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# African philosophy (of education) and post-apartheid South African schools: A critical analysis of the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement

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## Abstract

*In South Africa, indigenous (African) knowledge is at the heart of a single detailed national Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (2012). Against this background, the study on which this article is based, examined two long-standing genres of philosophy: Western philosophy, as a critical academic discipline and African philosophy, as a collective worldview. The article shows that universal philosophy and, by implication, a universal knowledge system transcends these seemingly particular, opposite and irreconcilable Euro-centred and Afro-centred schools of thought. In doing so, the article proposes that universal philosophy as an inclusive, rational and reflective practice makes it possible to merge Western and African philosophies to form a single knowledge system. Unfortunately, the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement emphasises indigenous African knowledge systems – thus, regresses to narrow African provincialism. In the end, the author (re)establishes a universal knowledge system as a sound African philosophy of education in post-apartheid South African schools.*

**Keywords:** *Western philosophy, African philosophy, African philosophy of education, endogenous knowledge, Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement, schools*

## 1. Introduction

There are three main concepts that underpin this article, namely Bantu (popular) philosophy<sup>1</sup> Western (academic) philosophy<sup>2</sup> and universal (single) philosophy<sup>3</sup>.

*Bantu philosophy, is [a] single system and unique to [African people]. ... True knowledge, human wisdom is dependent upon the wisdom of the [African] elders. One can learn to read, to write ... but all that has nothing in common with wisdom (Tempels, 1959: 25–35).*

*Ethno-philosophy [one aspect of Bantu philosophy] exemplifies an essentialist/particularist orientation, while academic philosophy constitutes a paradigm case of universalism (Horsthemke, 2015: 18).*



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*This universality must be preserved ... because these differences of content are meaningful precisely and only as differences of content, which, as such, refer back to the essential unity of a single discipline, of a single style of inquiry (Hountondji, 1996: 56).*

Below, I show how the three quotations above are integrated in the article in order to mount a clear, coherent and consistent argument. Tempels (1959), a Belgian missionary, sets out a systematic account of Bantu philosophy – a primitive philosophy foreign to European philosophers. The key principle of Bantu (indigenous) philosophy, Tempels maintains, was that Bantu ontology (theory of life) is the basis of Bantu psychology. Simply put, African people explain things by reference to supernatural forces, magical remedies, ancestor worship, ritual of forces, folklore and customs, oral traditions and legends, to name the few, and these vital forces penetrate and inform African thought. Horsthemke (2015) speaks of two analytical constructs: ethnophilosophy (oral tradition) and professional philosophy (written tradition) as a subtext of universal philosophy. Hence, Hountondji (1996) asserts that only universal knowledge (as we shall see in later sections, philosophy is defined as a theoretical discipline, while knowledge is defined as a justified true belief) transcends these narrow schools of thoughts (i.e. “knowledge of African” and “knowledge of the West”) – anchoring universal knowledge as a professional discipline. In light of this integration, the study on which this article is based, argued that:

- classical Western philosophy and indigenous African philosophy – and by implication of African philosophy of education – are part of a universal (united) knowledge system;
- as a unity of a single discipline, a universal knowledge system is feasible, desirable and relevant in settling differences between the “Western epistemology” and “knowledge of Africa”;
- although, the national Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) promotes (scantly so) both academic knowledge and a universal knowledge system, the scale is tipped in favour of indigenous knowledge systems in South African schools; and
- only a universal knowledge system is able to address global challenges and deal with domestic philosophical-educational issues in post-apartheid South Africa.

## 2. Methodology

The author maintains that all research contains (or should contain) a review of literature and locates empirical research within the relevant theory or theoretical framework. A conceptual article too, proceeds on theoretical level and works (even if it reports on empirical research) purely with concepts and texts. Viewed this way, this conceptual article employs three methods of inquiry. On the descriptive side, the author looks at the meaning and features of Western philosophy, African philosophy and universal philosophy. On the analytical angle, he provides a critical analysis of the concept of African philosophy of education reflected in the CAPS. Lastly, from a normative perspective, he makes practical claims about how the CAPS African philosophy of education project can be meaningful and consistent with the changing world. Briefly, this article is the result of a process of investigation with two aspects. First, the article liberates us from internal conceptual complexity we get into when normally used words, such as ‘indigenous knowledge systems’ idle in our minds. Second, the article presents possible alternatives to this popular conceptual use in curriculum policy in South African schools.

### 3. What is Western philosophy?

What is Western philosophy? The term “philosophy” comes from the ancient Greek words, *philo* meaning “love” and *sophia* meaning “wisdom” – the love of wisdom (Akinpelu, 1987: 1; Lacey, 1976: 59; Kanu, 2014: 87; Plato, 1994: 190; Runes, 1960: 234 & Scruton, 2007). The concept is attributed Protagoras (575–495 BC), a Greek philosopher, scientist and religious scholar. In Plato’s dialogue, *Protagoras* (1991), Socrates describes Protagoras to his friend as “the wisest man alive” (1991: 1). Socrates’ friend concurs, “He is the only man who is wise ... one who is knowledgeable in learned matters” (1991: 2–4). Protagoras’s love for wisdom is succinctly encapsulated in this Protagorean public statement (O’Meara, 1989: 42–43):

*Philosophy is indeed, it seems, is a road ... chose that philosophy and that road to wisdom ... the philosophy which progresses through immaterial eternal intelligible objects that always remain the same and do not admit in themselves of destruction or change, like its subject-matter, is unerring and firm, producing grounded and unswerving proof.*

Interpreting O’Meara’s quote, we can see that philosophy is “a kind of agony” (extreme mental suffering) (Strangroom & Garvey, 2012: 76). This metaphor of philosophy as a road takes one to the “intelligible world of truth postulated by the objects of knowledge, which are perfect, eternal and unchanging” (Dupré, 2007: 9). Since then, Protagoras’s philosophy has passed into common usage. Recently, it has been given two meanings, namely that of a science of questions (asking wise and foolish questions) and a general set of beliefs (general outlook on the world) (Luthuli, 1982: 19; Scruton, 2007: 552; Standish, 2014: 6; Waghid, 2016: 455). As the reader will see in this section, African philosophical literature rests on what Hountondji (1996: 47) calls a “confusion”, a confusion between the strict (science of questioning) use on the one hand and the popular (general beliefs) use, on the other.

### 4. What is African philosophy?

Hountondji (1996: 33) defines African philosophy as “a set of texts, especially the set of texts written by Africans and described as philosophy by their authors themselves”. But beyond this usage, lies a begging question: what feature should African philosophy take, ethnophilosophy (oral literature) or academic (written literature)? Interestingly, Hountondji challenges oral tradition, i.e. Tempels’s (1959) reconstruction of Bantu philosophy as a collective system of beliefs and supports written tradition, namely Pythagoras’ theoretical discipline or science of questioning. Hountondji (1996: 103–104) contends, “oral tradition favours the consolidation of knowledge into dogmatic, intangible systems, whereas archival transmission promotes better the possibility of a critique of knowledge between individuals and from one generation to another”. To drive this point home, philosophy existed in the West, Hountondji asserts, because “the history of the West is not directly cumulative but critical: it moves forward not through a mere plurality of knowledge ... but through the periodical questioning of established knowledge, each questioning being a crisis” (1996: 104). So, what is likely to give African philosophy a disciplinary character? Bensusan (2016: 255) notes that philosophy is a discipline for two reasons: it involves beliefs about the world that are singularly different from mythical or ideological beliefs; and it investigates the world using distinct concepts, principles, assumptions and methods. In this sense, but only in this sense, it seems to the author we can speak of African philosophy as a single, universal discipline – a concept of African philosophy of education that the author advocates for in the CAPS.

## 5. What is universal philosophy?

If we accept, as the author believes we must, Locke's (1960: 304) thesis that "individuals possess strength and reason according to the dictates of the Law of Reason", then human beings by nature are philosophers in pursuit of knowledge – the *Protagoras* road to wisdom. In other words, philosophy is a universal activity not confined to Western Pythagoras or African Hountondji. From this point of view, it is possible, as Le Grange (2007: 586) spurs us to disrupt the dichotomy between classical Western philosophy and an African indigenous worldview by creating "third spaces or interstitial spaces". As Odour (2012, cited in Horsthemke, 2015: 18–19) aptly points out, "universalists would maintain that ... African philosophy is first and foremost philosophy before it is African". Equally, Hountondji (1997: 13–18) expands this point and says the integration of the Third World (i.e. the developing world) into the world processes of knowledge production entails "a push of endogenous elements of knowledge to the periphery ... the ability to shift from one mode of thought and one logical universe to another. [...] The endogenous become 'indigenous' in and through such a world-widening process."

There are three points worth noting about this "new knowledge space". First, if we treat the so-called "Western thought" and "African thought" as unique, distinct, opposite philosophies, we are unwittingly perpetuating "narrow provincialism", to use Amin's (1989) phrase (cited in Moll, 2002: 11). Second, Kanu (2014: 92) maintains that philosophy is an "all-inclusive enterprise, a universal activity not limited to whites or blacks, nor confined to the peoples of the West and the East". Third, instead, universal knowledge takes the locale as the basis of international knowledge production – far from "permitting Western triumphalism or the retrieval of pre-colonial African tradition" (Enslin & Horsthemke, 2016: 188). It is clear therefore that there are three streams of thought that have emerged in the wake of Protagoras's concept of philosophy and Hountondji's (1996) definition of African philosophy: popular (or indigenous) knowledge, professional (or academic) knowledge and universal (single) knowledge. The focus now turns to a debate between African knowledge and Western knowledge.

## 6. African and Western knowledge: Going beyond the two poles

Seepe (2000: 119) writes, "Africanisation of knowledge ... refers to a process of placing the African worldview at the centre of analysis ... [and] advocates for the need to foreground African indigenous knowledge systems to address [Africa's] problems and challenges". Why is there a need to re-centre the African worldview and foreground an indigenous knowledge outlook? According to Horsthemke (2015: 21), the motivation is easy to discern and explains it considering the "denigration, suppression and exploitation of the traditional knowledge systems" from Western colonialism to date. To put it bluntly, Ochieng (2010) sees the call to Africanise knowledge as a response to Western barbarism. Santos (2014, cited in Le Grange, 2016: 4) describes the dissemination of (indigenous) knowledge as "the murder of knowledge ... the death of the knowledge of the subordinated culture ... [t]he loss of epistemological confidence ... the epistemicides perpetrated by hegemonic Eurocentric modernity". In the eyes of Lumumba-Kosongo (2000: 145), "[i]n Africa, knowledge within the Western educational context was transmitted through the institutions associated with [slave] capitalism, colonialism and slavery, such as churches and schools." Does this mean that we are in an endless battle of the dominant European centre on the one hand, and a push to recentring Africa, on the other?

A universal knowledge system is not only possible, if the author may say so in a Kantian spirit, but a categorical imperative, especially in enabling Africa's recentring project in the global "processes of knowledge production" (Hountondji 1997: 13). However, the recentring

project needs to confront its theoretical inadequacy of indigenous knowledge captured by Horsthemke and Enslin (2008: 217) as the “collective singular” that is often employed in African philosophy of education – a single, collective, unreflective and implicit worldview of African people – “African reality”, “African experience in its totality” and “indigenous African epistemology” (Lebakeng, Manthiba & Dalindjebo, 2006: 76; Ramose, 1998: vi). It is no longer tenable to deny Sartre’s (1974) transphenomenality of being, that is, human beings have absolute individuality and absolute freedom, and the self is a construct that is built and rebuilt and it can be changed and reconstructed as we choose. In the face of philosophy as a universal enterprise, it is therefore crucial for the advocates of indigenous knowledge systems to re-think their call and go beyond Western and African philosophies and their theoretical inadequacies and Sartre’s transphenomenality of being.

Letsekha (2013) made a call for a reconceptualisation of the term “Africanisation” – and by implication of indigenous knowledge systems. This means that the conceptual use of African philosophy as a general set of beliefs or collective systems of beliefs is in desperate need of definition, analysis and critical evaluation. In two of his famous passages, Hountondji puts it this way:

*African philosophy, like any other philosophy, cannot possibly be a collective worldview. We do not need a closed system to which all of us can adhere and which we can exhibit to the outside world (Hountondji, 1996: 53).*

*Bantu philosophy is shown to be a myth. To destroy this myth once and for all, and to clear our conceptual ground for a genuine theoretical discourse (Hountondji 1996: 44) ... philosophy is ... essentially an open process, a restless, unfinished quest, not closed knowledge (1996: 71).*

What does it then mean to reconceptualise “African philosophy”? Two instances can be given. First, it should meet three basic philosophical tasks central to the clarification of any general set of beliefs. Analysis of African philosophy itself, which specifies its elements; synthesis of African philosophy, merging it with academic philosophy to foster universal knowledge and improving African philosophy, for example, the concept “African philosophy” should be used in a strictly theoretical sense, and not in the popular, ideological sense. Second, by reorienting African philosophical discourse in this way, it is better placed to define, justify and defend itself on rational grounds (Nsamenang, 2011: 60). In the absence of clarification and critical evaluation of African collective beliefs, we end up with an uncritical and unargued acceptance of a false dichotomy between good, indigenous knowledge and bad, Western knowledge, or the other way around – and that is not useful. It is not useful because African philosophers should “take the word philosophy in the active, not passive, sense” as Hountondji (1996: 53) maintains.

Moll (2002) supports the claim that a universal knowledge system is able to resolve the debate between African knowledge and Western knowledge. To defend his position, Moll revisits a number of African philosophers and psychologists committed to a universal knowledge system that transcends Eurocentric knowledge and African knowledge. Starting with Amin’s (1989) defence of universal inquiry, Moll (2002: 1) maintains that Afrocentrism and Eurocentrism, as two positions in the philosophy of knowledge, in fact entail each other – Eurocentric thinkers are blind to the entailed opposite while African thinkers believe there is nothing to be done about it. It is against this mutual entailment that we encounter the Eurocentric and Afrocentric “theoretical inadequacy”, which compels the advocates of these positions to “start to develop Africa in a universal system of thought”. As Hountondji (1997: 8–17) convincingly demonstrates:

*[R]esearch in the peripheral countries is ... tied to the local scene, it is trapped in particularistic details, unable and unambitious to break to the level of universal ... it is in such a context that ... traditional knowledge must be placed ... [we] need to move beyond the present impasse ... beyond the mute coexistence of discourses, to examine each and every mode of thought within their specific frames, then, if possible, to bring them face to face within the unifying context ... such option for a rational approach requires ... to create bridges, to re-create the unity of knowledge, or in simpler, deeper terms, the unity of the human being. ... Endogenous knowledge appear[s] to be a better choice.*

By way of a brief summary, the author maintains that: man is by nature a philosopher, “characterised by a ceaseless quest for knowledge” (Luthuli, 1982: 31); philosophy is a universal practice not confined to Western or African people; it is possible, as Le Grange (2007: 586) argues, to disrupt the dichotomy between classical Western philosophy and African indigenous worldviews. As Horsthemke (2015: 23) also states, “a rapprochement between so-called indigenous and non-indigenous’ insights is not only possible but desirable – educationally”. Such is, regrettably not the case with CAPS – on the contrary, the policy document promotes indigenous knowledge systems – the claim that this article advocates and intends to demonstrate. The key question therefore is: which concept of African philosophy of education is reflected in the CAPS? It is to the African philosophy of education and critical analysis of CAPS that we now turn.

### **African philosophy of education and CAPS: Indigenous, professional or universal?**

In the light of the three streams of thought discussed in the preceding sections, this article provides a critical discussion of the national CAPS. To this end, the author argues that:

- there is an untenable mixture of indigenous, academic and universal philosophies within the document;
- indigenous knowledge systems lack a clear, coherent and unambiguous definition of “knowledge”; and
- the emphasis on indigenous knowledge systems is based on a weak understanding of constitutional democratic education.

The author concurs with Le Grange’s (2007: 581) assertion that “the inclusion of indigenous knowledge in South African curriculum policy statements [wa]s a positive step and could provide opportunities for debate on interaction(s) between Westerns and indigenous worldviews”. The underlying principles of the CAPS point to a combination of philosophies of education<sup>5</sup> in South African schools. To illustrate this point, two principles and the subsequent aim of the CAPS as far as this aspect of policy, i.e. indigenous knowledge is concerned, read:

- valuing indigenous knowledge systems: acknowledging the rich history and heritage of this country as important contributors to nurturing the values contained in the Constitution (Department of Education [DoE], 2012: 5);
- active and critical learning: encouraging an active and critical approach to learning, rather than rote and uncritical learning of given truths (DoE, 2012: 4); and
- to promote knowledge in local contexts, while sensitive to global imperatives (DoE, 2012: 4).

The CAPS philosophy of education is questionable, especially if one considers the urgent need to disrupt Western philosophy and African indigenous worldviews, for forming a single knowledge system. Apart from being questionable, the CAPS philosophy is untenable because

it promotes “differences of content” (Hountondji, 1996: 56). First, indigenous knowledge emphasises African history and preserving its cultural heritage through songs, poems and stories. Second, academic, professional philosophy fosters active, critical and inquiring citizens in post-apartheid South African schools. Third, universal philosophy seeks to promote local knowledge responsive to the global context. The difficulty is that at present, CAPS does not have a settled philosophy (of education); it is at the crossroads and is stretched and pulled in different directions. What should be the response to this state of affairs? Only a return to the source can enlighten us. Africans should not be afraid of thinking new thoughts. Simply put, Africans should appreciate academic philosophy as a window to universalism or the unity of knowledge in South African schools.

But, what is knowledge? What are indigenous knowledge systems? Which knowledge systems are taught and learnt by learners in post-apartheid South African schools? Hospers (1997) distinguishes three ways of knowing: knowledge by acquaintance (knowledge of a person, place or thing, e.g., I know that Cyril Ramaphosa is the president of the Republic of South Africa), practical knowledge (knowledge how, e.g. I know how to write a letter) and propositional knowledge (knowledge that, e.g. does God exist?). Although, there is no definition of indigenous knowledge systems, the CAPS attempts to reclaim Africa’s “collective singular” by re-acquainting and re-familiarising school learners with –

- African religion (Life Orientation Grades 4–6; 11–12 years of age);
- cultural rites of passage (e.g. important stages in the individual’s life in South African cultures: birth, baptism, wedding and death and cultural heritage (Life Orientation Grades 4–6; 11–12 years of age);
- oral traditions and scriptures of major religions and community or indigenous games (Life Orientation Grades 7–9; 13–15 years of age);
- indigenous medicine, such as healing properties of the aloe and indigenous knowledge systems, such as mountains and ancestors (Social Sciences Grades 4–6; 10–12 years of age);
- indigenous people’s interpretation of nationalism as a system of self-defence, whereby they aimed to unify commonly oppressed peoples (History, Grades 10–12; 16–18 years of age);
- indigenous culture of collective cooperation as a form of resistance against apartheid (History, Grades 10–12; 16–18 years of age); and
- ethical traditions and/or religious laws and indigenous belief systems of major religions (Life Orientation Grades 10–12; 16–18 years of age).
- There are three points worth noting about “indigenous knowledge” in the CAPS document.
- First, there is an overlap between knowledge by acquaintance, in other words, knowledge of African religion, cultural rites of passage, the role of oral traditions and sculptures, African mountains and ancestors as well as practical knowledge. (This involves the use indigenous medicine, systems of self-defence, indigenous culture of collective cooperation, indigenous games and ethical traditions and/or religious laws and indigenous belief systems.)
- Second, there is an assumption that acquaintance with African knowledge is shared by Africans of the blood (African defined by racial terms) and Africans of the soil (African defined by geographical or territorial terms) to use Mazrui’s (2009) phrase.

- Third, as Horsthemke (2016: 583) argues, practical “knowledge of Africa” is dubious in terms of its “purported knowledge-content and its *epistemic* status”, as the author demonstrated at the beginning of this section.
- Commendable modesty, no doubt, but re-acquainting and re-claiming African epistemology is only one aspect of individual development. Of equal importance, is the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake, the so-called “knowledge that”, or embarking on the road to endless wisdom.
- The author maintains that CAPS should be concerned with Hospers’ (1997) third way, i.e. the primary (propositional) knowledge. This form of knowledge, Hospers argues, is based on three requirements or the classical analysis of the concepts of knowing:
  - the statement must be true (objective knowledge);
  - you must believe that the statement is true (the subjective component knowledge); and
  - there must be good evidence for believing the statement.

Put it differently, knowledge is defined as justified true belief. Now, if African collective knowledge is incompatible with Western professional knowledge as far as knowledge by acquaintance and practical knowledge are concerned, the implication is that CAPS promotes different truths, beliefs and justification. If, indigenous and non-indigenous Africans share features, such as “truth-content and truth-functionality” as Horsthemke (2004: 584) puts it, why use a collective singular “African knowledge” in post-apartheid South African schools? One caveat is needed here: the emphasis solely on indigenous knowledge systems is restrictive and misleading, especially if one considers that the Bantu ontology (theory of life) is the basis of Bantu psychology, i.e. it means indigenous knowledge is not subjected to criticism but is regarded as enduring truth. We need a common, not a narrow African philosophical framework for CAPS. It is quite clear, then that unless we justify African collective beliefs there is no ground to make claims for African knowledge but acquaintance and practice of indigenous knowledge systems.

As already mentioned, indigenous knowledge systems acknowledge the rich history and heritage of South Africa as a vehicle to nurture the values contained in the Constitution of the Republic. However, the emphasis on knowledge by acquaintance and practical knowledge is unlikely to promote active, critical and inquiring learners in South African schools. As we have seen, the language of “collective singular” paints a picture of a child, incapable of theoretical discipline, unable to use universal philosophical concepts, principles, assumptions and methods, to employ Bensusan’s (2016) words. Let me argue one small, but significant, point of disagreement, the understanding CAPS shows of indigenous knowledge systems flies in the face of a liberal constitutional democracy, especially when it comes to learners’ abilities and inclination to act for themselves. However, CAPS’ “learner-imagery” is one of “a flock of sheep innocently nibbling the grass side by side” (Mill, 1975: 345). There is a need, therefore, to consider Gutmann’s (1987) theory of democratic education that is built on two principles: non-repression that secures freedom to deliberate rationally among different ways of life; and non-discrimination, which requires that all learners participate as citizens in shaping the future of citizenship education South Africa. These are the educational benefits of democratic education:

- safeguarding the principle of active and critical learning also considered “core” by the national CAPS;
- unlocking learners’ intellectual abilities and critical faculties that constitute the cornerstone of South Africa’s democracy; and
- recognising human agency, that is, learners’ capacity to think, act independently and make free choices among different philosophies of life.

### **African philosophy of education: Endogenous knowledge**

In the words of Horsthemke and Enslin (2008: 2005), African philosophy of education, i.e. “oral tradition’, ‘African traditional worldview’ (or ‘narrow communitarianism’) and ‘African experience’” is strikingly similar to characteristics of Fundamental Pedagogies based on the ideology of Christian National Education (CNE), its history and its basic beliefs. In 1948, the Institute for CNE published a well-known pamphlet setting out Christian education policy. The introduction of the pamphlet stated:

*Afrikaans-speaking children should have a Christian-Nationalist education, for the Christian and Nationalist spirit of the Afrikaner nation must be preserved and developed. ... By Christian, in this context, we mean according to the creeds of the three Afrikaner churches; by Nationalist we mean imbued with the love of one’s own, especially one’s own language, history, and culture. ... Nationalism must be rooted in Christianity (Federasie van Afrikaanse Kultuurverenigings, 1948: 1).*

Equally, the Bantu Education Act (No. 90 of 1953) established Bantu schools with a black-oriented education and black-oriented school curriculum “based on Black identity ... Black thought ... Black humanism ... the idioms of Black culture ... Black culture” (Luthuli, 1982: 32–101). Three possible traps should be avoided in thinking about African philosophy of education neatly encapsulated in the CAPS:

- an essentialist definition of African identity that suggests that there is only one authentic set of characteristics which all African people share and which do not alter across time – identities involve multiplicity, therefore rarely coherent and integrated (Woodward, 1997: 2);
- Africans are not a solidified, undifferentiated and homogenous mass of people: this tends to ignore differences and the fact that “Africans” are individual subjects too; and
- politics of collective identity that tends to accept historically inherited views escape critical scrutiny and constructive criticism.

Such is, regrettably, the case with CAPS as was with CNE and Bantu education. At the heart of African philosophy of education should be the clarification and critical evaluation of the national CAPS. As Strawson (1973: 828) puts it, “one remembers the Kantian tenet that concepts are empty, have no significance for us, are not concepts for us, unless we can relate them to experiential conditions for their application”.

The author’s disquiet about CAPS’ preferred indigenous knowledge systems are its inability to clarify, defend and justify itself. Consequently, one doubts its educational benefits in the light of global and domestic philosophical-educational challenges, such as:

- globalisation (that led to knowledge sharing) and neo-liberalism (and its privatisation of education that undermines theoretical knowledge) educational programmes that are suspicious of democratic human rights culture;

- Africa's scientific, intellectual and academic dependency, and African philosophers' inability to embark on a quest for universality of philosophy as a basis for endogenous knowledge;
- the need for African institutions of higher learning to undergo a process of decolonisation and arrest what Hountondji (1996: 56) describes as "African mythical exploration";
- the general unwillingness to choose and travel the road to wisdom calls for "the next stage of struggle, a reality that, unfortunately, never fails to arise, but whose battle must be waged (Gordon; 2016: 177); and
- the demons of racism and xenophobia that drain one emotionally and intellectually (McKaiser, 2015: 1).

All these global and national philosophical-educational issues taken together require policymakers to re-examine post-apartheid education and, by implication, the indigenous knowledge system in South Africa anew. In simple terms, the open nature of the aims of the CAPS attests to Carr's (2004: 57) misgivings about "policy makers who make and implement educational decisions in a way which generally lacks intellectual rigour and in which serious and systematic reflection on the fundamental philosophical standpoint that informs their decisions is conspicuously absent". If Carr's charge holds, presenting the aims of African philosophy of education in such open terms leaves the CAPS without the necessary theoretical foundation to discipline learners in particular, or to address global and domestic problems and challenges as Seepe (2000) hopes.

Amid the diverse but, deep down, so strangely similar genres, which conception of African philosophy should underpin education in post-apartheid South African schools? The author is in no hurry to answer this question, except to highlight possible pathways. One possibility, of course, is to revise and reformulate CAPS, since it operates in the realm of an academic curriculum (Govender & Fataar, 2015). However, that would be retrogressive and unhelpful. The issue, therefore, is how to make an African philosophy of education project meaningful. If such a course is followed, two mechanisms may be considered as ways of moving from where we are to where we ought to be. First, it involves reconceptualisation of African knowledge, i.e. acknowledging that this collective belief has a specific place within the wider field of beliefs. Second, African scholars should recognise professional philosophy for what it is, a free critical inquiry into problems raised by their intellectual and socio-political milieu (Green & Condy, 2016; Hountondji, 1996). Third, universal knowledge would require policymakers to explore ways of developing locally and regionally relevant policy that go beyond narrow provincialisms, but which is consistent with the changing world – the "freedom of movement of knowledge – knowledge in motion" as Mbembe (2016: 37–38) observes.

## 7. Conclusion

The author puts forward a conclusion, Hegel's (1977) dialectical method best understood in terms of the concepts of thesis (the minds), antithesis (the result of the encounter between minds), which together produce a synthesis (the resolution into Western philosophy and African philosophy). According to Hegel's conception, the battle for recognition between human minds leaves no room for cooperation between Western philosophy and African philosophy. The author alters this dialectical process in part, and maintains that endogenous knowledge is the third member of the triad – Western, African and endogenous knowledge – the latter being the unity of the other two. There is a far, nobler prospect of African philosophy of education in post-apartheid South African schools if indigenous knowledge (in *itself*) ceases

to regard itself as independent of Western philosophy (*not-self*). Historically and to date, African philosophy is arguably distinct from and identical to Western knowledge traditions. The cause of disagreement was, and still is, the identity in difference. Western philosophy and African philosophy should bury their narrow differences and “work together, recognising that what they have in common is much more than what separates them” (Budge, 1993: 154) – a unity of a single philosophy, of a single abstract subject matter, careful and systematic thinking (method) and way of life.

## 8. Notes

- According to Hountondji (1996: 60), Bantu philosophy is a myth at work, the myth of primitive unanimity, with its suggestion that in “primitive” societies – that is to say, non-Western societies – everybody always agrees with everybody else. Bantu philosophy is merely “a collective world-view, an implicit, spontaneous, perhaps even unconscious system of beliefs to which all Africans are supposed to adhere” (Hountondji, 1996: 60).
- For our purpose, Raphael (1990: 8) interprets the main tradition of Western philosophy as having had two connected aims: the clarification of concepts, for the purpose of the critical evaluation of beliefs. Put differently, classical Western philosophy can best be described as a theoretical discipline with its own descriptive analysis and normative methods of inquiry.
- For Kanu (2014: 92), philosophy is an “all-inclusive enterprise, a universal activity not limited to whites or blacks, nor confined to the peoples of the West and the East”.
- Briefly, according to Hountondji (1997: 17), “endogenous knowledge evokes the origin of the kind of knowledge identified as an internal product drawn from a given cultural background, as opposed to any other category of knowledge which would be imported from elsewhere”.
- According to Waghid (2001: 210), philosophy of education is a practice to think with clarity and reflection about how educational matters are and what should be done in the realm of education.

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