to find a concrete definition for it; he believes that "any attempt to define the labyrinth is lacking in something because the labyrinth is knowledge, experience, reflection, wisdom, enlightenment and more". Melissa Gayle West, in her book *Exploring the labyrinth: A guide for healing and spiritual growth* (2000) states that the labyrinth is like therapy that allows one to turn inwards, letting go of the stresses in our day.

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[5] The 'Bhagavad Gita' is a Hindu scripture or poem that forms part of a Hindu epic, the Mahabharata. It illustrates a message to live one's own life however it may be, rather than imitating what seems to be the perfect life of someone else.

2.5 Education in a multicultural society and social justice

Carl Grant and Agostino Portera (2011:4) maintain that it is salient in understanding the term 'multicultural education' and that there are several authors who believe that "multicultural education interconnects with equal themes that involve pedagogy, theory, practice, methodology, culture, identity, power relations, recognition, globalisation, cosmopolitanism and justice". Multicultural education would benefit learners, as they would become more knowledgeable about different cultures, people and practices. Educators could also become more aware of the needs of each learner and create practices around this to assist their learners.

In *The modern/colonial/capitalist world system in the twentieth century: Global processes, antisystemic movements, and the geopolitics of knowledge* (2002), Ramón Grosfoguel and Ana Margarita Cervantes-Rodríguez discuss unthinking the 20th-century Eurocentric views and how these views came to be. They explain Occidentalism,[6] which they believe to be obscuring the root cause of privilege and power in the world system. Grosfoguel and Cervantes-Rodríguez (2002:11) affirm that "throughout the twentieth century, [the] world-system has operated through some mythologies that mould the way we conceptualize the world today". They discuss Christianity as a central aspect of colonialism and how people were conditioned to think, which continues even today. In the opinion of Grosfoguel and Cervantes-Rodríguez (2002:28), "decolonization should address the global class, gender, racial, sexual, and regional asymmetries produced by the hierarchical structures of the modern and colonial capitalist world-system". Perhaps one way of addressing the global class is to incorporate, in addition to African indigenous rituals and other great faiths, Hindu and Buddhist rituals into the education system.

Multiculturalism without culture (2007) by Anne Phillips presents another understanding of culture and the duality or divide between people that remain prominent today. She explores ways to overcome this divide and looks into 'multiculturalism' as a means to gloss over or conceal inequalities. Her work is a key source in understanding the issues with post-colonialism and the denial to change. Phillips (2007:9) proclaims that "a more careful understanding of culture provides a better basis for multicultural policy than the overly homogenised version that currently figures in the arguments of supporters and critics alike".

In anthropological and sociological literature, the critique of culture is most fully developed, often combining it with a critique of ethnicity, community and race (Phillips, 2007:16). We can presume

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[6] 'Occidentalism' is the representations of the traits from the Western world. This is different from 'Orientalism', which is the characteristics of people and cultures.

that a more careful comprehension of culture allows for greater grounds for multicultural policy than the excessively homogenised version that currently features in the similar arguments of advocates and detractors. Debates are occasionally managed by testimonial to the basic human rights that are perceived as the requisite for all. For many, this approach is the least shaped by multicultural thought. Phillips (2007:9) argues that "one of the biggest problems with culture is the tendency to represent individuals from minority or non-western groups as driven by their culture and compelled by cultural dictates to behave in particular ways".

The world is established by cultural diversity; therefore, multicultural experiences have become a consistent aspect of many individuals' lives. According to Verónica Benet-Martínez and Ying-yi Hong (2014), the earliest discourse of multiculturalism proposes that multiculturalism is the primary presence of cultural diversification in a society. In the same breath, Benet-Martínez and Hong (2014:126) state that "multiculturalism is typically seen as identity supporting for minority groups and consequently leads to some resistance on the part of the majority". One can assume that the majority can be expected to only make use of multiculturalism wholeheartedly if it becomes more beneficial to their group. In the opinion of Phillips (2007:3), "multiculturalism became the scapegoat for an extraordinary array of political and social evils; a supposedly misguided approach to cultural diversity". In this case, using multiculturalism to create a space in the higher ranks seems like the only way for the majority to have an interest and see the relevance in making use of the concept. Multiculturalism has possibly not been fully implemented in many societies, and therefore not properly assessed as a possible solution. Multiculturalism presents us with a means that can benefit society, where all cultural groups are equally appraised and paramount in the society, including a form of communication that is positive and that may prepare a foundation to enhance social cohesion. It can be said that multiculturalism refers to a set of expectations or methods for dealing with diversity.

Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a world of strangers (2006) by Kwame Anthony Appiah discusses notions of values, including how people overcome conflicts among those values. Appiah discusses topics relating to identity, morality and justice – all of which help to understand and define who we are. This would be an important source when exploring ritual in the daily lives of people, including underlying issues that prevent people from accepting rituals that form part of other cultures. We should all aim to develop a society where people feel whole despite differences, leaving no room for marginalisation. Safa According to Appiah (2006:2), the challenge is to equip young minds and hearts with "ideas and institutions that will allow us to live together as the tribe we can become". He uses the term 'cosmopolitanism' as having regard for all people living on earth as "many branches of a single-family, and the universe as a state", in which all beings are citizens, supporting each other

under the "general laws of nature, the perfection of the whole, while each in his own fashion is busy about his own well-being" (Appiah, 2006:3).

2.6 Synthesis

The chapter provided broader understandings of ritual, Hinduism and Buddhism, Waldorf education as well as education in a multicultural society and social justice in a South African context. Hinduism and Buddhism reveal a few ritual practices and the meanings behind them, including the term *dharma*, which is central in both cultures. The importance of creating a foundation based on good morals and values was unpacked. Waldorf education implement Steiner's philosophies about education. It introduced the value of the Waldorf system and brought to light the link between Waldorf education and the Hindu and Buddhist cultures. Incorporating rituals from all cultures could bring about a different and more acceptable type of coexistence where multiculturalism is not just a term, but the essence of society and the world. An acceptance of diversity can contribute to transform humanity at a time when we habitually look outside of ourselves, seeking for something that will bring inner peace. The methodology of the study are discussed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter the research methodology is discussed. A qualitative research method was used to observe and explore representatives from both Hinduism and Buddhism to understand the different ritual practices that could contribute to teaching and learning. Learners from Grade 9 to 13 from a Waldorf school were also interviewed to discern how ritual practice forms part of their everyday teaching and learning. This method was also used to interview and engage in an art intervention, explained further below, with 35 Grade 8 learners from a mainstream high school. The data collected were qualitatively analysed with the aim to achieve validity, accuracy and truthfulness.

3.2 Research approach

An inductive approach as applied in this study was beneficial for investigating how ritual practices form part of everyday teaching and learning. The inductive method functions through observing and analysing information about certain opinions, behaviour and ideas, and developing general principles from these observations. Sharan Merriam (2009:15) states that the inductive process is a salient attribute of qualitative research where the researcher collects data to construct notions or theories.

3.3 Research design

The most general way, according to Merriam (2009:9), to conduct qualitative analysis is through making use of case studies. In addition, Merriam (2009:10) states that a qualitative case study could be a thorough, all-inclusive depiction and inquiry of an individual, social group, ideas or methods. Uwe Flick (2014:104) states that case studies "provide the empirical features to actually answer the questions raised through the criteria of comparison". Merriam (2009:43) maintains that all methods of obtaining data can be used within a case study, as there are no particular methods for data collection or analysis. The subsequent statement by Merriam (2009:43) explains how the research was conducted: "[Within a case study] the researcher aims to uncover the interaction of significant factors characteristic of [a] phenomenon [that] focuses on holistic description and explanation."

A case study as a research design is suggested as a means to allow for an in-depth understanding of a specific phenomenon. Within this case study, I aimed to investigate and explore real-life situations and experiences, where experience serves as a basis for reflection. Taking on a qualitative research methodology and design, the data for this study were collected over a period of one year from learners and educators of the Waldorf School on the Hill in Alverstone Road, KwaZulu-Natal, and Harborview Secondary School in Havenside Drive, Chatsworth, KwaZulu-Natal. In conjunction, interviews were conducted with the representatives from both Hinduism and Buddhism from the

Ixopo Buddhist Retreat in Nirodha Farm, Ixopo, KwaZulu-Natal; Knysna Zen Centre of the Dharma Centre in Metcalfe Street, Knysna, Western Cape; and the Satya Sai Organisation and Chatsworth Magazine Barracks Sri Vishnu Temple in Westcliff, Durban, KwaZulu-Natal. An art intervention, questionnaires and interviews were used for this investigation. Covid-19 regulations were taken into account at all times.

3.4 Sampling and data collection

I used a case study design that made use of two sampling techniques. Both probability sampling and quota sampling techniques were used for this research. Making use of probability sampling allowed the participants to have an equal chance at being selected. Email communications were used to make contact with one private and one public school together with representatives from the Hinduism and Buddhism community to invite participants and inform them about my study. The terms 'ritual' and 'ritual practices' were explained in detail, with examples, to all participants. They were also well informed that the interviews that would be used for data collection would be voice recorded. The schools connected me with the educators whom they considered suitable for me to work with to support this research. Once the representatives agreed to participate in the study, consent forms were emailed to them. Consent forms for parents, educators and learners were also despatched to inform all participants about the specifics of the study and what would be expected of them, including the contact details of the researcher and supervisor in charge of the study. The interviews were conducted with those who preferred this method instead of completing questionnaires. Because I invited participants at a very early stage in my study, all agreed to face-to-face or online interviews with the expectation that the interviews would be conducted as soon as possible, despite my explanation of the administrative procedures and that interviews could only commence once my ethical clearance certificate was issued. In time and due to delays in obtaining my ethical clearance and feedback from the university, many participants opted for the questionnaires instead of interviews.

The sample size was based on availability. At Harborview Secondary School, I worked with 35 learners who were split into two groups for the art intervention. Out of these learners, 10 were chosen by the educators to participate in the interview process and five educators from the school also volunteered. The educators all preferred the questionnaire due to lack of time. At Waldorf School on the Hill, only 15 learners participated in the interview process due to Covid-19 infections. Many educators and learners had to self-isolate, which limited my study, as only those learners who attended school were able to participate. Four educators decided to complete a questionnaire and one educator participated in a face-to-face recorded interview, which took place at the school.

The intervention and interviews at Harborview Secondary School took place during school hours and during art lessons. Due to the grouping system implemented in order for schools to adhere to Covid-19 regulations, there was no continuity of school days for each learner, as they came to school every second day and some were absent on those days. This posed a problem for each group to complete their activity promptly. The lesson could have been more effective without the break in-between. The intervention (examples can be seen in Chapter 5) presented a ritual practice, mainly practised within Buddhism, to the learners, who were required to engage with this practice.

The representatives from Hinduism were P2H, an educator and scholar in Hindu philosophy who has studied the practice of rituals in India and was also an author and radio presenter. Another representative was P1H, a Hindu priest. A face-to-face recorded interview with P1H was conducted at my home, which he preferred, taking into consideration the Covid-19 regulations. Another representative, P3H, was part of the Satya Sai Organisation and a doctor practising holistic dental medicine and surgery, who opted for a questionnaire. P1B was a representative from the Ixopo Buddhist Retreat in Nirodha Farm, Ixopo, KwaZulu-Natal. He lived at the Buddhist Retreat Centre and practised Buddhism. Due to P1B only being available to do an interview in September, the questionnaire was decided upon. P2B was also a representative from Buddhism and was a Dharma educator of the Dharma Centre in Metcalfe Street, Knysna, Western Cape. He opted for a questionnaire due to his busy schedule. Interviews were scheduled for a duration of between one and two hours. After the interviews, I transcribed the content of the recordings.

The research questions for the interviews and questionnaires included the following:

a) What was your understanding of rituals before my brief introduction to you?

b) What is your understanding of ritual practices now?

c) Do you practise any rituals personally (and in your classroom?) (This question was adapted according to interviewees.)

d) If so, do you mind sharing some of your practices?

e) What prompted you to follow these practices?

f) How does that support your lifestyle or belief system?

g) What do you think is the value of ritual practice?

h) Do you think ritual or ritual practices are important? If so, why?

i) If so, in what way?

j) How can the school culture be inspired by ritual practices?

k) Do you know whether the current education curriculum makes provision for ritual practice in schools?

l) Do you think rituals have created a foundation or discipline in the way you currently live?

m) Do you think ritual practice in schools can contribute to the educational environment in South Africa?

The data collection extended over a period of three months until the end of August 2021. The data were primarily gathered through the use of an art intervention, interviews, observations and taking notes. Semi-structured interviews, used in qualitative research, were also conducted sporadically, as time was a factor. According to Anne Galletta (2013:2), "the semi-structure interview is versatile and powerful for the qualitative research method". The semi-structured interview can be seen as an open interview. This allows new opinions or ideas from the interviewees to come about when the interviews are in progress. This was useful to my study, as the questions generated an outline for topics to be explored and were not limited to one outcome. It created a space where ideas were exchanged and where I could learn more about the topic presented. It also allowed room for follow-up questions. Galletta (2013:2) states that the semi-structured interview "is sufficiently structured to address specific dimensions of the research question while also leaving space for study participants to offer new meanings to the topic of the study". The data collection techniques, participants, time, duration and codes used for the research are shown in the table below.

Table 3.1: Data collection techniques, participants, time, duration and codes

	Technique	Participants	Time/Period	Duration	Code
1.	Art intervention (mainstream school)	35 Grade 8 learners	June 2021	Five sessions at one hour each	P1: Labyrinth 1 P2: Labyrinth 2 P3: Labyrinth 3 P4: Labyrinth 4 P5: Labyrinth 5 P6: Labyrinth 6 P7: Labyrinth 7 P8: Labyrinth 8 P9: Labyrinth 9 P10: Labyrinth 10 P11: Labyrinth 11 P12: Labyrinth 12 P13: Labyrinth 13 P14: Labyrinth 14 P15: Labyrinth 15
2.	Face-to-face recorded interviews (mainstream	10 Grade 8 learners	June 2021	Two sessions of approximately 10 minutes each	P1: Interview 1 P2: Interview 2 P3: Interview 3 P4: Interview 4

	school)				P5: Interview 5 P6: Interview 6 P7: Interview 7 P8: Interview 8 P9: Interview 9 P10: Interview 10
3.	Questionnaires (mainstream school)	2 educators	June–August 2021	Three months	P1: Educator S P2: Educator S
4.	Questionnaires (private school)	4 educators	August 2021	One month	P2: Educator R P3: Educator R P4: Educator R P5: Educator R
5.	Face-to-face interviews (private school)	15 learners	August 2021	Two weeks, approximately 15 minutes each	P1: Matric student P2: Matric student P3: Matric student P4: Matric student P5: Class 12 P6: Class 12 P7: Class 12 P8: Class 11 P9: Class 11 P10: Class 11 P11: Class 10 P12: Class 10 P13: Class 10 P14: Class 9 P15: Class 9
6.	Face-to-face interviews (private school)	1 Educator	August 2021	One day, approximately 1 hour	P1: Educator
7.	Questionnaire (Hinduism)	P2H P3H	June–August 2021	Three months	P2: Hinduism P3: Hinduism
8.	Face-to-face interviews (Hinduism)	P1H	August 2021	One day, approximately 1 hour	P1: Hinduism
9.	Questionnaire (Buddhism)	P1B P2B	July–August 2021	Three months	P1: Buddhism P2: Buddhism

The data (recordings, written notes and transcriptions) from all interviews were stored on my cell phone and in addition were backed up on a hard drive and stored securely on the Microsoft OneDrive platform (a platform supported by Stellenbosch University). Each participant's identity in this study is kept confidential and a coding system for participants was used. It was made very clear that participation in the research study was voluntary. Every participant had the opportunity to change their data or withdraw from the study at any given time.

The planning stage of my data collection did not go very smoothly, as most schools declined my invitation to participate in this study. Furthermore, many participants at the mainstream school were often absent. The grouping of classes due to Covid-19 broke the natural rhythm of the school cycle, causing the interest of learners to wane. This disrupted the flow of the intervention. A further hindrance was that those learners who were not present from the beginning of the activity turned up for the second part of the activity and wanted to participate as well. The school holidays and the rise of Covid-19 infections resulting in a Level 4 extended lockdown further obstructed my data collection with participation of learners and educators from the Waldorf school. This was followed by the unrest and disruptive protests in KwaZulu-Natal, which affected the lives of many participants.

3.5 Data analysis and validity

According to Merriam (2009:29), "in qualitative research, the investigator as the primary instrument of data collection and analysis assumes an inductive stance to derive meaning from data". Similarly, data for this specific study were coded using inductive qualitative content analysis. The ground for an inductive content analysis is to interrogate and organise the data qualitatively, and to view how participants understand the questions in interviews. An inductive content analysis examines similar or same answers and allows for key concepts to be used in the research. Making use of inductive qualitative analysis allows for organising and processing data into specific themes within the research. Concise reading of the recordings and handwritten notes were undertaken before beginning with the process of identifying the various themes, headings and sub-headings in the research. The text was organised into segments of information, which was labelled into further segments of information with codes. These codes were assigned numerically to each participant, e.g. P1. The codes were later reduced and combined into themes. The data were analysed to assess how they were related. The codes and sub-themes identified were combined to form final themes. Figure 4.1 shows how I coded my data.
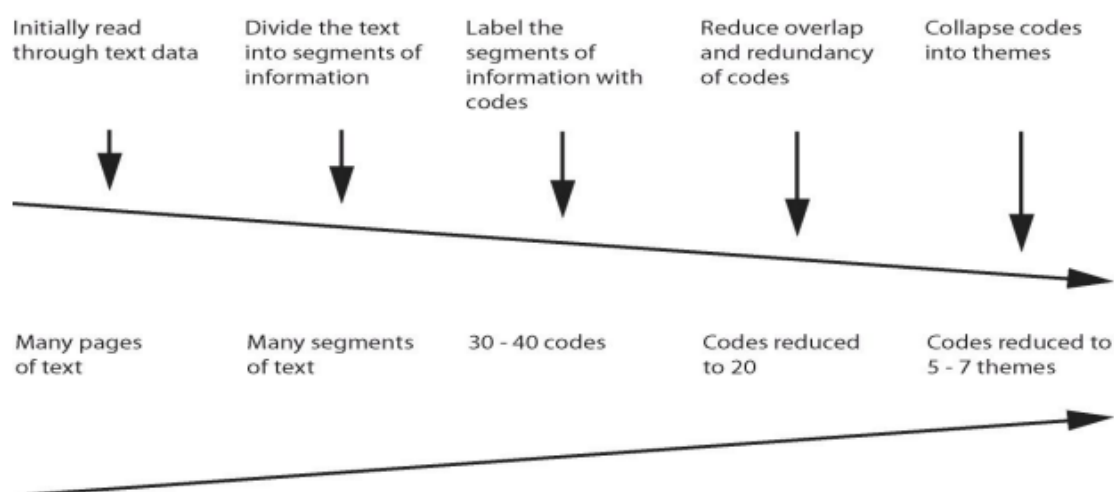
Initially read through text data	Divide the text into segments of information	Label the segments of information with codes	Reduce overlap and redundancy of codes	Collapse codes into themes
Many pages of text	Many segments of text	30 - 40 codes	Codes reduced to 20	Codes reduced to 5 - 7 themes

Figure 3.1: Creswell's (2005:238) qualitative research coding procedure

3.6 Ethical considerations

Ethical clearance for this research was obtained from the Stellenbosch University Research Ethics Committee: Social, Behavioural and Education Research. Ethical clearance aims to ensure that research is not conducted in an exploitative manner or infringe upon the rights and privacy of the participants. The participants were given a consent form in advance, which provided them with the necessary information regarding the study. All terminology was explained to the learners if they did not understand the content of the form. The parents of the Grade 8 learners also signed consent forms, as the learners were under the age of 18. The participants were allowed to withdraw at any stage of the research process. Permission was obtained to use the data collected for research purposes. The identity and confidentiality of participants were not disclosed and coding was used for reference.

This study aimed to be plausible, verifiable and reliable. The data were captured through interviews, questionnaires and an art intervention. Photographs were taken of the work produced by the learners in the art intervention. All interviews conducted for this study were voice recorded and thereafter transcribed. I aimed to interpret the data to the best of my ability to enable reliability and credibility.

I am fully aware that I recognise myself as part of Hinduism and have investigated specifically the Hindu and Buddhist cultures, but I have included participants from all cultural backgrounds and not only those of Hinduism and Buddhism. I took into consideration what all participants contributed to my study when analysing the data. I approached this study with full awareness to limit my personal biases and motives for the study. As such, the findings of the study are mainly based on the responses of the participants. The intention of the study was not to convert participants or to

manipulate participants' views to fit into the study, but to obtain impartial responses to the intervention.

3.7 Synthesis

In this chapter I discussed my research approach, research design, sampling, data collection and capturing, data analysis and ethical considerations. Through the use of an art intervention, questionnaires and interviews, the contribution of ritual practices to teaching and learning was explored. A case study is the most common method to follow in a qualitative study. Sampling was conducted by distributing emails to schools, parents and all participants, followed by the interviews, the art intervention and questionnaires. The data collected were in the form of reflections, written notes, analysis of the artworks made by the learners, observations, semi-structured interviews and groups discussions. The data were analysed using the inductive method. Ethical considerations comprised of the qualitative research planning to be plausible, verifiable and reliable. In the next chapter I present the data collected, followed by a full discussion of the findings.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION OF THE EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the evaluation and interpretation of the qualitative data collected from research conducted. This study aimed to explore and investigate how ritual practice forms part of everyday teaching and learning as well as how ritual practices within Hinduism and Buddhism can contribute to social cohesion in a multicultural classroom. The data were grouped under three sections, namely mainstream school art intervention and interviews with learners and educators, interviews with Waldorf private school learners and teachers, and Hindu and Buddhist representatives' interviews. Only the most relevant data and quotes from participants were presented. A discussion of each section follows after the presentation of the data.

4.2 Mainstream art intervention and interviews with learners and educators

Data collected from a Grade 8 class of a mainstream high school consisted of 35 artworks. The intervention chosen for the mainstream high school consisted of drawing and painting a labyrinth. The plan was to build a labyrinth with the Grade 8 learners in order for them to have a full experience of walking it. However, this was not possible due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the drawing was a compromise. A labyrinth was decided upon, as it was already present at the private school. A further reason was that during Grade 9, when I felt lost in the world, walking the labyrinth during break times brought me comfort and helped me find direction in life. I wanted to test whether this ritual practice would have the same effect on other learners too. Thirty-five participants engaged in the art intervention. After a discussion, all participants were handed a drawing of a labyrinth to trace using their fingers. They were thereafter requested to draw circles with a pencil using their feet. The final step was to paint inside the labyrinth with a paintbrush, using their feet. This was followed by a further discussion.

The participants were separated into two groups due to Covid-19 regulations. The lessons began by drawing the labyrinth on the board. Before explaining, the learners thought the drawing was a maze, a brain, headphones, a place to walk, curved lines, a tree, a mandala, a road or a sort of pattern. When asked what they thought a labyrinth was used for, some learners responded: it is for drilling, mosquitoes, directions to go somewhere or something used for hypnosis. Only two learners appeared to have some idea of what a labyrinth is and what it is used for. According to Melissa Gayle West (2000:n.p.), "[t]he labyrinth is one of the oldest and transformative tools known to humankind, used for centuries for prayer, ritual, personal and spiritual growth". My explanation to the learners was that ritual practices could enhance personal growth and development. The term 'ritual practice'

for the purposes of this study was then clarified and the labyrinth which I drew on the board was explained to the learners. The history of labyrinths from Greek mythology was used to support my explanation. The curious learners had many questions before we even began the activity. I thereafter handed out the drawings of a labyrinth and requested them to very quietly and very slowly, using their index finger, follow the circular lines of the labyrinth going into the middle and back out to gain a concrete understanding and feel of the paths that form a labyrinth. After an explanation, the learners then placed the same page on the floor, with the blank side facing up. With a pencil, they were requested to draw circles using their feet. This was merely a practice exercise for the next step, which entailed metaphorically walking the labyrinth with their paintbrush in-between their toes while imagining walking a labyrinth. Some learners used their hands to dip their brush into the paint before placing the brush in-between their toes and very silently and slowly followed the lines into the drawn labyrinth and back out. Other learners used only their feet. The activity was followed by a discussion with the learners about how they felt during and after the three stages of the exercise, which is presented below. The art intervention is depicted in the following figures.

Figure 4.1: Art intervention, following the labyrinth in and out using hands

Figure 4.2: Art intervention, warming up by drawing circles with pencil and feet

Figure 4.3: Art intervention, using paint and feet to 'walk' the labyrinth

Figure 4.4: Art intervention, using paint and feet to 'walk' the labyrinth

After the art intervention, questions were posed to the participants. The first question was: 'How did you feel about the activity?' and P1S said:

> *I actually was at peace doing it because I'm always very energetic, so it actually tamed me and I was in peace and I really enjoyed it, [...] it was very exciting for me to do because I don't do such unique things like [this] every day.*

Although not expressed, P2S did not appear to enjoy using her feet. "It was very unusual" and a new experience, she said. P3S engaged well with the activity. Despite using her feet, Figure 4.4 reflects her controlled movements. She said:

> *I enjoyed it very much. … Actually, I'm happy that I had to meet you, because I've never seen this before, I've never even heard of it before* [points to the drawing on the board]*, so it's like new information to me.*

Although P4S was shy and soft-spoken, she reported, "Mam, I really enjoyed doing the painting, […] it was my first time doing something with my leg, but the pencil, I didn't like doing the pencil, it was like [inaudible]". P5S said she would like to experience physically walking a labyrinth, "because I would like to be able to focus more in a way and even be calm while walking". Although P7S lost control of the paint brush, spilt the paint over her page and tore her page in the process, she said, "I enjoyed […] experiencing something new, like I've never done this before and it was something new for me so I kind of got interested in it". There was a more childlike enthusiasm when watching P8S work. He too spilt the paint over his page, but was not perturbed by it. These comments indicate that the participants felt something positive, which may not have been accurately articulated due to the language barrier, yet the gist of their comments and body language was received positively. West (2000:n.p.) explains that "[d]uring a labyrinth walk the left and right hemispheres of the brain are balanced, leading to the perfect state for accessing intuition and creativity".

The second question that was posed to them was: Did you know what a labyrinth was before? Aside from P5S and P10S, none of the other participants had heard of a labyrinth before. It was a new experience that was approached with curiosity. P5S vaguely said that it was a maze, while P10S had seen a labyrinth on television. When the question: If a labyrinth was built in your school, would you walk it and why? Were posed to the learners, nine participants reported that they would definitely walk a labyrinth if built at their school. However, P6S appeared unsure and simply said, "Most probably the daily stresses, it will help that". P3S stated that he would walk the labyrinth "because it really makes you focus and if you focus then you'd be able to concentrate in class". P8S said, "It would make them try to find a way out of something". Christie (2018:n.p.), who educates people about the symbolisms of the labyrinth, believes that the labyrinth is a means of bringing a person into a space to "feel more at one with yourself, and you begin doing things that you enjoy [that] make you feel alive" (Christie, 2018:n.p.).

The learners were then asked what their understanding of a ritual is. P1S stated, "I feel like when I hear the word 'ritual' I feel like peace or something, but I don't actually know what it means". P3S and P5S felt that a ritual was a gathering with other people doing a small prayer or offering to God. P5S added that it could be when people fast or when a wife fasts for her husband for luck. P6S felt that a ritual could be art. P8S felt that ritual is part of religion and is something that "came from the past". When the question: 'Do you practise any rituals?' P2S shared that she prays, watches Netflix and does homework. P3S was happy to share and said, "Well I play cricket, volley ball, sometimes [I] play soccer with my brother … that's pretty much what I do on a daily basis and reading". None of the participants were able to identify any positive ritual practices at school. School rituals were related to mathematics, homework or lessons taught and socialising during lunch and after school. The negative rituals were reported as smoking, swearing, drinking, taking drugs and vandalism. P1S explained that the use of rituals among the learners could be beneficial and stated, "I actually would change the vandalism and bullying because I see like every wall I go past […] there's something written on the wall and some of them are very rude things, and also the bullying it's like really bad". P2S reported that learners do not communicate and "everyone minds their own business". It appeared to me that the learners did in fact understand what rituals meant, especially after I explained it with examples. The different views regarding rituals are interesting and enlightening.

The art intervention intended to present to the learners of the mainstream high school a ritual practice (walking a labyrinth) common to Hinduism and Buddhism. Despite the language barrier, each piece of work allowed the learners to investigate something new while invoking new thoughts,

understandings and ideas. Each piece of work also finally became a representation of the learners in their mark making, reflecting those whose thoughts were focused on 'walking' the labyrinth and those who felt distracted or uncomfortable. Although the learners were at a disadvantage in that they were not physically able to walk the labyrinth as intended, most learners were receptive and showed a positive reaction to the art intervention. They enjoyed painting with their feet more than drawing with their feet. Most learners were focused and calm during this process. Although most learners expressed feeling calm upon reflection during the group discussions, some struggled, as they felt awkward using their feet, which distracted them. One learner said that it felt like a "mother guiding you out of things". The association with certain action were clearly different for different learners and coming from different cultures also must have played a role. The class educator was pleased that the learners enjoyed the activity and were exposed to something innovative that could allow for further thinking. Gauging from the educator's and the learners' feedback, there is a likelihood that this type of ritual practices, when done on a more regular basis, could positively contribute to teaching and learning.

Due to time constraints and the Covid-19 pandemic, only two educators of Harborview Secondary School agreed to participate in this study and preferred completing a questionnaire rather than face-to-face or online interviews. The educators were asked what their understanding of ritual practices are. T1S answered that rituals include cult-like activities or a religion that exhibits "sacrificial offering". She clarified that "there are religious groups like Hindus who believe in sacrificing an animal […] it involves long prayers […] my understanding was pointing to the negative thinking of Satanists, drinking of blood, Islamist and the sacrifice of animals over Eid-ul-Adhaa". T2S, on the other hand, linked the term 'ritual' to religion and religious practices all over the world. After explaining my study, T1S's understanding was possibly broadened and she commented that ritual "could refer to habitual practice that could determine the outcome of a certain aspect of the day". She understood that a ritual does not necessarily have to be religious or sacrificial in nature. T2S stated, "I did not realise that ritual was consisting of such a vast aspect as to one's daily living and so on".

When the educators were asked what the ritual are that they practice at school, T1S said that she incorporated prayer in her classroom, which is a "personal habit" to make the learners aware of a "higher being". She also considered marking the register and discussing Covid-19 protocols as rituals. T2S reported that she did not talk about religion to avoid conflict between learners. She regarded everything that is done in a day as ritualistic, "from doing school work, to having lunch and socialising". She found value in the ritual of socialising and felt strongly that religious practices are not beneficial in that they may "create conflict amongst learners of different belief systems". T1S

commented, "All the children know what to expect every morning [and] feel serene and peace, as they know what to expect. [This] keeps them central and they can focus their energies on preparing for the day". For some individuals, ritual practice "is all they have to keep them sane and motivated" (T2S).

My question regarding if ritual practices could educate people about the similarities that exist among multicultural communities, T1S explained that the ritual of the morning prayer is universal, incorporating all cultures. T2S, who still linked ritual practice to religion, felt that if people want to learn more, they should attend places such as "churches, temples and mosques". She also said that holy books are also available to learn more. T2S did say when asked if ritual can contribute to social cohesion: "Yes, I feel that ritual practices can enhance social cohesion within schools if everyone can accept that we are all the same despite colour and home languages". The last question to the educators was, 'how do you feel about Hindu and Buddhist ritual practices (values and morals) being incorporated in schools?,' T1S answered in the following way: "All practices aim for peace, love, tolerance, acceptance [and] understanding". She also said she believed that this may assist those who are lost and unaware of the benefits of prayer. T2S said, "I feel it is a good idea, because the ways of the Buddhist do not rely solely on religion" and said their teachings assist people in finding inner peace. Contrary to the first part of her answer, T2S felt that Hindu practices could cause conflict among learners, probably because she linked Hinduism to religion. She therefore recommended that only Buddhist teachings be incorporated in schools.

4.3 Discussion of mainstream art intervention and interviews with learners and educators

Based on the intervention and all responses, the learners move freely without inhibitions. They appeared more accepting and tolerant than the educators, who treaded cautiously with trepidation. Most learners were empowered with new knowledge and interested in knowing about other cultures. Despite the learners having different religious backgrounds, there was no evidence that religion was a barrier to the learners. There was a tacit cry for help when the learners looked past religion and expressed an interest in the rituals of other cultures, if it could benefit them, especially those who experienced problems at home and consumed alcohol, drugs and other substances. It was also noted that educators and most learners linked rituals to religion. As discussed in Chapter 2, Durkheim (2001:94) states that religion comes from ritual and not the other way around. Durkheim (2001:94) also believes that the function of a ritual is to help one live freely in the world, rather than being attached to religious dogma. It was noteworthy that the art intervention, despite limitations, had an impact on the learners in a subtle way, allowing them to connect to their innate self. Berthomé and Houseman (2010) also indicate a link between rituals and emotions. It appeared to me

that if the walking of a labyrinth was a regular ritual for the learners, they would likely experience what Boyer and Liénard (2006:1) say about rituals being able to ground us "with a sense of steadiness and continuity in life".

It was also noteworthy that T1S expressed that Hindu and Islamic ritual practices were tied to Satanic connotations. It reflects that as an educator, she was hardly well informed about other cultures, which could negatively impact on teaching and learning. T2S felt that only Buddhist ritual practices should be incorporated into schools. This is linked to the view of Lewis and DeAngelis (2017:366), who believe that Buddhism in the classroom can create "devotion" and "reverence". P2S was of the view that Buddhist practices are much easier for learners to grasp and that they are universal, unlike Hindu ritual practices. It may be construed from her comments that T2S too had limited knowledge about religions. The data collected and time spent at the mainstream school were insufficient to obtain an accurate finding that ritual practices in Hinduism and Buddhism would enhance teaching and learning and contribute to social cohesion in a multicultural classroom. It did, however, appear that the learners were able and willing to learn more about ritual practices of all cultures. Given the opportunity, as Stets and Turner (2006) and Bell (1992) state, ritual practices can contribute to social cohesion among learners, and a labyrinth can also enhance teaching and learning if used on a daily basis.

4.4 Waldorf private school interviews with learners and teachers

Data from a private school were collected through 15 face-to-face learner interviews, one educator interview and four completed educator questionnaires. When the learners were asked what their understanding was of ritual practices, most understood it to be a repetitive action as a form of discipline. P1R stated that one can have religious rituals, but that not all rituals are religious per se. She further commented that a ritual is something one does daily or at intervals "with some kind of reverence or emotional connection to it". P8R said that it helps individuals "to […] ground themselves […] a repetition of something [done] on a regular basis that makes things easier". P9R was reminded of her parents who do biblical readings as a ritual and spoke of "my own type of rituals with crystals and candles". P12R also considered rituals to be ceremonial and imagined ritual practice to be "people dancing around the fire".

P1R said that she practised martial arts at home, which commences with a ritual of bowing down, and "[s]ome phrases that are basically saying that we will treat this with reverence and we will train together". This creates an "open, free space where everyone is able to be vulnerable with each other". By vulnerable, P1R perhaps meant that she can share her weaknesses and insecurities with

others. The ritual practice of martial arts had improved her life, allowing her to feel confident and safe around other people. "I'm so comfortable with my training partners because of this ritual and how we appreciate it [...] and I feel more calm and confident in myself so that's helped me," she said. Ritual was more habitual for P2R due to the fact that he and a family member are autistic. She implied that autistic people incorporate certain activities into their lives daily and that if the routine is upset for someone who is autistic, they become distressed. Rituals provide a safe space of comfort and familiarity for her. "I'm also on the autism spectrum so I have a very selective preference in regards to food and […] there are […] only certain foods that I can eat," she explained. There were tiles in her home and walking between the tiles in specific patterns was something she does daily:

> When I get home […] walking towards my bedroom […] that's a ritual for me and it's […] kind of like a cool down of like getting from […] having to walk from the estate gates to my house and then being in my own home.

This is linked to the view of Boyer and Liénard (2006:1) stated, that rituals are created differently and in different ways, which could also include obsessive compulsive disorders.

A ritual practice for P9R was sending messages to two people and making a phone call to friends, which she said added value to her life. Lighting a candle before dinner and sharing mealtimes were regarded as rituals by P11R. She explained that when she felt under the weather, she did "some breathing exercises to feel more controlled", which she learnt from drama lessons at school and which she embraced in her life. "Our grace is something that I have learnt from school, and mainly my mum has sort of guided us through what we do," she added. Rituals for P6R included going to bed at a certain time, dinner and daily exercises. P14R's ritual practice was drawing, which he stated helped him "get like all my frustrations out, which […] expresses my mind".

The learners were also asked what they regard as ritual practices in your school and P1R, P2R, P3R, P4R and P8R considered school festivals as ritual practices. They felt that it embraces a sense of community among educators, learners and parents. At the Waldorf schools they celebrate in the way of festivals that often replace sport gatherings. P4R clarified: "but the festivals is mainly to bond, another one is all the food". He said that food was one way of bringing the class together. He fondly remembered the St Johns Festival, where the learners wrote down a wish or things that troubled them, then folded up the paper and threw it into the St Johns fire. "That was useful for some people […] let go of […] habits or negativity in their life," he said. P1R and P3R identified the labyrinth as a ritual practice, which P1R commented formed part of a festival in the primary school. She said that participating in the ritual made her feel enriched.

The farming and main lessons that is used at the Waldorf school were also identified as ritual practices by P5R. He stated that every morning before the main lesson the learners would spend a few minutes outside observing their environment and paying attention to the sounds around them. He said, "For me that was the first time I realised that this is Waldorf […] this is a feeling I've never had, you know!" P6R stated that the daily timetable, main lesson and festivals were the most meaningful rituals for her. P13R expressed that he really enjoys Waldorf and stated that "all of the students here are a lot more open-minded and able to cope with a lot of situations better than mainstream schools".

Two learners felt that Waldorf embraces mainly Christianity and would like to change that. P1R and P7R said that Waldorf is mainly Christian in its teachings. He said he would prefer the school to be more in tune with "cultures like Buddhism". P1R said "Waldorf is mainly Christian-focused […] maybe bring in aspects of other cultures and religions". All participants were open and amenable to incorporating Buddhist and Hindu practices such as positive affirmations, yoga and meditation. However, P6R felt that there was already quite a lot of Hinduism and Buddhism being practised in their school. P5R and P6R thought that yoga would help the learners the most and stated, "Yoga isn't only just about stretching […] again like with the St Johns thing, you just go into another part of yourself, you know". These participants embraced yoga as much more than merely physical exercises.

The Waldorf school that I visited use a labyrinth as part of their teaching. P2R stated that she often walked around the classroom, as she was unable to sit still and because of this, she would often ask permission to go walk the labyrinth: "It's sort of a meditation […] it just […] allows me to focus on one thing […] so it's a nice cool-down and it's a nice change of pace". P1R, P3R and P13R reported that the educators took the learners to the labyrinth when they felt restless to calm them down. P1R explained, "It's kind of like a reset, so I think it's a very good thing that we have". P3R expressed that the labyrinth gave learners a chance to be with themselves: "There can't be a lot of people in there, it just doesn't work so it gives you space by yourself to think". However, P15R experienced it differently and commented:

> I don't see so much of a benefit in the labyrinth, but I can understand the idea of just walking and being with yourself, in yourself, quiet, with no one else to disturb you in that sense, I can agree with that, but the idea of just walking in circles is a bit strange to me.

Most participants responded that Waldorf rituals could definitely benefit learners of mainstream schools. P1R stated that the way Waldorf approaches teaching and creates a safe space where

learners are able to "grow emotionally and spiritually" is unique. Main lessons come alive with stories: "We are fortunate to have a beautiful school, whereas at mainstream schools it's just blocks and blocks and cement and brick" (P1R). Similarly, T1R stated that the school architecture was said to evoke certain factors within the child – from the colours of the classroom to the rounded buildings. T4R said much about eurhythmy[7] and felt that it is one important ritual practice that could be beneficial to all learners. It is an expression of feelings through movement without words. P6R stated that mainstream schools could benefit from "small classes, open minds, independence […] seeing things from an outdoor perspective rather than just inside, walking […] woodwork or metalwork", rather than just subjects you study to write an exam and pass. When asked about the differences between the Waldorf and mainstream schools, P5R felt that mainstream schools lack humanness. He said:

> I think we need to be more human about it […] Like I know it's difficult, especially with the amount of pupils in the normal schools. You can't always have a one-to-one connection, but at least make it feel like home, sort of like here, and everything's a community and so I feel like [it is] the more human way of teaching.

P5R further recommended that other schools should incorporate all the teachings from Waldorf:

> I've been to a normal school and it felt like we were trained to be machines […] any humanness was gone there was always a space between me and the teacher so I feel that anything they can get from Waldorf can help.

The educators at the Waldorf were also interviewed. Five educators of the school agreed to participate in this study. Due to time constraints and the Covid-19 pandemic, four preferred completing a questionnaire and one educator opted for a face-to-face interview. I again started with their understanding of ritual and T1R understood ritual practices to be her morning routine. She explained, "My understanding of a ritual [is] a daily practice of life, forming a relationship to the spiritual world, and I'm not speaking of any particular religion". According to T1R, the learners "do hear about the Christ stories, but no religion is pressed onto the children, although it is perceived in that way sometimes […] its really about what the stories speak of". T4R expressed that ritual does not need to be linked to religion, saying "Rituals can have a pragmatic effect […] the participants believe it to have an effect through social conditioning or tradition or pure advertising". T5R also commented that repetitive actions "following a particular pattern [are] ritualistic". T1R for instance referred to a ritual practice "of unifying the whole class no matter what walk of life you come from". T4R stated that Islamic, Jewish and African rituals are also incorporated in the school.

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[7] 'Eurhythmy' is performance art, where learners are taught expressive movements which are said to be therapeutic. Eurhythmy is found specifically in Waldorf schools.

T2R said, "The routine of rituals gives the learners a sense of security […] little routines create stability, calm, predictability and safety". According to T2R, "reverence is practised daily", especially when reciting the morning verse and giving thanks before meals. She said this includes reverence for other beings and for the world around each person, which all help an individual "to be grateful, empathetic, humble, and kind – all values which are needed in society". She also commented that the ritual practices in the Waldorf school can inform people about similarities that exist among multicultural communities, as they "are non-denominational, non-biased and not 'preachy'". T2R also felt that Waldorf ritual practices can promote acceptance of and respect for others "by promoting love, gratitude, reverence and wonder for all people and things". She emphasised that the Waldorf system does not "demand conformity but celebrates individuality within a caring community". T4R commented that ritual practices create "memory points […] they make you look outside the mundane". T3R stated that "modern rituals need to encompass different individuals within a diverse community beyond family, ethnic, racial, linguistic, cultural ideological positions". She also stated that values and morals are not necessarily taught, but are rather experienced through the educator of the class. According to T3R, "the care of the school environment, classroom aesthetics, [and] handshakes at the door […] convey morals and values" in a Waldorf school.

The question: 'Can ritual practices educate and inform people about the similarities that exist among multicultural communities and enhance social cohesion?' was posed to the Waldorf teachers and T2R for instance stated, "Yes, if done in the right way" ritual practices can further enhance social cohesion in multicultural societies. T1R stated that the diverse curriculum itself enhances social cohesion and brings to light the similarities that exist among multicultural communities. T3R stated that ritual practices can "build communal spirit which will support social cohesion". T5R commented that social cohesion is enhanced when "pupils and educators engage in and are exposed to such practices, we understand more about each other".

When the teachers were asked specifically how Hindu and Buddhist ritual practices can contribute to education, T1R answered, "I really think the discipline of Hinduism, discipline being a positive discipline that I'm speaking of in Hinduism and Buddhism, would benefit the life of any human being". T2R commented that she did not know enough about Hindu and Buddhist ritual practices, but from experience she was aware that both cultures "place a high importance on recognising others as individuals, and a reverence for the human being and the world around us". She also commented that if certain ritual practices could develop values and ideals, such as mindfulness and gratitude, then it "would be beneficial to learners and educators alike". However, T3R stated that one should

use "traditional viewpoints and religious teachings in a non-religious way". T4R commented that Buddhism could be more difficult to incorporate, while festivals in Hinduism could be incorporated. T4R further felt that "a subject called World Religions would be amazing from primary to matric". But, according to T5R, "in Waldorf education, such practices already exist within our curriculum […] the Waldorf curriculum is perhaps the most open to other cultures [or] religious practices and diverse in its thinking [and] methodology".

4.5 Discussion of Waldorf private school interviews with learners and educators

From the above analysis it was found that the learners at the Waldorf private school had more of an understanding of ritual practices than the learners at Harborview secondary public school. Most learners understood rituals as daily repetitive actions, in line with the view of Bell (1992), who discusses rituals as repetition and a result of societal norms, as discussed in Chapter 2. The school incorporates many ritual practices, including festivals, that are significant in preparing young primary school learners for high school. It is clear that the educators embraced and had reverence for the Waldorf system of education. This corresponds with the writing of Dahlin (2017), who maintains that Waldorf education grounds the curriculum and systems to that of the learner. He also describes a Waldorf school as a school for humanity. T1R similarly expressed that the curriculum serves each child and addresses the whole child. While most learners felt that Waldorf education is all-embracing of other cultures and religions, some still felt that Christianity is the foundation. T1R also expressed that at times, the school was mistaken as Christian, as many Christian festivals were celebrated. She did however clarified that the stories and festivals were a way of allowing the learners to come to question and understand a higher nurturing being.

Corresponding to the views of Phillips (2007), the data collected revealed that the Waldorf education is one that incorporated harmony, unity and social cohesion among educators, parents and learners. The curriculum required educators to have an understanding of the different cultures and to present knowledge in creative ways so that lessons came alive to the learners. The unity among learners and educators was very apparent during data collection.

T1R considered creative learning to be the most important ritual practice of the school. Almost all learners felt the same about creative learning and said they believed that mainstream schools would benefit from it. As discussed in Chapter 2, Creeger (1994) supports creative learning, which helps discover the source of human existence. He says that creative learning can overcome narrow perspectives that separate rather than unite.

T3H stated that the teachings of Hinduism work with the "head, heart and hands". T1R affirmed that Waldorf teachings did the same. This helped the learner to get in touch with all aspects of the self and not just be focused on working to achieve high marks or compete with other learners. This is linked to Creeger (1994), who discusses Steiner's teachings, as well as McDermott (2009) and Lachman (2007), who discuss the connection between Hinduism and Buddhism in Waldorf education. Similarly, Grant and Portera (2011) remind one that education should be more than preparing learners for the working world. From the data, the Waldorf School encourages learners to find who they are. In Buddhist and Hindu teachings, the focus is also on finding and making 'peace with the self' for learning to be effective.

4.6 Hindu and Buddhist representatives' interviews

In order to gather in-depth information on values contained in Hinduism and Buddhism, I identified learned participants that were willing to participate in this study. Three individuals from Hinduism and two from Buddhism with expounded knowledge of the scriptures shared their views on rituals. Data were collected from the Hindu representatives through one face-to-face interview and two completed questionnaires, and data were collected from the Buddhist representatives through two completed questionnaires.

The Hindu and Buddhist representatives were also asks what their views were on rituals and each participant had a different view. P1H regarded ritual practices as a way of life. He said it was "parallel to […] our manners, our ethnic etiquette", for example being polite by offering a visitor a snack or drink. He said he believed that ritual practices "are a way of evolving oneself" and stem from "culture". P2H said that rituals are "directly linked to religion [and] commence from the time of conception and continue after birth". She explained that these rituals are "aimed at moulding or shaping one into becoming the best they can be in our society". She concluded that "ritual is an integral part of Hinduism". P3H related rituals to a form of discipline. He said, "Rituals generate faith in an individual, foster discipline [and] perpetuate consistency".

P1B understood rituals to be repetitive actions. P2B explained rituals in different contexts. He called the first type of rituals "Sunday rituals". He explained that every Sunday after "8 am mass" he returned home to breakfast, "which was always toast with grilled cheese and tomato on top". The second type of ritual "was a religious one, the Catholic Mass". There was "no question about it", he said, "because that was how it was". Even though it was not by choice, it brought him "a sense of certainty, of comfort, a sense of identity, of knowing who we were, all somehow part of a large 'tribe'". He described the third type of ritual as "day-to-day family rituals". Some examples he gave

were "making tea for my parents after supper", listening to the radio together, 19:00 news for his father, children washing Sunday dishes and having his grandmother over for tea and a Sunday drive. All these rituals brought to him "security, respect, togetherness [and] love". Family togetherness can be attributed to these ritual practices that were inculcated in their lives from early years. It created a solid foundation for virtuous living. As simple as it appears, he claimed that those practices were effective in creating a solid foundation for him, so much so that he had carried these practices into the lives of his children.

With regard to rituals in context, P1H stated that "every action is a ritual and every action performed is supposed to enhance oneself". He added that rituals are aimed at "moulding or shaping one into becoming the best they can be in our society". P3H felt that it added value in that it integrated "tolerance of society". P2B's answer to this question was that he was not sure whether "the explicit reason for a ritual is a necessary element of a ritual".

When asked about his daily rituals, P1H explained that he commenced his mornings by having conversations with his deities, lighting incense, breathing exercises, chanting for an hour and making an offering at his alter in gratitude. His "early morning and night prayer at the lamp" were intended to give thanks to a higher being. Although this may appear to be religious, for P1H it was spiritual in nature and a good grounding of reverence for all of creation. Like P1H, P2H also prayed daily at her lamp to give thanks and to ask for blessings. P2H stated that her ritual practices were "driven by my religious teachings". Charity was a daily ritual for her. She said, "Paying for food for my learners, buying them clothing if it is tattered, going an extra mile to teach them" are rituals that added value to her and society. Rituals practised by P3B included "ChiKung (Qigong) daily, mindfulness (sitting) meditation, (occasional) yoga stretches, jogging, [and] online exercises to maintain and improve cognitive brain function". P3H recorded that the purpose of his ritual practices was "to integrate unity in diversity", as well as to encourage "tolerance, coexistence and understanding amongst a diverse population". Growing up in a "Christian, Calvinistic household", P1B felt he could not find any answers to his questions and therefore "developed an interest in Eastern spiritual and health practices", which allowed him to deal with his emotional and personal dilemmas. He explained, "They were mainly Hindu-based practices (transcendental meditation, yoga, etc.)". His ritual practices included "the Four Zen Bodhisattva Vows [which set] intention in my life" and meditation, which "helps bring a sense of happiness, great loving-kindness and improved relationships". Further rituals were chanting, yoga, grace at the dinner table and sitting together, and birthday and Christmas rituals. He said, "I believe that at its core all the major wisdom traditions are saying the same thing, and that there is none better or worse than the other".

When asked about the specific value of Hindu and Buddhist rituals, P1H expressed that unity among people is very prominent in Hindu culture. Despite the differences between individuals, there is always someone willing to help. "It's huge that somebody who cannot afford a lot, somebody who isn't dressed up properly identified with this spirituality [or] humanity". He also said that Buddhist ritual practices can improve "social and intercultural interaction by promoting, tolerance, respect and harmony". He added that values in Buddhist ritual practices enhance the "possibility of personal (psychological) growth [or] some form of enlightenment [as well as] treating the earth and environment with care and respect", which aids current environmental issues. Further examples can be viewed in Addendum C. P2H stated that "collective worship" allows for "a sense of belonging [and] adds value to an individual's life".

P1H argues that Vedas in Hinduism have "an enormous amount of shlokas that speak about universal wellness", which could inform people about harmony and unity. The Vedas also promote gratitude for everything around us, the sun, the rivers and the sea: "We have rituals in place and systems in place to keep that harmony". The Hindu scriptures, which are over thousands of years old, state, "vasudhaiva kutumbakam", which means "the whole world is your family". One is expected to embrace all of creation with a sense of belongingness. P2H commented that Hinduism is not a "dictatorship kind of religion, [but] a way of life". P3H said he believed that Hindu ritual practices are "broad-minded […] beyond dogma of religions" and said that "prayer and rituals are beyond microcosm of religious practices". In addition, P1B pointed out that we all have anxieties, fears and problems, which can be minimised by practising mindfulness, meditation and awareness.

P2B affirmed that "once we have [the] right view, [the] right understanding, we can embody the same through the practise of ritual". P2B commented that Hindu ritual practices or any other ritual practices can promote acceptance of and respect for those of other cultures, as Hinduism claims to be the oldest religion in the world and is "open to all". Similarly, P3H commented that Hindu rituals imbued in a veracity of selfless service and promote the five common human values of "truth, right action, peace, love [and] non-violence". P1B also agreed that Buddhist ritual practices promote acceptance of and respect for other cultures. He said that this can be done by "experiencing each other's humanity through direct interaction and life experience".

P2B further shared that his daughters attended a Waldorf school "where many rituals are practised". Even though his family did not attend church, the Waldorf school became their "community and we practised the rituals such as the St Johns festival ritual". He reported that ritual practices become a

way of life and "the good rituals bring love and togetherness". P2B stated that "social cohesion can be achieved if we are able to place more value on our same-ness rather than our differed-ness". P1H said he believed that Hindu scriptures have brought systems in place to bring about "harmony, inclusiveness and cohesion [as] part of daily life".

P2H commented that "all schools favour a multicultural curriculum". However, it is questionable whether this is implemented in all schools, and if it is, whether it has a spiritual or political tinge. P3H stated that he believed that Hindu teachings "definitely" enhance social cohesion and encompass the "common dictum: service to society beyond politics". P1B felt that social cohesion can be achieved through "shared cultural and social experiences". He also said that it is important to have insights and understandings into "how perceptions, stigma, shame, stereotypes and propaganda work". This will help to turn "negatives into positives – stigma transformed into acceptance, shame into self-acceptance". The epics in Hinduism and Buddhism appear to contain the lessons needed for this enhancement of social cohesion in multicultural societies.

All participants were of the view that Hindu and Buddhist ritual practices would add value to school curriculums. However, P1B was concerned that "with Christianity and Islam being the predominant religions in South Africa", it may not be easy to incorporate. He said that "both religions are of an exclusive nature and generally intolerant towards views that do not fit into their dogma". P1H stated that both religions, Hinduism and Buddhism promote awareness and mindfulness, which would be most valuable to learners. P2H said that all religions should be incorporated to allow learners to understand more than their own religion or culture. P3H said he believed that "the practices of Hinduism and Buddhism empower a population to self-empower and accept ownership of their destiny to develop a solutionist thinking". P3H also spoke of the five "principle human values: truth, right conduct, peace, love, non-violence imbued in 3HV [which refers to the] (head-heart-hand). This is present within the Waldorf education as stated by T1R and Creeger (1994:29). P1B felt that incorporating other cultural and social rituals such as "meditation and mindfulness techniques" into schools will have "profound effects on mental and physical health, personal effectiveness and interpersonal relationships" of learners. It will also help "being present in the moment, experiencing mind-body unity, experiencing the world with all senses, and not only virtually or mentally". P2B concluded that Buddhist and Hindu ritual practices being incorporated into a school curriculum is "vital, as they can bring about reduction of stress and anxiety, increase concentration" [and could] enable social cohesion" which could produce well-rounded individuals.

4.7 Discussion of Hindu and Buddhist representatives

The data collected from the representatives from Hinduism and Buddhism revealed which ritual practices could be useful in educational environments. Both representatives spoke of the term '*dharma*' as defined by Williams (2003) and Menon (2001). They also spoke of these cultures promoting human values to bring about harmony and unity among people. Klostermaier (1989) too describes Hinduism as all-embracing. This is linked to the views of Menon (2001) and Narayan (1972), who discuss Indian epics and the value of these stories in the lives of Hindu people. Both participants from Buddhism discussed more concrete ritual practices that learners could incorporate into their lives. These are also discussed by Rahula (1959), who says that Buddhism is a way of life, more than a practiced religion. The view of Klostermaier (1989), who believes that Hinduism is a way of life, appears to be on par with that of P1H, who described the teachings of the Vedas as also way of life. The data also linked to the work of Hagen (1997), as these representatives commented that honouring the elements, non-violence and right conduct are all teachings in Hinduism and Buddhism. The representatives from Hinduism and Buddhism were able to explain with examples that ritual practices could be of importance for the enhancement of social cohesion, teaching and learning. From my experience and the data collected, it may be possible that the values enshrined in Hindu and Buddhist teachings can allow learners to look deeper into themselves to develop their unique abilities, which could enhance their learning journeys.

4.8 Synthesis

From the above discussion it is clear that although ritual practices have positive and negative effects, the positives outweigh the negatives, and that ritual practices in post-apartheid South Africa could serve as a tool to promote social cohesion, tolerance of other cultures and stability of a society, and enhance the mental and physical well-being of individuals whose innate propensities stem from culture and tradition. The following chapter discusses the conclusions and implications of the study.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The aim of this research was to discern how ritual practice forms part of everyday teaching and learning as well as how ritual within Hinduism and Buddhism can contribute in a multicultural classroom. The research design was qualitative and entailed a case study that included an art intervention, observation, face-to-face interviews and questionnaires. The boundaries and limitations of the research included the availability of the participants, time constraints, Covid-19 regulations, the number of rising cases within the two high schools and language barriers between me and the learners. The research was conducted at two mainstream high schools, and included 15 Grade 8 learners from the mainstream school. These learners participated in an art intervention where a ritual practice from Hinduism and Buddhism was introduced to them, followed by a group discussion and interviews with 10 learners chosen by the educator. Fifteen learners from grades 9 to 13 at the Waldorf private school were also interviewed as well as one educator from the primary school. Educators from both schools completed questionnaires, as did representatives of Hinduism and Buddhism, with one representative of Hinduism who chose a face-to-face interview. Many valuable lessons were learnt during the process that could be useful when delving deeper into ritual practices from all cultures and how to introduce these to learners of all ages in a South African context.

5.2 Conclusions from findings

This study explored how ritual practices form part of everyday teaching and learning and how Hindu and Buddhist rituals can further contribute to social cohesion in a multicultural classroom. Ritual practice, for the purpose of this study, entailed the repetition of activities. This type of ritual practice brings about discipline, which in turn creates meaningful and shared experiences. Incorporating these kinds of ritual practices into schools requires time and planning. Establishing positive and valuable rituals is a long process and cannot be done in one art intervention or a few discussions. It needs to be incorporated into the curriculum, or as many would argue, it should become a way of life, in and outside the school. The timeframe of this research was limited but I had to remind myself that I am writing a mini-thesis and that i can continue with this research even after my formal studies are completed. Despite these various challenges that I experienced, this study established that ritual practice from Hindu and Buddhist, but possibly also many other cultures in South Africa could contribute in enhancing teaching and learning in multicultural classrooms, and hopefully also contribute to social cohesion in society. Apart of the dominant Western culture that are practiced at most mainstream schools in South Africa, more studies could be done by including ritual practices of other cultures to find new solutions to the many challenges in the South African educational system.

Sir Ken Robinson (Sadhguru, 2017) says that people become who they are in the world because of what they have gathered. This could mean what they have been exposed to and learnt from different people. He adds that teaching is not about telling people what to think; it is "creating conditions where people will come to understand for themselves by probing, questioning and raising curiosity" (Sadhguru, 2017). The question is whether the curriculum is actually nourishing young minds with what learners need. This research reflects that it is possible for ritual practice from other cultures to enhance teaching and learning and social cohesion in multicultural classrooms.

This research has been an enriching experience where I learned from other cultures and how they view my culture. The various experiences at the mainstream school, Waldorf school and interacting with the Hindu and Buddhist representatives opened up new avenues for learning. Working with for instance the Grade 8 learners was a rewarding experience and both the learners and I learnt from the process. Hearing the views of many educators gave me insight into their teaching and learning worlds. These experiences made me realise even more than before, that the focus on the development of the individual's well-being in addition to the curriculum is crucial.

I was initially met with much hesitation and rejection from the many schools and parents I approached due to my topic. Many felt that religion is too sensitive a topic to discuss or explore. This was an indicator to me that despite being in the 21st century, people are not yet open-minded or have limited knowledge of other opinions or cultures. Open-minded educators that are in line with the requirements of social justice positively impact on the lives of their learners. A good example is the Waldorf school incorporating Buddhist and Hindu teachings, which are expressed through the educators in their lessons. The ritual practices at the Waldorf School discussed in Chapter 5 are proof of the possibilities of incorporating rich diversity of ritual practices from different cultures into a school curriculum and syllabus. P3R stated that if the "curriculum needs to be reimagined for the 21st century individual, it must be in an all-inclusive reimagined way".

From my research and observations, I found that the inculcation of certain ritual practices has the potential to enhance learning in a multicultural classroom. Once incorporated into a curriculum, the repetition thereof could be meaningful and will no doubt create harmony, sameness and togetherness. From analysing the art intervention and the comments made by the learners and educators, it appears that ritual practices can contribute to positive behaviours in learners if applied in the right context. The learners from the mainstream school felt it would help those learners who struggles with emotional complexities.

The data collected, although on a small scale, reflected that it may be time to observe one another as affiliated to one mankind or one world culture, teach all learners to practise good thoughts and speech and avoid viewing races and cultures as permanently unwavering obstacles, or disregard or be ignorant of them. Education should also not be viewed as a process to encourage competition and economic success which often worsen relationships between different races and cultures.

5.3 Concluding remarks

As I researched this topic and writing up this thesis, and despite the devastating global Covid-19 pandemic, I also found myself in the midst of an unrest that permeated the provinces of Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal[8]. I cannot help but repeatedly question what would prompt these tendencies. My parents grew up in poverty too. Their struggle turned into rituals when we gathered together after dinner, hearing their stories and those of my grandmother. We were taught lessons from our scriptures. We were taught the value of truth, righteousness, peace, compassion, non-violence and what it means to be human. Why is there still no faith in humanity in the 21st century? Perhaps it is a lack of education. Perhaps it is a lack of spirituality, perhaps a lack of a strong foundation in human values or being led by materialistic, unscrupulous leaders whose focus is churning the economy. The unrest prompted me to delve deeper into reasons for negativity as well as how rituals could possibly be used to connect people.

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[8]. The civil unrest occurred in the province of Kwa-Zulu Natal during July 2021. It was triggered by the imprisonment of erstwhile president Jacob Zuma.

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