The "Normative" Concept of Personhood in Wiredu's Moral Philosophy

DOI: https://dx.doi.org/10.4314/ft.v10i1.8
Submission: July 16, 2020 Acceptance: April 1, 2021

Motsamai Molefe, PhD
Centre for Leadership Ethics, University of Fort Hare
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5030-6222

Abstract
The article explores the place and status of the normative concept of personhood in Kwasi Wiredu's moral philosophy. It begins by distinguishing an ethic from an ethics, where one involves cultural values and the other strict moral values. It proceeds to argue, by a careful exposition of Wiredu's moral philosophy, that he locates personhood as an essential aspect of communalism [an ethic], and it specifies culture-specific standards of excellence among traditional African societies. I conclude the article by considering one implication of the conclusion, which is that personhood embodies cultural values of excellence concerning the place and status of partiality in Wiredu's moral philosophy.
Keywords: Afro-communitarianism, agent-centred personhood, Ethic, Ethics, Kwasi Wiredu, Partiality Personhood.

Introduction
The normative concept of personhood is one of the most influential ideas in the tradition of African philosophy. Ifeanyi Menkiti was the first one to proffer a philosophical explication of it in the tradition of African philosophy (MENKITI 1984, see also, MENKITI 2004; WIREDU 2004, 17), in the article "Person and Community in African Traditional African Traditional Thought"[1]. The idea gained prominence in the literature due to one of the perennial debates in African philosophy between the so-called *radical* and *moderate* communitarians, and the new position in the debate *limited communitarianism* (MENKITI 1984; GYEKYE 1992; 1997; MATOLINO 2009; 2014). Gyekye (1992, 103-104) accused Menkiti of defending a radical concept of personhood that entailed an interpretation of Afro-communitarianism that has the political consequence of undermining individual's rights. Matolino accuses both Menkiti and Gyekye of ultimately failing to accommodate rights (MATOLINO 2014). Matolino

[1] Wiredu (2014, 17) informs us that anthropologists, in the 1940s, had already identified this normative conception of personhood.

(2013) argues that Masolo's communitarianism can accommodate rights and, in another place (2014), he defends his own version of communitarianism, limited communitarianism, which he believes can secure them. The essence of his position, in my view, is, whatever contribution or role the community plays, it must consider the facts of human nature as they manifest in what constitutes human beings and it is these facts (at least some of them) that serve as the basis for human rights.

It is crucial to note that Wiredu, in the debate regarding the status and relevance of personhood in Afro-communitarian thought, takes the side of Menkiti. Wiredu speaks approvingly of Menkiti's analysis of the concept personhood. In this light, Wiredu (2009, 16) avers:

> In contemporary African philosophy, as far as I know, the first exposition of this normative conception of a person was given by Menkiti in an article of superlative beauty entitled "Person and Community in African Traditional Thought.

With specific reference to whether Menkiti is a radical communitarian or not, Wiredu, as cited in conversation with Eze and Metz (2016, 74, emphasis mine) makes the following remark:

> Eze: Thank you, professor, for this wonderful opportunity. I begin by asking if you could state more clearly for us your position on the issues of community and individualism, that is, the debate on the primacy of either the community or individual in the African thought system. *Of course I presume you do not agree with Menkiti's radical communitarianism*...
>
> Wiredu: (cuts in) Which scholar is that? No, it is Gyekye who does not agree with Menkiti. *I do not believe that Menkiti said anything extremely radical*. Menkiti's position is that to be a person in Africa, you need to not just be born of human heritage, you need also to have achieved certain socio-ethical standards. *You need ethical maturity, you need to achieve certain standard morally*. That ethical maturity defined in terms of the mores and ethics of the society. Gyekye objects to this because Menkiti seems to be saying that the individual does not have any standing and this leads to extreme communitarianism. *But this is absolutely not the case*; Menkiti didn't say that the individual is not appraised and is not given any room.

Above, Wiredu contests the dominant view in the literature that Menkiti's notion of personhood can be associated with anything radical insofar it as degrades the individual or her rights[2]. Furthermore, Wiredu is explicit that the idea of personhood under consideration is a" normative" one involving specifying standards for ethical maturity or moral excellence. In fact, it is even possible that the ethical idea of personhood has its own way to respond and relate to human dignity (MOLEFE 2020).

On my part, I hope the reader appreciates the obvious fact that to talk of ethical maturity or excellence, as a status assigned to some moral agent, presupposes norms of excellence that will make such evaluation possible in the first place. What is not immediately obvious, however, concerning the nature of the "norms" under consideration is whether they are merely cultural, which signifies their contingency, or universal by nature, which signifies their essentiality for all human cultures. The above idea can be put in more precise terms as follows – (1) does the concept of personhood as it features in Wiredu's moral philosophy embody *cultural* standards of recognizing excellence or (2) *universal* ones?

In this article, I argue that a close analysis of Wiredu's approach and treatment of the idea of personhood leads to the conclusion that he construes it merely as a constellation of cultural values, and never as a strict moral concept. The idea of personhood, at least in Wiredu's analysis, is an embodiment of cultural values that have no necessary application trans-culturally or universally. The point that I am making is not that it is not possible to read Wiredu's philosophy as imagining the idea of personhood as embodying a universal standards of evaluating conduct. Rather, the claim that will emerge is that a careful analysis of his work would reveal a disjuncture where he locates the cultural standards for regulating human conduct on personhood and the universal ones on sympathetic impartiality. It is the insight as captured by this disjuncture in his moral philosophy that I am bringing to our attention.

There are two aims that inform the emergence of this article. On the one hand, it is imagined as an attempt to contribute to the scholarship of Wiredu's African (moral) philosophy. Wiredu is arguably one of the leading scholars of African philosophy. The wealth of his contribution to African philosophy provides many facets of research that require earnest philosophical engagement for the sake of appreciating his scholarship and contributing to the tradition of African philosophy. On the other hand, the

[2] Elsewhere, I independently reach a similar conclusion after a close analysis Menkiti's adumbrations on personhood (MOLEFE 2016). In another place, I further offer what I take to be a plausible reading of Menkiti's moral political philosophy (MOLEFE 2019). Ikuenobe (2017) also seems to reject the idea that Menkiti advocated radical communitarianism, and he also offers what he takes to be a plausible reading of Menkiti.

aim of this article is to contribute to the discourse on personhood. There is no dispute in the literature that the idea of personhood is one of the salient notions in African philosophy. Furthermore, Wiredu has contributed immensely both to African moral philosophy and to the discourse on personhood (see WIREDU 1992; 2004; 2008; 2009)[3]. It will be interesting, therefore, to ascertain the status of personhood in Wiredu's moral philosophy. The same question, I submit, can be posed in relation to Menkiti, Masolo, Ikuenobe, among others. For the present project, I limit myself to Wiredu's moral philosophy.

The major weakness of this article is that it does not go a step further, if its analysis of Wiredu's philosophy is true, to evaluate whether such an approach to personhood is plausible or not. This is the case for two reasons. Firstly, space does not permit the pursuit of both exposition and evaluation of Wiredu's moral philosophy. I also believe that the exposition I am pursuing here would be interesting for those scholars that are familiar with Wiredu's moral philosophy, and specifically, the implications it might have for the place and status of personhood in African moral philosophy. In the final analysis, I will argue that a careful analysis of Wiredu's philosophy regards personhood as a cultural concept, and this view has the meta-ethical implication that the discourse on partiality in African philosophy is generally understood as a non-moral one. I will go on to consider the theoretical implications of this conclusion.

I structure this article as follows. In the first section, I clarify the notion of personhood crucial in this study. I do so because scholars have tended to confuse and conflate different concepts of personhood in the tradition of African philosophy. I distinguish four distinct concepts of personhood in African philosophy. Secondly, I bring to the fore the distinction that Wiredu draws between what he calls an *ethic* and *ethics*. In the third section, I provide evidence from Wiredu's writings that support the view that he regards the idea of personhood as an ethic, and never as ethics. Finally, I consider two implications of this analysis of Wiredu's treatment of the concept of personhood – (1) its implications for the debate on partiality and impartiality and its potential to contribute to the cultural decolonization and the quest for a global ethic.

The Concept(s) of Personhood

Typically, African philosophers identify two notions of personhood: the ontological and normative one (WIREDU 1996; IKUENOBE 2006; METZ 2013; OYOWE 2014). My analysis of the literature demands that we

[3] It is worth noting that Wiredu is one of those philosophers that have played a leading role in drawing a distinction between cultural particulars and universals. It is only apropos and important to evaluate whether personhood, in his philosophy, takes a form of a cultural particular or universal.

notice two distinct ontological and normative notions of personhood (MOLEFE 2019). The first ontological notion refers to me, the author, and you, the reader of this article, as both human beings. Philosophically, we may want to enquire about what metaphysically constitutes the kinds of things we are as human beings. This will amount to a philosophical disquisition of the components of human nature i.e., we will be investigating whether human nature is constituted by physical properties or by a combination of both the physical and spiritual elements (WIREDU 2009; IKUENOBE 2016; KAPHAGAWANI 2004). The debate between Gyekye (1995) and Wiredu (1992) on the nature of *okra*, whether it is entirely spiritual or is a quasi-material property speaks to this idea of personhood (see, KAPHAGAWANI 2004). The ontological notion of personhood is continuous with the ordinary (English) use of the word "person" like when we identify an individual as a person as opposed to a table, stone or animal.

The second ontological notion of personhood pertains to the theme of *personal identity*. The debate here involves accounting for socialisation or personal identity. The debate here, in the Western tradition, is between the liberals and communitarians. Liberalism accounts for personal identity in terms of properties that are intrinsic to the individual like rationality, memory and so on – what Menkiti refers to as the minimalist view of personhood. Communitarians, on the other hand, tend to account for it by emphasising social relationships (NEALE & PATRICK 1990). This debate also manifests in African philosophy, where on the one hand, you have scholars accounting for personhood strictly in relational terms (MBITI 1969; MENKITI 1984), and on the other hand, you have scholars that insist on a balanced view, which accounts for personal identity in terms of both relational and individual properties (GYEKYE 1992; EZE 2009; CHIMAKONAM & AWUGOSI 2020).

It is also crucial to notice that there are two distinct normative notions of personhood in African philosophy. Gyekye (1992) was the first one, in my opinion, to suggest these distinct normative notions (see MOLEFE 2020). Metz (2013, 7) insists that we pay attention to these distinct normative notions of personhood. Recently, Kevin Behrens (2013) wrote an article titled – "The Two Normative Notions of Personhood" – elaborating the distinction between the two normative concepts[4]. He distinguishes between the *patient-centred* and *agent-centred* notions of personhood. The "patient-centred" notion of personhood is tantamount to a talk of moral status. The idea of moral status picks out moral patients,

[4] During the research for my doctoral dissertation, I came to the same conclusion regarding the distinction between the patient-and-agent-centred notions of personhood.

that is, beings of intrinsic value that we owe direct moral duties (TOSCANO 2011). We owe these entities direct moral duties based on some facts about them (DEGRAZIA 2009). In other words, merely because these entities possess certain onto-moral properties, like rationality, capabilities or even sentience, we owe them direct moral duties (DARWALL 1977). The "agent-centred" notion, on the other hand, picks out moral agents characterised by moral excellence (MENKITI 1984, 171). To be called a person, in this latter normative sense, denotes moral praise, honour and admiration for reasons tracking the agent's moral performance or good character (WIREDU 2009, 15; TUTU 1999, 35; EZE 2018).

Both normative notions of personhood, the patient-and-agent-centred, embody their respective forms of respect. In other words, we associate different forms of respect in relation to the two distinct normative notions of personhood. The respect imagined by the patient-centred notion tracks ontology insofar as we respect the agent for possessing particular kinds of ontological properties. The respect imagined is a reaction to this invariant feature of human nature (Metz 2013). On the other hand, the respect characteristic of the agent-centred notion tracks performance, respect varies relative to the proportion (or lack thereof) of performance (METZ 2013; BEHRENS 2013).

Above, I distinguished four distinct concepts of personhood – two ontological ones and two normative ones. The aim of this exposition was to single the one that is pivotal in African thought. It is the normative notion of personhood *qua* the agent-centred one that is salient in the discourse of African philosophy. When scholars of African philosophy talk of personhood, typically, they have this notion in mind. Notice that Gbadegesin (1991) and Wiredu (2009), for example, inform us that this notion is central in African thought. Gyekye (1997) considers it relevant and an important aspect of Afro-communitarianism. Ikuenobe considers it to be the core of Afro-communitarianism. Masolo (2010) takes it to be foundational in African philosophy. It is this notion of personhood that will be the focus of this article particularly as it features in Wiredu's moral philosophy[5].

The aim of this article is to evaluate whether the agent-centred notion of personhood is a cultural or strictly moral concept. Before I make that kind of determination, I begin, next, by drawing a distinction between an ethic and ethics in Wiredu's moral philosophy. This distinction will help us with our aim of properly understanding the status of personhood in Wiredu's moral philosophy.

[5] In my recent publications, I have started urging the literature to pay attention to the patient-centred notion of personhood in African philosophy. This is one of the most neglected aspects of the literature (Molefe 2020).

The aim of this article is to evaluate whether the agent-centred notion of personhood is a cultural or strictly moral concept. Before I make that kind of determination, I begin, next, by drawing a distinction between an ethic and ethics in Wiredu's moral philosophy. This distinction will help us with our aim of properly understanding the status of personhood in Wiredu's moral philosophy.

Ethic and Ethics

The distinction between an ethic and ethics manifests throughout Wiredu's moral philosophy (WIREDU 1992; 1996; 2004; 2005; 2008). The distinction appears to be crucial in his moral exposition of African ethical thought. Several reasons buttress the significance of this distinction. The first reason involves the very fact of the nature of moral philosophy. Being able to grasp and appreciate the distinction between an ethic and ethics is important because it helps us to carefully delineate and delimit the purview of what Wiredu calls the "province of pure morality" (WIREDU 2008, 334). The implication of talking of the province of pure morality points to another province of human existence that is not purely moral.

Secondly, failure to appreciate the distinction between pure morality and the not-so-pure province of morality, Wiredu argues, lies at the heart of the colonial project, specifically as practised by Christian missionaries on African peoples (see, WIREDU 1996: WIREDU 2005). Wiredu's view insists that there is a need for us to realize the distinction among the metaphysical, moral and cultural truths. Even if it turned to be the case that Jesus Christ is the saviour of all mankind, it does not follow that Africans must also necessarily adopt the cultural tendencies of the missionaries as part of the gospel in terms of dress code, how to eat, how to raise children and so on. One can distinguish the work of salvation as a fact of history, a metaphysical consideration, from moral issues like, murder, truthfulness and so on, and cultural ones like dress codes, how to sing, and so on. The major flaw of missionaries was their failure to distinguish the purely ethical from the cultural; they also required new converts to take European modes of cultural expression, which is not part of the gospel.

Finally, the distinction is crucial for differentiating among ethical cultures, in terms, for example, of identifying others as individualistic and others as communitarian (see, WIREDU 1992; 2005). To point out that some ethical orientations are individualistic and others are communitarian is to emphasise cultural differences that serve to frame moral theories – this distinction will be clarified later on in the article.

I have just sketched the reasons that explain the importance of the distinction between an ethic and ethics in Wiredu's moral philosophy. Explaining the importance of the distinction is not the same however as conceptually spelling out the denotation of these important terms in Wiredu's moral philosophy. Below, I explain these terms.

In my view, the distinction between an ethic and ethics appears throughout Wiredu's moral philosophy, but it gets a clearer exposition in his article titled – "On the idea of a global ethic" (WIREDU 2005). Wiredu (2005, 45) begins the article by drawing our attention to the distinction in this fashion - "Because ethics and an ethic are grammatically cognate and are concerned with behaviour, it is easy to conflate the two". Notice that Wiredu is aware of the possible conflation that can emerge because these two terms are grammatically cognate. It is to avoid the possible conceptual conflation that he spends time distinguishing them in the article under consideration. At least two considerations could be drawn from the quotation above.

Firstly, it makes it abundantly clear that we are dealing with two distinct concepts that we must be able to distinguish. Hence, Wiredu urges us to duly note their distinctness. Secondly, the focus of these two concepts is human conduct. These two concepts, in relation to human conduct, embody "different kinds of rules needed in the regulation of human conduct" (ibid). Hence, we can rightly notice that the concepts of an ethic and ethics embody two different rules for regulating human conduct. In other words, the concepts of ethic and ethics deal with two different provinces relating to or evaluating human conduct.

Concerning an ethic and ethics, Wiredu inform us that:

> …an ethic consists of a code or codes of behavior devised for the well-ordering of *specific* human interactions or activities. By contrast, the principles of ethics are necessary laws for human behavior. (ibid, emphasis mine).

In light of the above, we notice that an ethic deals with rules of conduct that are both *local* and *contingent*; whereas, ethics embodies those rules that are *universal* and *necessary*. To say rules are local is to capture their particularity i.e., these rules are true for reasons that have to do with a particular history and its attendant opportunities, limitations and challenges. In other words, to capture these rules as "local" is to point out that these rules were invented or that they emerged as a response to the

socio-political, environmental and economic milieu. Hence, it is appropriate to think of these rules as contingent insofar as they are context-specific-and-dependent, and to appreciate the fact that they are subject to change depending on circumstances. In other words, had circumstances been different, some of these rules would never have emerged. In light of the above adumbrations regarding an ethic, the following comment is not surprising by Wiredu (2005, 46, emphasis mine) regarding an ethic:

> *Every society has its own contingent ways of regulating behavior* … A large assortment of issues are relevant here … By what rules are the social arrangements relating to the relations of the sexes and, in particular, to procreation to be regulated. How are we to welcome newborns into society and initiate them into the arts of purposeful living? In what manner may juniors relate to seniors?

It is beyond doubt that rules relevant in the province of an ethic are particular to each society. Wiredu further describes them as contingent to indicate their particularity. To ask the kinds of questions regarding human conduct, as suggested by Wiredu, like how to raise children, monogamy or polygamy, how to greet, dress and so on, is to be involved on issues pertaining "to a particular culture" (2005, 46). To talk of an ethic is to talk of rules for regulating conduct with regards to how different groupings of people decide to regulate facets of their lives, or what we might call cultural values – these cultural values include customs, taboos, rituals and so on (Wiredu 1996). These cultural values are crucial in their own right, but they are not the same as those of morality "in the strict sense" (2005, 46). The best way to identify cultural rules is by keeping in mind that their authority or binding force is context-specific.

On the other hand, an ethics embodies rules that are "binding on all" human beings or that are "the same everywhere" (WIREDU 2005, 45-46). Wiredu is abundantly clear that "an ethic can be optional; ethics cannot" (2005, 47). Wiredu thinks moral rules in the strict sense ought to be binding on all because they are necessary for a robust human or social existence, in the way that the ones specified above are not. The strict moral rules are necessary for the very survival and continuance of society in a robust or meaningful state. These rules are the very essence that holds the social fabric of society together. In other words, without the rules of ethics society will recede to the Hobbesian state of nature. To exemplify the rules intrinsic in an ethics he uses the example of the value of truth in the social context (Wiredu 1996). Wiredu argues that were we to remove the requirement of truth as a tacit or even explicit condition for all our social engagement, human life would immediately be put in jeopardy. The consequence of such a removal would be that no conversation, promise,

contract, or covenant would have any effect because they would have been stripped of the moral essence that gives them meaningfulness, usefulness and relevance. Social interaction or communication, by removing truth, would be rendered otiose.

From the above analysis, we identify, in Wiredu moral philosophy, two concepts that carve out two distinct human domains of interaction that require regulation. The domain of ethic is cultural, and it regulates by relying on conventions that emerge in light of the natural, social, religious and political circumstances of a group of people. These rules are characterised by optionality, in particular, in relation to cultural outsiders, and they are mutable given changing social circumstances, challenges and opportunities. On the other hand, we have rules that have to do with morality proper, which apply to all human beings and, therefore, they function as universal norms for regulating behaviour.

Above, I distinguished cultural rules (ethic) from proper moral rules (ethics). Below, I proceed to argue that an exposition of Wiredu's moral philosophy construes the notion of personhood as a cultural value, an ethic.

Personhood as a Cultural Value

A number of scholars of African thought tend to regard the idea of personhood as ethics (METZ 2007; VAN NIEKERK 2007; 2013; BEHRENS 2013; IKUENOBE 2017a; 2017b; GYEKYE 2010; MOLEFE 2019; 2020; 2021). Below, in contrast to these scholars of African thought, I set out to demonstrate that Wiredu regards personhood as a *cultural* value, an ethic. To unfold my argument, I will focus on Wiredu's (2008) article titled "Social Philosophy in Postcolonial Africa: Some Preliminaries Concerning Communitarianism and Communalism". Some might wonder why I am doing my exposition in relation to an essay that deals with questions of Afro-communitarianism rather than one dealing specifically with the idea of personhood. I do so for two important reasons.

African scholars tend to construe Afro-communitarianism in terms of personhood (MENKITI 1984; GYEKYE 1992; EZE, 2009; OLATUNJI & KOENANE 2020). The common position is that one of the crucial concepts for explicating Afro-communitarianism is that of personhood. That this is the case is best represented in the debate among radical, moderate and limited communitarians (MENKITI 1992; GYEKYE 1992; MATOLINO 2014). The entire debate centres on the idea of personhood. Hence, talk of Afro-communitarianism is inextricably bound to the idea of personhood. The second reason involves Wiredu's conception of political philosophy. For Wiredu (2009, 10), "politics is applied ethics". In other words, our discussion of communitarianism, as a political view, involves or is based on certain *ethical* considerations. I italicize the word "ethical"

to highlight the ambiguity of the term and to suggest that it will not be surprising that both senses of the term will be crucial in imagining Afro-communitarianism (2008, 338). Below, I proceed to analyze whether the idea of personhood, as it features in Wiredu's moral philosophy, is an ethic or ethics.

For Wiredu, a theory of communitarianism is one that involves a normative theorization concerning what is to count as a good society in the African context (2008, 338). To be able to give a robust conception of Afro-communitarianism, we need to distinguish between morals in the strict sense (ethics) and communalism (as an ethic), though the two are crucial for the project (of communitarianism). Wiredu (2008, 333) makes the following crucial points about communalism. First, he notes that communalism is "the sure foundation" for re-imagining post-colonial societies and their development. If communalism is foundational in re-imagining a robust post-colonial African conception of a good society, then the second thing that is required is for us to define it. Wiredu defines communalism in terms of two features, namely: (1) the structural feature of a society and (2) the emotional-moral bonds that make it functional. Concerning the structural features of this system, Wiredu (2008, 333) comments:

> In general, African societies are founded on kinship relations, which begin from the household and expand to lineage and clan proportions. This is structurally speaking.

Concerning the emotional-moral bonds, Wiredu notes:

> In terms of feeling and sentiment, people are brought up to develop a sense of bonding with large groups of relatives at home and outside it from very early childhood. This evolving sense of bonding is a learning process in which the individual comes more and more to see herself as the center of obligations and rights. At the level of the lineage one is already affiliated with quite a substantial population.

The individual grows up in a social system that locates her in a web of social networks where she enjoys a high degree of social connection with others. One of the outstanding features of being so connected with others is that it is attended by reciprocal obligations and responsibilities designed to meet human needs and to create conditions for human well-being to be possible (MOLEFE 2021). According to Wiredu (2008, 333), the combination of structural and emotional-moral bonds amounts to the "roughest sketch … of African communitarianism".

The second point is crucial, and leads us to the distinction between communalism as an ethic and the golden rule as an ethics. Wiredu thinks of the relationship between communalism (as an ethic) and the golden rule (ethics), not as one of identity, where these should be thought as both dealing with the same rules or principles, but thinks of them in terms of "analogy" (WIREDU 2008, 333, emphasis mine). In this light, he notes:

> Both might be called principles for adjusting the interests of the individual to those of the community. Morality seeks the harmonisation of the interests of the individual with those of the community on the principle of … sympathetic … impartiality. This is what is called the Golden rule in Christian discourse. It is important, by the way, to discourage any impression that the Golden rule is a Western principle. It is, in fact, a global principle. The *analogy* between this principle (the Golden rule) and the principle underlying African communitarianism consists in the fact that the latter also is the quest for the adjustment of certain special interests of the individual to those of community. (WIREDU 2008, 333).

From the above, I hope it is obvious that Wiredu treats communitarianism as an ethic and the Golden rule (sympathetic impartiality) as ethics. According to Wiredu, these principles are analogous in function, but not identical. They both serve the function of adjusting or harmonizing the interests of individuals to those of the community. The one principle, the golden rule, however, is described as "global" as opposed to being Western, Christian or even African; while the other principle, communitarianism, is specifically identified as African. Wiredu's (1996) use of the idea of global, I suggest, should be understood in line with his common parlance of the "universals," which refers to truths that apply trans-culturally. I also bring to the attention of the reader the fact that Wiredu defines Afro-communitarianism in terms of "certain *special* interests".

This characterization of Afro-communitarianism in terms of *special interests* appears to operate on the kinds of values that are distinct from those characterizing the golden rule. Afro-communitarianism operates on the "moral" logic that accommodates *special interests*, whereas the Golden rule operates on the moral logic of equality or impartiality (MOLEFE 2017). The golden rule or sympathetic impartiality rules out *special interests* by accompanying the imagined sympathy with the idea of impartiality. Wiredu (2008, 333) comments in this fashion on the special interests characterizing Afro-communitarianism:

> I call the interests and concerns generated by such issues *special* because they go beyond the province of pure morality (as defined by the principle of sympathetic impartiality or the Golden rule).

The issues covered by Afro-communitarianism are special insofar as they are interests that are culture-specific or cultural in nature. They are "special" because they capture the fact that they arise in specific contexts. That is, it refers to those duties that arise in some contexts and may not arise in others. Wiredu is clear that these issues, an ethic, are *beyond* the province of pure morality. The word "beyond" should not be read to imply that the issues emerging in communitarianism are above or supersede those of pure morality. The word "beyond" is used to capture the fact that they are distinct and outside of the province of pure morality. To give an example of these special interests, Wiredu gives us two examples: the example of borrowing money with the promise to pay it back and the example of mutual aid in agriculture among African societies. The example involving the promise to pay back the borrowed money is regulated by a rule that "applies to everyone in the universe" (WIREDU 2008, 334). The case of mutual aid, on the other hand, where when a farmer, for example, is going to harvest her farm, her neighbours are required to assist, is a special obligation that is prevalent and decisive among some African cultures. The obligation to aid the neighbouring farmer is a special obligation in the sense that it is true for people living in cultures where this requirement is operational, but it is not a universal one. Not to aid another farmer among the Akans, for example, is a "moral" failure, but such a requirement is absent among American farmers and is not regarded as a social failure in that community. Wiredu proceeds to clarify the role of the two (the Golden rule and communalism) in his moral-political scheme.

Wiredu (2008, 334) informs us that "Morality in the strict sense is absolutely essential for the continuation of human society". Without the golden rule that requires us to be mindful of the interests of all others or to show due respect for others' interests, human society *qua* society is in danger (WIREDU 1996). These rules (ethics) are necessary for human existence, but they are not sufficient since they cannot answer all questions occasioned by human existence and interaction. Wiredu is specific about another set of issues that still require an answer for human existence to be robust – he locates this answer, in the African context, on Afro-communitarianism. He asks:

> How shall we train our children, for example? How shall we arrange the relationships between men and women that eventually lead to procreation? How shall we help the bereaved in times of loss of loved ones. (WIREDU 2008, 334).

To make matters clear regarding the nature of the values involved in this discussion of communitarianism, Wiredu (2008, 334) informs us that "These are matters of culture". Therefore, we note that ethics deals with human issues *qua* human survival or flourishing, but it cannot comprehend all the issues occasioned by human existence. Some of the issues occasioned by human existence find their answers within various cultural packages of different groupings of people like communalism in the African context.

Hence, we observe that communalism is characterized by cultural values that offer answers to certain cultural questions that cannot be answered by pure morality. Wiredu proceeds to draw a distinction between values that characterize communalism and those that characterise pure morality. Concerning values in general, he notes that (1) some values are bad and some good, as such, they may be changed or even jettisoned; and (2) he notes that some values "are immutably good" (2008, 335). Morality in the strict sense, or pure morality, is characterised by immutable values. Regarding communalism and the values that attend it, Wiredu (335, emphasis mine) notes: "Communalism is an embodiment of the values of *traditional Africa*", which implies that these are culture-and-context specific values. To describe these values as of "traditional Africa", however, does not quite tell us about their specific nature. The answer to the question pertaining to the nature of values characterizing communalism is found in the idea of personhood. Wiredu (2008, 335, emphasis mine) makes this crucial submission:

> However, no thought experiment is going to reveal to us the components of the communalistic ethic. *It is therefore of great interest that some of the basic communalistic values of traditional African society can be read off the traditional conception of personhood*.

It is crucial to note that Wiredu refers to communalism as an *ethic*. It is also crucial to note that Wiredu informs us that its values, not just some of its values, but some of its *basic* values, can be gleaned from the traditional idea of personhood. It becomes very clear from reading the entire passage that the idea of personhood pertinent here is the agent-centred notion of personhood. This is the case because he speaks of personhood in terms of the agent that "satisfies certain norms" of conduct (ibid). What is the nature of these norms? Wiredu suggests the nature of these norms by pointing to some features that ought to characterise a person in traditional African societies:

> He must be reasonably successful in his line of work enough at least to enable him, jointly with his spouse, to see to the upkeep of his household and to make non-trivial contributions to the well-being of his lineage and community at large. He must show maturity in the way he handles personal relations and bring up his children to develop similar qualities of mind. These are not all the criteria, but they should give a basic idea.

Success in some line of work is crucial for personhood. Furthermore, one must be able to take care of family, lineage and community at large. One must also be married and must have children and raise them well. Wiredu imagines these values to be cultural ones. This point is buttressed by what he says next:

> The question naturally arises whether … modifications would need to be made in the above normative conception of person for the purposes of contemporary society. An affirmative answer seems unavoidable … (2008, 337)

What we can make from the above quotation is the following. Wiredu distinguishes between communalism as an ethic and the golden rule as an ethics. Communalism embodies mutable rules and the golden rule immutable ones. The best way to understand values characterising communalism, at least some of the basic ones, is by analysing the normative notion of personhood. Personhood is characterised by values, if Wiredu is right, that can be *modified* depending on circumstances - and, in fact, he urges us to do so in light of contingencies of contemporary African societies. The rules or values characterising the golden rule are not subject to such a change or modification in relation to changing circumstances. The "norms" characterising personhood are subject to such modifications depending on circumstances, which suggests their contingent (cultural) status.

In the light of the above analysis of Wiredu's moral philosophy, it appears that the notion of personhood manifests in his moral philosophy as an ethic, and never as an ethics. This treatment of this idea of personhood as an ethic manifests in other places as well in Wiredu's moral philosophy. Note, for example, Wiredu (2009, 15, emphasis mine) speaks on this wise regarding this idea of personhood:

> How, then, do matters stand philosophically with the African idioms of normative personhood just referred to? In answering this question we begin by noting, after Kaunda, that to be called a person is to be commended. Inversely, to be called a non-person is, in general, to be downgraded. But such evaluation presupposes *a system of values*. Since the context of such evaluations is nothing short of the entire sphere of human relations, the system of values presupposed cannot be anything short of *an ethic* for a whole society or *culture*.

Philosophically interpreted, Wiredu informs us that the idea of personhood presupposes a "system of values". By now, we know that Wiredu distinguishes between two systems of values, one that is strictly ethical and the other that
is cultural. Thus, to leave matters at the level of asserting that the idea of personhood presupposes a system of values does not take us very far. Wiredu does not leave us hanging over whether the system in question is an ethic or ethics. He proceeds to note that personhood presupposes a system of values for evaluating the entire sphere of relations *in a whole society or culture*. As if this is not enough, he dubs such a system of values an *ethic*, and not an ethics. It is crucial to note that to make sure that we are not confused about the scope of relations to be regulated and evaluated by this system of values, he uses both terms as co-referring terms "an ethic for a whole society *or* culture". In this light, it seems to emerge that Wiredu takes this idea of personhood to be an embodiment of rules regulating what is expected of an individual in African communitarian settings, and not as a universal principle.

One might here object that it is possible that Wiredu holds a mistaken conception of moral philosophy. On the one hand, he advocates an action-centred moral principle of the golden rule; and, on the other, the agent-centred moral approach that is character-based of personhood. These are two competing approaches to morality, and Wiredu must treat both of them as instances of an ethics. Hence, Wiredu is mistaken to treat personhood as a cultural value.

This is an interesting objection, which provides an alternative interpretation to the idea of personhood (though it does not resolve the question of how to adjudicate between the two competing approaches). It suffices for my own project to note that the objection concedes to my interpretation of Wiredu's analysis of personhood. My aim in this analysis is not so much to deny that there are interpretations of personhood that

treat it as a strict moral philosophy (see, METZ 2013; BEHRENS 2013; Ikuenobe 2017; 2018; MOLEFE 2019; 2020). Further, my aim is not to evaluate Wiredu's treatment of personhood whether it is plausible or not. My aim is to explicate Wiredu's treatment of personhood and to determine its place in his moral philosophy. If my analysis is true, it reveals that he regards personhood as an embodiment of cultural values. It is crucial to note that the same conclusion could be drawn concerning Gyekye's treatment of the idea of personhood. It also does not help matters that some leading scholars of personhood also tend to use language that reduces personhood to cultural values. For example, Ikuenobe (2006, 116, emphasis mine) captures values characteristic of personhood, thus:

> … the African conception of personhood is based on an *intragroup* moral and social recognition … (it refers) to descriptions of *intragroup recognition* … The recognition of a person implies the existence of (satisfied) *group standards* for action and achievement.

Whatever else could be read into this analysis of personhood, it is undeniable that personhood is construed as a function of satisfying standards of a particular group. The language used to talk of these values is not that of values that are universal, but those that are culture or group specific.

Implications of Personhood as a Cultural Category

Below, I consider two implications that flows from this particular interpretation of Wiredu's view of personhood in his moral system. I explore the importance of a culture-based view of personhood for (1) the meta-ethical debate on partiality or impartiality and (2) cultural decolonization and the search for a global ethic. I begin by discussing the cultural construal of personhood and its implications for the debate on partiality and impartiality.

Remember that Wiredu holds the view that morality, if it is to count as morality at all, ought to be universal. In all instances, in his analysis, Wiredu invokes sympathetic impartiality or the golden rule as proper moral theory. The principle of sympathetic impartiality, for Wiredu (1992), is not a local one, or one that only applies to the Akans or Africans, it is true for every culture, and has binding force over all of them. Since morality applies to all, it is not surprising that it is characterised in terms of sympathetic *impartiality*. The idea of impartiality is a meta-ethical one referring to how one construes the nature of moral properties or rules in that they must equally act in ways that manifests any prioritization of some subset of individuals (WOLF 1992; COTTINGHAM 1983). In this regard,

Wiredu is overtly on the side of characterising morality in terms of impartiality (see, MOLEFE 2017; 2021). This is not a surprising feature of his approach to morality since morality is about equally regarding the interests (or, the well-being) of all moral patients (WIREDU 2005). The reason for this characterization of ethics in the strictest sense with impartiality is that we have no non-arbitrary basis to assign more value to interests of some sub-set of individuals over others, all things being equal. As a result, in our distribution of sympathy, we should do so without arbitrary confines or favouritism. A genuine moral agent does not take their own interests as more important than those of others. To put matters in a more sophisticated moral parlance, the reasons or aims for acting in terms of sympathetic impartiality are agent-neutral (MACNAUGHTON & RAWLING 1996). The most important consideration in morality (in the strict sense) is promoting the interest of *anyone* and, if possible, of everyone so far as is possible; and, to operate on the understanding that the interests of all moral patients matter equally.

The idea of personhood, at least as understood by Wiredu, is overtly characterized by partiality. That personhood embodies partiality is demonstrated by how the duties he associates with partiality prioritizes special obligations. Remember, Wiredu (2009, 16) holds a person to be one that manifests "a sense of responsibility to household, lineage and society at large". Anyone who would distribute obligation to the society at large whilst neglecting his family and lineage will be considered to be "morally" deficient. The idea I am pointing to is that our duties, in lieu of the idea of personhood, are stronger towards those close to us than towards strangers. Wiredu (1992, 200) captures the partialism characterizing personhood in this fashion:

> What, then, in its social bearings, is the Akan ideal of personhood? It is the conception of an individual who through mature reflection and steady motivation is able to carve out a reasonably ample livelihood for self, family, and a potentially wide group of kin dependents, besides making substantial contributions to the well-being of society at large. The communalistic orientation of the society in question means that an individual's image will depend rather crucially upon the extent to which his or her actions benefit others than him/herself, not, of course, by accident or coincidence but by design. The implied counsel, though, is not one of unrelieved self-denial, for the Akans are well aware that charity further afield must start at home. (WIREDU 1992, 200)

In this passage, Wiredu's aim is to spell out the implications of the normative notion of personhood. He is very specific about the scope of the ideals under consideration – the *Akan* idea of personhood. The scope is culture-specific and not universal. A person is one that has a truckload of other-regarding duties, but I advise the reader to note the *order of priority* associated with the dispensation of these duties. The obligations move from a self, to family, to the wide group of kin dependents and to the society at large. That the order of priority is intrinsically partialist in Wiredu's analysis is captured by what he says next – the idea that among the Akans there is a maxim "that charity *must* start at home". It is crucial to recognise that this maxim imposes a hierarchy among moral patients. This prioritisation of special relationships is intrinsic in the idea of personhood. It is crucial to note that we are told that our duties have to start with our close relations before they go to strangers or the society at large. It is important to note the language Wiredu employs to capture the priority attending the dispensation is imperative (must), not merely suggestive. The idea that one *must* start at home denotes that it is obligatory for him, in this culture, to prioritise their special relationships. The point of this analysis is to show that the idea of personhood is characteristically partial.

The second implication associated with personhood construed strictly as a cultural category revolves around what it means to be an *African* in a way that has implications for the question of cultural decolonization and the discourse of a global ethic. *Cultural decolonization* roughly involves the recognition that different groupings of peoples tend to be characterized by certain rituals, practices, customs, institutions and so on, which tend to be definitive of their identity as a group. These features of each cultural group are characterized by two important properties. On the one hand, they are contingent and, on the other, they are non-moral (Wiredu 1992). That is (in terms of contingency) these are the kinds of features that in the unfolding of time have come to characterize this group and continue to take new forms as the group persists. Consider, as an example, the practice of *lobola* among the Zulu people of South Africa. The practice is still an essential component of effecting a marriage, but often literal cows are no longer required, cash money is an acceptable form of social exchange. In terms of non-morality, one cannot say, of such practices, rituals and so on, that they are either right or wrong. These are morally neutral aspects of human conduct, which are merely permissible. Consider the same practice of *lobola* as a form of effecting marriage. One cannot say it is immoral either to practice or even not to practice it as a form of effecting the union of two families – it is a cultural contingency invented to imagine how to formally organize families in some African cultures.

If personhood is an ethic represents an answer to the question – what is an African? In this sense, we asking of those cultural practices, rituals, norms of conduct expected and characteristic of African people. The discourse of personhood provides us an opportunity to pursue an African identity by drawing from cultural practices salient among African cultures or to innovate on extant ones or create entirely new ones. The focus on ethics can create the problem of cultural colonization where we allow the influence of dominant cultures to take over our own cultural world. In this light, we can challenge African people to pursue personhood in a sense of acquiring and developing habits associated with African cultures *qua* standards of cultural excellence. (The examples used in what follows make sense in the South African context and situation). Moreover, we can directly associate these cultural habits with institutions of our societies.

Consider the fact that majority of cultural practices associated with personhood like *lebolo* (the process of preparing young men (and women, sometimes) to become adults are not recognized by any social institutions of our society. In other words, in a country where majority of individuals believe in such practices, they remain marginal. Consider the fact that holidays associated with African cultures are generally not recognized by the state and social institutions at all only the Christian calendar with Easter holidays, Christmas, among others, are officially recognized. Our African culture, with its own conception of time (as we use the Gregorian calendar), important seasons in it and essential rituals associated with them (seasons) remain socially marginalized. It is hard to be an African in Africa because rituals, practices and customs associated with a constellation of cultural values associated with personhood remain marginal. I throw light on Wiredu's treatment of personhood as a cultural concept for the theoretical and practical implications it might have if we were to allow African cultures to take root and be taken seriously.

To appreciate the importance of personhood as a cultural category one can think of it in terms of what the concept of *li* (ritual) does in Confucian ethics. Note this commentary by Yinghua Lu (2020: 71).

> Compared with *ren* (仁 humaneness), *yi* (義 righteousness) and other Confucian values which possess complex philosophical meanings in both depth and abstraction, *li* (禮 ritual propriety) has a noticeable sense of practical 'concreteness.' In order to understand the virtues of *ren* as love-care and *yi* as duty-righteousness, one needs to reflect on them. Besides, *ren* and *yi* do not directly prescribe people's concrete behavior in specific circumstances. Comparatively, one could follow the prescriptions of *li* just by externally knowing ritual protocols. In order to be practiced by people, li must be obvious enough to everyone, including those who have no interest in philosophical thinking as a speculative enterprise.

To appreciate personhood as a cultural concept, it demands the reification of cultural institutions that will specify and concretize protocols of social or ritual propriety. This will serve as a cultural capital that a people can draw and innovate from in imagining, negotiating and contributing in their own cultural world and the world at large. The concept of personhood as a specification of ritual propriety will embody rules and rituals specifying what constitutes respectful forms of dress, eating, courtship, communication, greetings, relating to elders, mourning, selecting leaders, relating to authorities, managing disputes, and so on.

The concept of personhood understood as an embodiment of cultural standards of excellence is relevant not only for imagining, creating and maintaining an African identity or even identities, it also useful as a resource that can contribute to discourses on global ethic. Roughly, a *global ethic* refers to conventions that ought to regulate social exchanges and encounters at an international arena (WIREDU, 2005; OKEJA, 2012). The reader will remember that Hans Kung (1997) grounds the global ethic on the view that the Golden rule is a universal principle that regulate interaction and transactions at an international level like the United Nations and so on. Okeja (2012) draws from Wiredu's sympathetic impartiality to imagine an African conception and contribution to the search for a global ethic. On my part, I suggest that a cultural resource of excellence, in the form of the concept of personhood, could serve as a useful resource insofar as it could point to some of the features of African that could be useful in facilitating global interactions.

It remains to be seen, in a future project, how the concept of personhood, as an embodiment of cultural standards of excellence, could contribute to the search for a global ethic. So far as I am aware in the literature, the concept of personhood, as an ethic, has not been extended to imagine how it can contribute to cultural decolonization and a global ethic. If Africans are to have a meaningful presence, it is crucial that the social conventions that characterize our social engagements are informed by indigenous resources like that of personhood.

From the above then we can come to the following conclusion. On the one hand, morality in the strict sense applies to all cultures. The obligations engendered by ethics are not optional. We further note that ethics, as captured by the golden rule, embodies the meta-ethical stance of impartiality. On the other hand, we note that the idea of personhood is characterised by culture specific values (or, standards of excellence). The idea of personhood is also characterised by partiality as a feature of an ethic characteristic of Africans. We also noted the potential it has to inform a meaningful discourse of cultural decolonization. We also made some comments about how personhood as a cultural concept of excellence can bolster our search for a global ethic (or, at least it can contribute to such a search). The aim of unfolding the implications of the cultural concept of personhood is for the sake of highlighting the importance of building a robust culture in imagining the future of Africa. A robust ethics must be supported by a robust ethic, hence, consistently, Wiredu juxtaposes his discussion of sympathetic impartiality (ethics) with personhood (ethic).

Conclusion

This article was engaged primarily in the exposition of Wiredu's moral philosophy. The aim was to analyse Wiredu's moral philosophy to determine the place and status it assigns the normative idea of personhood, whether it is a cultural universal (ethics) or cultural particular (ethic). Ethics embodies intrinsically obligatory moral rules that are necessary for the very survival and flourishing of humanity as a whole. An ethic embodies context-dependent rules for regulating human conduct. In the final analysis, I argued, through an exposition of Wiredu's moral philosophy that Wiredu is best read as regarding the idea of personhood as a communalistic one; that is, as a cultural particular (ethic). We further discussed two implications associated with this cultural view of personhood. On the one hand, I noted that partiality is an inherent feature of the discourse of personhood. In this light, we also note that the idea of partiality in Wiredu's moral philosophy is not a moral category in the strictest sense, but rather a cultural particular. We also noted that the cultural interpretation of personhood might have positive contribution for the quest of cultural decolonization and a search for a global ethic.

Relevant Literature

1. BEHRENS, K. "'Two "Normative' Conceptions of Personhood," [Quest], pp103-118, 2013. Vol 25. No 1 - 2. Paperback.
2. Brennan, A. and Lo, Y. "Environmental Ethics," [The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy], N.P, March 2011 Web. Accessed June 2018.
3. Bujo, Benezet. [Foundations of an African Ethic: Beyond the Universal Claims of Western Morality], 2001. The Crossroad Publishing Company: New York. Paperback.
4. EZE, O. M. "Menkiti, Gyekye, and Beyond: Towards a Decolonisation of African Political Philosophy," [Filosofia Theoretica], pp1–17, 2018. Vol 7. No. 2.
5. EZE, O. M & METZ, T. "Emergent Issues African Philosophy: A Dialogue with Kwasi Wiredu," [Philosophia Africana], pp73–86, 2016. Vol 17, No 2. Web.
6. GYEKYE, K. "Person and Community in African Thought," [Person and Community: Ghanaian Philosophical Studies, 1, Kwame GYEKYE & Kwasi WIREDU Eds.], pp101 – 122, 1992. Council for Research in Values and Philosophy: Washington DC. Paperback.
7. GYEKYE, K. [Tradition and Modernity], 1997. Oxford University Press: Oxford. Paperback.
8. GYEKYE, K. [Beyond Cultures: Perceiving a Common Humanity: Ghanaian Philosophical Studies], 2004. Accra: The Ghana Academy of Arts and Sciences. Paperback.
9. Gyekye, Kwame. "African Ethics," [The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy], N.P, June 2010. January 2013. Web.
10. IKUENOBE, P. "The Idea of Personhood in Chinua Achebe's Things Fall Apart," [Philosophia Africana], pp 117 – 131, 2006. Vol 9. No. 2. Web.
11. IKUENOBE, P. "Relational Autonomy, Personhood, and African Traditions," [Philosophy East and West], pp1005–1029, 2015. Vol 65. No 2. Web.
12. JANZ, B. [Philosophy in an African Place], 2009.Lexington Books: Toronto. Paperback.
13. KAPHAGAWANI, D. "African Conceptions of a Person: A Critical Survey," [A Companion to African Philosophy, Kwasi WIREDU Ed.], pp332–422, 2004.Blackwell Publishing: Oxford. Paperback.
14. MASOLO, D. [Self and Community in a Changing World], 2010.Indiana University Press: Indianapolis. Paperback.
15. Matolino, B. [Personhood in African Philosophy], 2014.Cluster Publications: Dorpspruit. Paperback.

16. Menkiti, I. “Person and Community in African Traditional Thought,” [African Philosophy: An Introduction, Richard WRIGHT Ed.], pp171–181, 1984.University Press of America: Lanham. Web.
17. MENKITI, I. “On the Normative Conception of a Person,” [A Companion to African Philosophy, Kwasi WIREDU Ed.], pp324–331, 2004.Blackwell Publishing: Oxford. Paperback.
18. METZ, T. “Toward an African Moral Theory,” [The Journal of Political Philosophy], pp321–341, 2007. Vol 15. No 2. Web.
19. METZ, T. “Two Conceptions of African Ethics in the Work of D. A. Masolo,” [Quest], pp7–15, 2013. Vol 25. No. 1 – 2. Paperback.
20. MOLEFE, M. “Revisiting the Debate Between Gyekye-Menkiti: Who is a Radical Communitarian,” [Theoria], pp37–54, 2016. Vol 63. No 3. Web
21. MOLEFE, M. “An African Perspective on the Partiality and Impartiality Debate: Insights from Kwasi Wiredu’s Moral Philosophy,” [South African Journal of Philosophy], pp470-482, 2017. Vol 36 No. 4. Web
22. MOLEFE, M. [An African Philosophy of Personhood, Morality and Politics], 2019.Palgrave MacMillan: New York. Paperback.
23. MOLEFE, M. [An African Ethics of Personhood and Bioethics: A Reflection on Abortion and Euthanasia], 2020. Palgrave MacMillan: New York. Paperback.
24. MOLEFE, M. [Partiality and Impartiality in African Philosophy], Forthcoming.Lexington Books: New York. Web.
25. MUNYAKA, M. & MOTHLABI, M. “Ubuntu and its Socio-moral Significance,” [African Ethics: An Anthology of Comparative and Applied Ethics, Felix MUROVE Ed.], pp324–331, 2009.University of KwaZulu Natal Press: Pietermaritzburg. Paperback.
26. MUSSCHENGA, A. “The Debate on Impartiality: An Introduction.” [Ethical Theory and Moral Practice], pp1-10, 2005. Vol 8 No 1/2. Web.
27. OKEJA, U. [Normative Justification of a Global Ethic: A Perspective from African Philosophy], 2013.Lexington Books: New York. Paperback.
28. OYOWE, A. “Personhood and the Strongly Normative Constraint,” [Philosophy East and West], pp783-801, 2018. Vol 68. No 3. Web.
29. POJMAN, L. “What is Ethics?,” [Ethical Theory: Classic and Contemporary Readings, Louis POJMAN Ed.], pp483–498, 2006.Wadsworth: London. Paperback
30. RAMOSE, M. [African Philosophy through Ubuntu], 1999.Mond Books: Harare. Paperback.

31. SHUTTE, A. [Ubuntu: An Ethic for a New South Africa], 2001.Cluster Publications: Pietermaritzburg. Paperback.
32. SINGER, P. [Practical Ethics], 1979. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge. Paperback.
33. TUTU, D. [No Future without Forgiveness], 1999.Random House: New York. Paperback.
34. Wall, Stephen. "Perfectionism in Moral and Political Philosophy," [The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy], N.P, June 2012. Web. March 2019.
35. WIREDU, K. "Moral Foundations of an African Culture," [Person and Community: Ghanaian Philosophical Studies, 1, Kwasi WIREDU & Kwame. GYEKYE Eds.], pp192–206, 1992.The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy: Washington DC. Paperback.
36. WIREDU, K. "Reply to English/Hamme," [Journal of Social Philosophy], pp234-243, 2006. Vol 27. No 1. Web.
37. WIREDU, K. "Introduction: African Philosophy in Our Time," [A Companion to African Philosophy, Kwasi WIREDU Ed.], pp1-27.Blackwell Publishing: Oxford. Paperback.
38. WIREDU, K. "On the Idea of a Global Ethic," [Journal of Global Ethics]. pp45–51, 2005. Vol 1. No 1. Web.
39. WIREDU, K. "Social Philosophy in Postcolonial Africa: Some Preliminaries Concerning Communalism and Communitarianism," [South African Journal of Philosophy], pp332–339, 2008. Vol 27. No 2. Web.
40. WIREDU, K. "An Oral Philosophy of Personhood: Comments on Philosophy and Orality." [Research in African Literatures], pp8–18, 2009. Vol 40. No 3. Paperback.
41. WOLF, S. "Deconstructing Welfare: Reflections on Stephen Darwall's Welfare and Rational Care," [Utilitas], pp415–426, 2006. Vol 18. No 2. Web.
42. VAN NIEKERK, J. "In Defence of an Autocentric Account of Ubuntu," [South African Journal of Philosophy], pp 365–368, 2007. Vol 26. No. 4 Web.
43. VAN NIEKERK, J. [*Ubuntu and Moral Theory*], 2013. University of Witwatersrand: Johannesburg. Web.