

**Roux-volution: From Religious Studies to  
Human Rights in Education for Diverse  
Cultural, Religious and Gender Contexts**



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Guest Editor: Special Edition

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ASRSA

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# Preface

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It gives me great pleasure to convey my heartfelt congratulations to the team that put together this volume of the *Journal for the Study of Religion* in honour of the very significant research leadership and research outputs of Prof. Cornelia Roux. Roux has been the most important academic who has promoted Religion in Education (RiE) and Religion and Education (RaE) in South Africa. In her career that stretches over more than thirty years, she has tirelessly done research, lectured and provided guidance in these vital areas of study in southern Africa. Most significant are the three research projects that she headed during the last decade. These are:

- *Understanding Human Rights through Different Belief Systems: Intercultural and Interreligious Dialogue* (2005 - 2008);
- *Human Rights Education in Diversity: Empowering Girls in Rural and Metropolitan School Environments* (2010-2013); and
- *Human Rights Literacy: A Quest for Meaning* (Roux & Du Preez 2013).

Given South Africa's legacy of the anti-colonial and anti-apartheid struggles, the combined quest embedded in 'Understanding Human Rights'; 'Human Rights Education in Diversity'; and 'Human Rights Literacy' constitutes one of the most significant contributions to the South African academy and more particularly, the broad field of Education. Not only has it succeeded in putting the concerns and hopes embedded in 'Human Rights' as it relates to Education firmly on the academic and educational agendas; it also ground-breakingly succeeded in producing the requisite scholarship and graduate students to develop the discourse further.

Roux has also succeeded in creating a research community of practice that is operating not only in South Africa, but internationally. Contributions to this volume by colleagues in the field are indicative of both the international significance and appreciation of her work as well as those of her students. As such, her research as well as those of the students who graduated under her supervision, are impacting both internationally and locally. Since it is in countries such as ours, where we continue to develop systems and institutions conducive to the facilitation of a new citizenry –beyond the legacies of colonialism and apartheid – the knowledge production around human rights fills an important gap in discourse development. In this regard, what really gives Roux's work a cutting edge quality is that she has produced this in the education domain. Since it is impacting on learners in education and through them on the teaching profession as such, it will have lasting impacts in our country. So, if we want to talk about the future of our country and its people, the corpus of research around Roux's three research projects mentioned earlier, is a benchmark for research still to be engaged by the South African academy. I also hope that this journal issue of the *Journal for the Study of Religion* will make a not insignificant contribution to this developing discourse.

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# Editorial: Roux-volution – From Religious Studies to Human Rights in Education for Diverse Cultural, Religious and Gender Contexts

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This special edition is dedicated to the research of Professor Cornelia Roux. The articles captured in this edition are contributions from some of her scholarly friends, nationally and internationally, the doctoral candidates she has delivered over the years, and her postdoctoral fellows. The works reflect the main themes in Roux's research over the years and illustrates the evolution it has undergone, i.e. moving from Religious Studies to Human Rights in Education for diverse cultural, religious and gender contexts.

The first two articles are solely dedicated to the work of Roux. In the first, Robert Jackson provides an international commentary on her work. As a scholar on theory and pedagogy of religion education in the European context, Jackson writes about some of the pertinent issues that mark the main moments of Roux's professional journey. In particular, he formulates an argument about the move from Religion *in* Education and Religion *and* Education toward a human rights education perspective that could sustain an intercultural education view. In the second article, René Ferguson proffers a critical appraisal of Roux's contribution to the fields of religion and human rights in education in South Africa as 'scholar-activist'. Her contribution sets the scene for the articles to follow in terms of the themes she discusses. In Ferguson's words,

An analysis of Roux's published work indicates that she was conscious of changes in political and social paradigms especially where religion in education is concerned, and consequently the need for 'paradigm shifts' before effective learning and teaching religion in diverse religious and cultural educational contexts could occur [...] The article covers the following themes in Roux's work: the significance of values in education and in collaborative research, the need for paradigm shifts for effective learning and teaching religion and values, the teacher as facilitator/mediator of learning, creative and appropriate pedagogies for diversity and learning to understand 'the other', classroom praxis and research as praxis, religion and belief as a human right in a diverse society, and finally a critical discussion of Roux's research projects as collaborative and consciousness-raising endeavours.

The next two articles pick up on the paradigm shifts that Roux explored throughout her academic career. In the article of Liam Gearon, her use of 'paradigm' is re-examined in the light of Thomas Kuhn's (1996) *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Based on this re-examination he argues for a more rigorous theoretical conceptualisation of the underlying paradigms of contemporary religious education. He provides a critical outline of six paradigms - the scriptural-theological; the phenomenological; the spiritualexperiential; the philosophical-conceptual; the socio-cultural; and the historical-political - to frame his arguments. In the article of Siebren Miedema, *From Religious Education to Worldview Education and Beyond*. The Strength of a Transformative Pedagogical Paradigm, a plea is made for strengthening the transformative paradigm in pedagogy. A plea fully combinable with Roux's views and needed as a counter-voice against dominant neo-liberal rhetoric.

The following set of three articles concerns teaching-learning and curriculum development themes that Roux also explored in her academic work. Heid Leganger-Krogstad extends the dialogical pedagogy proposed by Roux and by introducing a triologue, i.e. the inclusion of a third voice in classroom conversations. She also aligns her argument with that of Roux in terms of the need for classrooms to be safe spaces of teaching and learning. Shan Simmonds writes about the reconceptualisation process of religion in curriculum-making. Simmonds argues that Roux, in disrupting the boundaries of religion, has made human rights the departure point for engagement with Religion and Education. She argues that the blurring of the boundaries between religion education and human rights education, has made it necessary to explore the complexities of the foundations of human rights and, in the light of this, she engages with the possibilities of human rights literacy in curriculum-making for human rights education. Petro du Preez too draws on Roux's ideas about curriculum-making. She does so in the context of postconflict curriculum-making and the role that remembrance plays in such contexts. It is argued that the past should not merely be seen as a strategic, reconciliatory possibility for the future, but as an opportunity for critical learning to transpire.

Janet Jarvis, Ina ter Avest and Marian de Souza's articles form the next set of articles that addresses the theme of identity that is central to many of Roux's scholarly writings. Jarvis's contribution alludes to identity in the context of gender equality. Key concepts she explores includes: teacher identity, 'identity capital', self-narrative, self-dialogue. These are explored in the context of classroom praxis and backed by empirical evidence for the main findings. In similar vein to Jarvis, Ter Avest draw on the themes of identity and safe spaces when she states that '[t]eachers as role models are of pivotal importance, creating a safe space and a rich learning environment to learn about and from differences in life orientations and from the encounter with "the other"'. Ter Avest envisages diversity issues to be addressed by teams of teachers so as to enable 'teaching and learning in difference to become unique persons and equal citizens'. Marian de Souza provides an Australian view of fluid, multiple identities in multicultural contexts by drawing on a variety of sources including research and statistical data, content analysis as well as snapshots of the lived experience of Australian Catholics from diverse backgrounds. She offers some insights into the role that identity may or may not have in a pluralistic climate and its relevance for religious education.

The contribution of Roux's postdoctoral fellows – *Moving towards Understanding One Another: Cornelia Roux on Religion, Culture and Human Rights* - captures some of the most recent data generated in her human rights literacy project. Anne Becker, Annamagriet de Wet and Glynis Parker draws on Bauman's (1994) conceptualisation of moral responsibility and relations of proximity and distance to demonstrate how human rights literacy could facilitate moving towards understanding one another. Qualitative comments are provided to corroborate their main theoretical propositions.

The last two articles are philosophical reflections on religion education and human rights as put forward by Roux in scholarly writings. Yusef Waghid reconsiders the notion of an African philosophy of education as a response to human rights violations, in particular how the notion of *Ubuntu* can be used to counteract violence. This notion too has been addressed by Roux in one of her earlier works. Waghid makes reference to the thoughts of Giorgio Agamben to develop his arguments. In the last article in this edition, Martin Prozesky discusses the human reality and ethics underlying human rights and human rights education in South Africa's multicultural society as evident in Roux's works. He does so by employing an approach based on a view of human nature in which questions of ethics are central.

I believe that this collection of works provide sufficient evidence of the evolution in the work of Roux in terms of her movement from Religious Studies to Human Rights in Education for Diverse Cultural, Religious and Gender Contexts. Its international appeal is clear and the critical engagements of the authors in this special edition provide thought provoking arguments for further research in these areas, especially in terms of its ethical and moral relevance.

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