

Kwasi Wiredu: Theorist of Conceptual Decolonization

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Kwasi Wiredu was a pivotal modern African philosopher who passed on in 2022. In 2021, Barry Hallen published a monograph on this revered Ghanaian thinker that analyzes his various discursive preoccupations and conceptual development. However, Hallen seems more concerned with establishing Wiredu's merits as an analytic philosopher than with focusing on his contributions to African philosophy as a whole. In evaluating Wiredu as a first-rate thinker, this essay critiques the somewhat limited focus of Hallen's book while also offering a much broader analysis of Wiredu's contributions to modern African philosophy.

Key words: African philosophy; Afrocentricity; conceptual decolonization; John Dewey, Willard Van Orman Quine; Kwasi Wiredu

1 Beyond Analytic Philosophy

In his introduction to *Reading Wiredu*, Barry Hallen confirms that Kwasi Wiredu, who passed on January 6, 2022, “has been recognized as one of the most important philosophers of Africa for many years” (Hallen 2021: 1).¹ According to Paulin Hountondji, his equally accomplished Beninese counterpart, Wiredu was simply “the greatest” of the famed universalist school of African philosophy (Hountondji cited in Osha 2022).²

In view of Wiredu's recent passing at the age of ninety in Tampa, Florida, this essay bears two main objectives. First, it serves as a review of Barry Hallen's *Reading Wiredu* (2021). Second, it re-evaluates Wiredu's more substantive contributions to African philosophy. Some of Hallen's major assertions are assessed in conjunction with other discursive aims. In particular, this essay considers how Wiredu should be received as an African philosopher and how his work features in the conversations Africa-centered philosophers are having amongst themselves. In other words, it seeks to re-claim some of the Africanity of Wiredu's philosophy, often missed by Hallen's work.

The opening passages of Hallen's book set the tone for his over-arching *problematique*, which is to establish Wiredu's stature and credentials beyond the often contested confines of African philosophy. While there are some claims to be made for Hallen's reading of Wiredu as an analytic philosopher, the validity of those claims is undermined by Wiredu's espousal of what he calls “a genetic methodology” (Hallen 2021: 1). This methodology is derived from his critique of W.V.O.

Quine's work. This approach accomplishes two objectives simultaneously: broadening the scope of his work beyond that of a mere African philosopher, and also serving to increase his appeal as a probable analytic philosopher.

As such, Hallen's view is that "Wiredu is much more than an African philosopher who does African philosophy," adding that, "he has important things to say about academic philosophy generally-regarding the philosophy of language, ontology, epistemology, ethics, and social and political philosophy"(Hallen 2021: 2). This may sound plausible at a certain level, but such an assertion warrants a re-consideration of Wiredu's entire oeuvre.

The more obvious implication of Hallen's claim is that African philosophy needs to be defined and confined solely in relation to western provenance. The point of African philosophy and other philosophical inheritances that have been othered in the analytic tradition is that if they are not accepted by hegemonic western readings, then they are not worthy of attention. A broader implication that follows from Hallen's claim is that philosophy retains the colonially structured binaries of center/periphery, tradition/modernity, savage/civil, and so on. Finally, Hallen's view absolves (western) philosophy of the ethical necessity for constant and stringent self-reflexivity. It also needs to rid itself of a self-endowed, Archimedean pedestal, fervently contested and debunked in innumerable post-structuralist/deconstructionist critiques (Derrida³, 1994; Foucault 1974, 1977, 1980, 1991).⁴ But African traditions of thought question and subvert this constricted scope of philosophy. This is why it is important to read Wiredu within the African context. And through this lens, his idea of decolonization needs to be addressed.

In western academia, there has always been some resistance to the idea of philosophy within indigenous African cultural formations or supposedly pre-literate societies. Undoubtedly, this resistance has constrained the resourcefulness of contemporary African philosophers. Initially, Wiredu himself must have experienced the stifling effects of this pernicious resistance. In his research papers published in *Second Order: An African Journal of Philosophy* (based at the University of Ife, Nigeria, now called Obafemi Awolowo University), Wiredu concentrated on W.V.O. Quine's work in his earliest academic writings. Quine had proffered "a thesis intended to re-define and restrict the meaning of existence" (Hallen 2021:3). Ultimately, Wiredu did not agree with Quine's conclusions based on formal philosophical and linguistic differences.

Wiredu commenced his studies in philosophy in 1952 at the University College of the Gold Coast, which became Ghana five years later. He then proceeded to Oxford University, where he completed a thesis titled "Knowledge, Truth and Reason" under Gilbert Ryle's supervision. Being at least bilingual, Wiredu had to grapple with the central questions and preoccupations of the philosophy of language during his time at Oxford. According to Wiredu, "philosophical analysis elucidates thought and discourse by breaking down concepts and their constituent parts and also exhibiting their relations with associated concepts. It also studies various structures of language and the manner in which linguistic elements gain connection with extra-linguistic reality" (Wiredu cited in Hallen 2021: 20). This insight would eventually lead him to re-evaluate and (in)validate the transcultural attributes of certain philosophical concepts. Quine's work had provided the basis for pursuing this particular project.

As mentioned earlier, Wiredu did not see himself as an analytic philosopher when he explored a genetic methodology inspired by the thought of John Dewey, the American pragmatist. In clarifying his own understanding of the genetic methodology, Wiredu states that we ought to consider “the fundamental features of our conceptual framework as a cumulation of developments arising out of the needs of life in its transactions with the environment” (Wiredu cited in Hallen 2021: 21).

Hallen writes, “genetic methodology is thereby distinguished by the practice that it goes deeper into human being than what is conventional in analytic philosophy” (Hallen 2021: 23). In the Afterword of his book, Hallen states that Wiredu is concerned amongst other things with confronting and disproving accounts of an endogenous “African intellect that could produce little of philosophical merit. He does not do this on the basis of rhetoric. Instead, he undertakes a subtle and exacting analyses of Africa’s indigenous cultures to demonstrate that their languages, beliefs and practices are reasonable have philosophical merit”(Hallen 2021: 23).

Hallen’s assessment only provides a partial view of Wiredu’s impact. Even if the ultimate intention might have been to establish that Wiredu is more than merely an analytic philosopher, the structure and arguments of Hallen’s book claim that Wiredu is indeed an analytic philosopher and might be taken seriously as such. It seems that Hallen is more concerned with enshrining Wiredu’s work as part of the hegemonic western heritage. In his framing the problem of Africanity and a decolonizing subjectivity, Hallen’s framework is clearly insufficient to grant Wiredu the kind of voice that is required for Wiredu’s decolonization project. And for African philosophers, it is this aspect of his work that carries more weight. Let it be noted that a recent book on Paulin Hountondji by Franziska Dübgen and Stefan Kupien (2019)⁵ with the provocative subtitle “African Philosophy as Critical Universalism,” also seeks to establish the Beninese philosopher’s credentials beyond an apparently confining ghetto of African philosophy.⁶

If indeed we only get a partial representation of Wiredu’s centrality to contemporary African philosophical discourse, then the occasion of his recent passing offers an opportunity to re-read him appropriately and perhaps a little more critically. In my book, *Wiredu and Beyond: The Text, Writing and Thought in Africa* (2005),⁷ I argued that Wiredu’s lack of familiarity with postcolonial theory and Afrocentric discourse has been quite delimiting for his project of conceptual decolonization. Undoubtedly, for a decolonizing postcolonial consciousness, it is necessary to engage with Fanonian epistemology (1963, 1967)⁸, Walter Rodney’s critiques of western structures of global dominance, and Cheikh Anta Diop’s radical historiography (Diop 1974, 1981, 1987, 1991)⁹ in order to fashion a sufficiently emancipatory and an appropriately decolonizing subjectivity (Cronon 1955, 1981; Doormont, 2005).¹⁰

Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o, the Kenyan novelist and cultural theorist, argued that any project of intellectual and linguistic decolonization is necessarily a vast operation involving a global vision and awareness. Wa Thiongo, whose project of linguistic decolonization is similar to Wiredu’s, would eventually publish some of his novels in Gikuyu as a way of addressing the practical demands of his thesis. Wa Thiongo argued that decolonization was an elaborate project of mental recuperation starting with language. The previously colonized had to re-learn to think and act in her own language. Paulin Hountondji’s moving tribute to Wiredu—published in *L’Evenement Precis* on February 2, 2022—captures some of the magnitude of this conceptual enterprise as well as the laborious and inspiring

challenges on the African continent that pertain to the birthing of conceptual decolonization as a project. For Hountondji in particular, this entailed forging links with African philosophers across the continent to address matters of collective interest. It was agreed that Africans intent on various projects of intellectual decolonization (Diop; Wa Thiongo) simply needed to translate supposedly universal-western-philosophical concepts in their indigenous languages. Eventually, Wiredu succeeded in publishing an article in Twi, an indigenous Ghanaian language, entitled *Papa ne Bone*, which means Good and Evil.

To be sure, the implications of Wiredu's conceptual inputs on approaches such as "genetic methodology" and conceptual decolonization ought to be re-assessed in view of what possibilities they might offer in charting fresh courses in African philosophy. Indeed, in reassessing Wiredu's work on "genetic methodology" and conceptual decolonization for our context, a few key historical realities need to be considered, namely the primacy of the pre-Socratic—and in fact ancient Egyptian—philosophical tradition in its essentially radical formulation. Other variables include the colonial intrusion, the violent paradigmatic interruptions it caused, and finally, the obviously disorienting ambiguities of modernity. These are important factors to be considered when attempting to fashion a modern African philosophical template.

Any African philosopher needs to pose the question: Is the western orientation in philosophy equipped to address the myriad problems of Africanity and the incredible devastation wrought by the colonial invasion? According to the vista provided by Diop's liberating historiography, it simply isn't. Diop debunked the western myth that Africa was devoid of God, history, morality, and consciousness in a series of transdisciplinary studies spanning history, anthropology, linguistics, and archaeology. As such, a spirited internal questioning of the discipline in its contemporary rendition is necessary. Wiredu embarked on this much-needed mission, but his efforts were, arguably, not nearly deep nor extensive enough.

2 Conceptual Decolonization as Radical Praxis?

Wiredu was arguably the most influential Anglophone thinker in Africa. His impressive intellectual stature stems from his seminal work on 'conceptual decolonization.' Conceptual decolonization is concerned with the systematic subversion of western concepts, ideas and structures of knowledge embedded in the modern African *episteme* that either have little utility for the African continent or have been detrimental to African growth and advancement. In pursuing this particular epistemological project, Wiredu's scope and terms of reference are quite specific. His Akan background provides the epistemic and linguistic canvas to explore a feasible synthesis between African and western cultures in a bid to hoist Africans out of the existential and epistemic dilemmas caused by the colonial encounter.

Wiredu's project of conceptual decolonization is elaborated in two major books *Philosophy and an African Culture* (1980) and *Cultural Universals and Particulars: An African Perspective* (1996). At a glance, it would appear that Wiredu's project is of a purely philosophical import as he focuses on well-known

philosophical concepts such as ‘truth,’ ‘mind,’ ‘language,’ ‘democracy,’ and ‘morality.’ However, the significance of his approach immediately assumes greater clarity when faced with the challenge of rebuilding African societies and epistemic frameworks in the wake of the colonial intervention.

In order to successfully embark on conceptual decolonization as prescribed by Wiredu, at least three kinds of competencies are needed. First, a knowledge of western cultures and languages together with their disruptive effect on subject cultures; second, a keen familiarity with indigenous cultures and languages prior to their infiltration by western traditions; and third, the possession of the conceptual nimbleness and aptitude needed to confront the often obfuscating colonial legacy. By establishing this blueprint, Wiredu opened up a channel not only to interrogate the lingering effects of the colonial encounter, but also one by which a diverse range of modern projects can be undertaken. In conceptual terms, his project is historical, metaphilosophical and regenerative, and this is why it can be applied to a seemingly infinite array of African contexts.

Unlike many radical nativists who prefer to see nothing of value in the colonial encounter and western cultures generally, Wiredu’s contribution involves a dispassionate assessment of the current existential situation in Africa and a solemn contemplation of the conceptual options available to the decolonizing as well as the modernizing consciousness. He thus poses the fundamental question: What can we recuperate from our past while keeping what is useful in the present? In this manner, the survival of the African subject, which from this perspective is largely existential, becomes paramount. But the apparent simplicity of the framing of this question obviously carries considerable philosophical value and utility. Wiredu’s project of conceptual decolonization encompasses both metaphilosophical and existential dimensions. These often interchangeable dimensions are vital for the African subject’s negotiation of the often perplexing intricacies of hybridized forms of modernity.

Wiredu’s understanding of conceptual decolonization also shifted the conceptual moorings of the debate on political decolonization significantly. The latter had to be accompanied by an elaborate exercise in mental emancipation. Only then could African subjects foster a sense of collective dignity, restore forms of blemished consciousness, and equip themselves with the necessary tools to face the future with renewed vigor. In other words, it involved an annihilation of colonized subjectivity. Decolonization had to incorporate a therapeutic component to heal broken selves and indeed broader forms of consciousness. To facilitate this shift, Wiredu offered critiques of both western-inspired modernity and its general philosophical heritage, on the one hand, and indigenous African culture, on the other.

Wiredu also interrogates the divide between tradition and modernity in African—particularly Akan, Ghanaian—contexts. Wiredu does not unduly romanticize the supposed magnificence of ancient African cultures and traditions. Instead he is selective in accepting parts of them he finds useful and then repudiating others that impede the course of development in Africa. For instance, he discourages the widespread African practice of polygamy as it is simply impractical within the context of a modern economy. Wiredu dissects concepts in western philosophy in relation to Akan culture in modern-day Ghana. He analyzes concepts such as God, Mind, Morality, Modernity, Marxism, and Truth while taking into account African specificities and historical trajectories (Wiredu 1996, 1995). Wiredu essentially re-examines those western philosophical concepts within Akan

conceptual frameworks to see if they make any sense. As mentioned earlier, Wiredu is not uncritical of aspects of Akan traditional culture that he deems to be counter-productive, nor is he eulogistic in relation to unhelpful or unnecessary western methods, concepts and ideas. What he attempts, instead, is a sort of cultural synthesis between Euromodernity and a traditional African culture. This conceptual approach has been very influential in most of Anglophone Africa particularly in West and East Africa. In these two regions, there have been numerous academic treatises written on his work at various levels attesting to the enduring impact of his pivotal insights.¹¹

Nonetheless, African philosophy, as such, seems removed from the hotbed of decolonization even when Wiredu's project of conceptual decolonization provides an undoubtedly important approach to the topic. For philosophy to be relevant to the practices of everyday life in Africa, it has to be embedded in, directed, and defined by everyday struggles and experiences. However not all philosophical trends in Africa are seemingly removed from everyday realities. For instance, the Southern African concept of *ubuntu* is constantly bandied about the public realm, as opposed to being limited to the discourses circulating only within the ivory tower.

3 Radical Formulation of the African Philosophical Tradition

Afrocentric theory locates ancient Kemet as the site that birthed philosophy, and in fact, civilization as a whole. It attempts a total re-fabrication of the entire conceptual apparatus dealing with the African subject as an experiential and philosophical being. This wide-ranging operation works at many levels and in the following ways: a re-consideration of the question of African historiography (Diop 1974, 1981, 1987, 1991); a re-evaluation of the place of the African subject in history; and a re-positioning and re-alignment of the discipline of philosophy incorporating its pre-Athenian locus and orientation in order to transcend the bounds of philosophy itself in its contemporary form.

Essentially, this kind of operation constitutes a considerable advancement on Wiredu's project of conceptual decolonization. In this manner, the haunting occasioned by deep loss, collective psychic disequilibrium, and severance and a psychological mis-alignment with a superimposed cultural order are downplayed for a more vigorous engagement with the internal momentum of pre-colonial African history. The point, is, how do we deal with the traumas of loss without the usual recourse to collective amnesia? Afrocentric discourse suggests that this is wholly possible. Wiredu's project of conceptual decolonization appears to be lacking the psychological resources to cope with the traumas of loss and the unremitting despair caused by the diminution or even erasure of identity, and so in establishing a conversation between tradition and modernity, the African subject still has to avail herself of heretical means to deal with agonies of cultural disconnect.

However, Wiredu did not engage with this trend in African contemporary thought and practice. In his attempt to recuperate the African subject as a central object of discourse, the African subject suddenly finds him/herself within a western—and often alien—canon of rationality. The incongruity of this presence disrupts the 'normal' dynamic of analytic philosophy and then announces the frightening possibility of a multiculturalism that is fundamentally alien within that philosophic

equation. But for the average African subject, the much-touted cosmopolitanism of the digital era is not feasible for a number of reasons, least of which are the actual limitations of unfettered geographical mobility.

As such there has been a—for want of a better term—schism between academic philosophy and non-academic intellectual practice, a trend that mirrors what exists in Black America where academic luminaries based within the academy are hardly known outside it, whilst Afrocentric thinkers become, in the eyes of the public, learned folk heroes precisely because they engage constantly with their communities on a wide range of burning issues. Thought, as it were, has to be imbued with a measure of social activism and transformational potential. Otherwise, the divide between the ivory tower and the community remains unmediated. This seems especially true in relation to formerly colonized or severely oppressed and marginalized groups and peoples.

Wiredu showed an awareness of the other traditions of African contemporary thought that seek to bridge the divide between academic philosophy and folk thought as exemplified by the contributions of Kwame Nkrumah, Julius Nyerere and Leopold Sedar Senghor. These thinkers were termed philosopher-kings as distinct from the ‘universalists’ which include the likes of Wiredu, Bodunrin and Henry Odera Oruka, the so-called Anglophone school of African philosophy. All the aforementioned African liberation-fighters-turned-political leaders combined the conceptual and practical aspects of decolonization under one overarching imperative to forge an existential vision for the decolonized African.

4 Colonial Modernity

On the African continent, as states fail, ethnic strife erupts and millions are displaced through wars, migrations, disease and famine, an all-too-familiar picture of the beleaguered continent is further lodged in the public eye. But all around us within the continent, there are cacophonies of voices, unruly regimes of representation, disclosure and spectrality, clashing, jarring, refusing to be curtailed and silenced, bursting forth in variegated hues and displays until the senses experience multiple stages of sensory overload. It becomes evident that we have no vocabulary to describe this state of affairs that constantly threatens to overwhelm our abilities to cope with, classify, and assess phenomena. Instead of philosophy and theoretical language, we find succor in constant eruptions of music, dance, the ever-revolving institutions of the ‘palaver’ (as defined and conceptualized by the late Congolese scholar, Ernest Wamba dia Wamba), and in other forms of conviviality that may emerge suddenly and then disappear only to reappear in somewhat altered conditions in ever-mobile cyclicity and shifting bases of transformation.

But within this seemingly unsalvageable scenario there are instances of resilience, color, strength and creativity that overwhelm existing conceptual vocabularies. Cultural synthesis as conceptualized by normal philosophical diction does not quite capture the forms of life in constant transition that the inhabitants of Africa battle with daily. These supposedly random and chaotic fragments of African existence are paradoxically a liberation of the African voice, a dervish of presence which colonialism

had done everything to deny, suppress and ultimately, destroy. Such a presence constitutes an existential antithesis to philosophical equilibrium and therefore decorum.

Earlier, I had suggested that in identifying frames of reference that suit the decolonized African subject, discourses such as cultural studies, postcolonial theory, ethnic and race studies appear to be better positioned to do so than philosophy. One of the reasons for philosophy's limitations is its innate reluctance to question and undermine the basis of its repressive attitudes in relation to the African subject. In other words, the African subject is compelled, with little or no voice, to find her locus of muteness within an invariably western philosophical canon. Within this philosophical straitjacket, her potential for maneuverability is significantly curtailed. If indeed she is able to acquire a voice, it is one that is lacking in confidence and ultimately unrepresentative and self-defeating. Within the annals of academic philosophy on the African continent, Wiredu would continue to be a respected figure. But it is always tempting, or even necessary, to read him against currents of radical Black thought during which he sometimes falls short.

It is tempting to state that philosophy would lose its powers in Africa unless it resorts to the language of pathology, that is, at least, a certain understanding of philosophy which, paradoxically, Wiredu is able to employ in his project of conceptual decolonization. However, I have pointed out the limitations of acquiring and maintaining a liberated voice within that fraught conceptual milieu. At best, that constrained voice constitutes a disruption within the 'normal' philosophical momentum. But essentially, what we require more than ever is a complete transformation of the conceptual apparatus so that we are able to embrace our essential realities more fully, rather than being alienated and stymied by them at a fundamental conceptual level.

The disruption caused by Wiredu's insertion of an African presence in philosophy foreshadows a crucial logical progression, one that demands that philosophy turn against itself in order to be representative of an African cosmology. There needs to be a more inspiring way to capture the myriad sounds, languages, voices, dialects, and tropical colors that characterize African existence. Instead, under the strictures of analytic philosophy (and other similar traditions), what we see is a retreat by philosophy from this reality. By so doing, philosophy disqualifies itself as a medium of expression for non-western experiences and instead launches an offensive by labeling everything African as rudimentary, unformed, non-descript and unnameable. Being a philosopher in the proper sense of word, Wiredu obviously despaired of the possibility of effecting a negation of philosophy. What is not clear is whether he read modern philosophy's limitations in the manner described in this article. But even if Wiredu senses its fundamental limitations, he never quite attempts to transcend them in a radical manner. Indeed his project of conceptual decolonization could have made more far-reaching demands and hence accomplished more radical results.

Wiredu's Publications

The list of publications below seek to capture Wiredu's multiple discursive preoccupations.

Logic

"Kant's Apriori in Geometry and the Rise of Non-Euclidean Geometries," *Kant Studien*, Nos. 1-4, (1970); "Truth as Opinion," *Universitas*, (March, 1972); "A Note on Modal Quantification, Ontology and the Indenumerably Infinite," *Analysis*, (June, 1972); "Material Implication and If-then,"

International Logical Review, (December, 1972); “Deducibility and Inferability,” *Mind* (New series) 82, no. 325 (1973); “Logic and Ontology, Part 1,” *Second Order* 2, no. 1 (1973); “Philosophy, Mysticism and Rationality,” *Universitas*, (March, 1973); “On the Real Logical Structure of Lewis’ ‘Independent Proof,’” *Notre Dame Journal of Formal Logic*, (October, 1973); “Logic and Ontology Part 2,” *Second Order* 2, no. 2 (1973); “To Be is to be Known,” *Legon Journal of Humanities* 1 (1974); “What is Philosophy,” *Universitas* 3, no. 2 (March, 1974); “Carnap on Iterated Modalities,” *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 35, no. 2 (1974); “Classes and Sets,” *Logique et Analyses*, (January, 1974); “A Remark on a Certain Consequence of Connective Logic for Zermelo’s Set Theory,” *Studia Logica* 33, no. 2, (1974); “Logic and Ontology Part 3,” *Second Order* 3, no. 2, (1974); “In Praise of Utopianism,” *Thought and Practice* 2, no. 2, (1975); “Logic and Ontology Part 4,” *Second Order* 4, no. 1, (1975); “Truth as a Logical Constant with an Application to the Principle of the Excluded Middle,” *The Philosophical Quarterly* 25, no. 101, (1975); “Predication and Abstract Entities,” *Legon Journal of the Humanities* 2, no. 2, (1976); “On the Formal Character of Logic,” *Ghana Social Science Journal*, (May, 1976); “On ‘Reduction ad Absurdum’ Proofs,” *International Logic Review*, (June, 1976); “Paradoxes,” *Second Order* 5, no. 2, (1976); “On Behalf of Opinion,” *Universitas*, (December, 1976).

African-Centred Problematic as Focus:

“On an African Orientation in Philosophy,” *Second Order* 1, no. 2, (1972); “How not to compare African Thought with Western Thought,” *Ch’ Indaba*, no. 2, (1976; reprinted in ed. Richard Wright *African Philosophy: An Introduction*, Washington D.C. University Press of America, 1977 and ed. Albert Mosley *African Philosophy: Selected Readings*, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1995); “Philosophy and Our Culture,” *Proceedings of the Ghana Academy of Arts and Science*, 1980; “Philosophical Research and Teaching in Africa: Some Suggestions,” *Teaching and Research in Philosophy: Africa*, Paris: UNESCO, 1984; “Survey: Philosophy Teaching and Research in English- Speaking Africa,” *Teaching and Research in Philosophy: Africa*, Paris: UNESCO, 1984; “On Defining African Philosophy,” *African Philosophy: The Essential Readings*, ed. T. Serequeberhan, New York: Paragon House, 1991; “Formulating African Thought in African Languages: Some Theoretical Considerations,” *The Surreptitious Speech: Presence Africaine and the Politics of Otherness 1947-1987*, ed. V.Y. Mudimbe, Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1992; “The Akan Concept of Mind,” *Ibadan Journal of Humanistic Studies* (1983; reprint in *Contemporary Philosophy: A New Survey*, vol. 5, ed. G. Floistad, Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1987; “Morality and Religion in Akan Thought,” *Philosophy and Cultures*, ed. H. Odera Oruka and D. Masolo Nairobi: Bookwise, 1983, reprinted in *African- American Humanism: An Anthology*, ed. Norm Allen Jr., New York: Prometheus Books, 1991; “The Concept of Truth in the Akan Language,” *Philosophy in Africa: Trends and Perspectives*, ed. P. O. Bodunrin, Ile-Ife: University Press, 1985; “The Moral Foundations of African Culture,” *African-American Perspectives on Biomedical Ethics*, ed. H. E. Flack and E. D. Pellegrino, Washington D. C.: Georgetown University Press, 1992; “African Philosophical Tradition: A Case Study of the Akan,” *Philosophical Forum*, 24, nos. 1-3, 1992-93; “Death and the Afterlife in African Culture,” *Death and Dying: Cross-Cultural and Multi-Disciplinary Views*, ed. A. Berger et al, Philadelphia: The Charles Press, 1989; “On the Question of the Right to Die: An African View,” *To Die or Not to Die?: Cross-Disciplinary, Cultural and Legal Perspectives on the Right to Choose Death*, ed. Arthur Berger and Joyce Berger New York: Praeger, 1990; “An Akan Perspective on Human Rights,” *Human Rights in Africa: Cross-Cultural Perspectives*, ed. A. Ahmed An-Na’ im and Francis Deng, Washington D. C.: Brookings Institution, 1990; “Universalism and Particularism in Religion from an African Perspective,” *Journal of Humanism and Ethical Religion* 3,

1990, reprint in *Self, Cosmos and God*, ed. D. Kolak and R. Martin, New York: Harcourt, Brace, Javanovich, 1992; “The Akan Concept of Personhood,” *African-American Perspectives on Biomedical Ethics*, ed. H. E. Flack and E. D. Pellegrino, Washington D. C.: Georgetown University Press, 1992; “Metaphysics in Africa,” *A Companion to Metaphysics*, ed. J. Kim and E. Sosa, Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1995; “Custom and Morality: A Comparative Analysis of some African and Western Conceptions of Morals,” *African Philosophy: Selected Readings*, ed. Albert Mosley, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1995; “Can Philosophy be Intercultural? An African Viewpoint,” *Diogene* 46, no. 4 (1998); ed. *Person and Community: Ghanaian Philosophical Studies*, New York: Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 1992 (with Kwame Gyekye); “Democracy and Consensus in Traditional African Politics: A Plea for a Non-Party Polity,” *The Centennial Review* 39, no. 1, (Winter, 1995); “In Decolonizing African Religions” and “Particularistic Studies of African Philosophies as an Aid to Decolonization,” in *Decolonising the Mind: Proceedings of the Colloquium held at UNISA*, ed. J. Malherbe, October 1995, Pretoria: Research Unit for African Philosophy, 1995; “Our Problem of Knowledge: Brief Reflections on Knowledge and Development in Africa,” *African Philosophy as Cultural Inquiry*, ed. I. Karp and Dimas Masolo, Indianapolis and Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000; ed. *A Companion to African Philosophy*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2004.

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¹ Barry Hallen, *Reading Wiredu* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2021).

² See Sanya Osha, “Kwasi Wiredu Cleared the Way for Modern African Philosophy,” *The Conversation* 18, January, 2022 (URL: <https://theconversation.com/kwasi-wiredu-cleared-the-way-for-modern-african-philosophy-174917>; last accessed May 29, 2023).

³ Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International*, trans. Peggy Kamuf, (New York: Routledge, 1994).

⁴ Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Pantheon, 1974); *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. A. M. Sheridan-Smith (London: Allen Lane 1977); *Language, Counter-Memory and Practice. Selected Essays and Interviews*, ed. Donald Bouchard, (Ithaca 1980, NY: Cornell University Press); *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (New York: Pantheon 1982); “Governmentality” in *The Foucault Effect*, ed. G. Burchell, C. Gordon and P. Miller, (Chicago: Chicago University Press 1991).

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- ⁵ Franziska Dübgen and Stefan Skupien, *Paulin Hountondji: African Philosophy as Critical Universalism* (London: Palgrave-Macmillan 2019).
- ⁶ See also Paulin Hountondji, *African Philosophy: Myth and Reality*, (London: Hutchinson and Co. 1983); *The Struggle for Meaning: Reflections on Philosophy, Culture and Democracy in Africa*, (Athens: Ohio University Center for International Studies, 2002).
- ⁷ Sanya Osha, *Kwasi Wiredu and Beyond: The Text, Writing and Thought in Africa*, (Dakar: CODESRIA, 2005)
- ⁸ Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. C. Van Markmann, (New York: Grove Press 1967); *The Wretched of the Earth*, (London: Penguin 1963).
- ⁹ Cheikh, Anta Diop, *The African Origin of Civilization: Myth or Reality?* trans. M. Cook (Westport, Conn.: Lawrence Hill 1974); “Origin of the ancient Egyptians” in *General History of Africa II: Ancient Civilisations of Africa*, M. Mokhtar, (Paris: UNESCO 1981); *Precolonial Black Africa: A Comparative Study of the Political and Social Systems of Europe and Black Africa, from Antiquity to the Formation of Modern States*, (Westport, CT: Lawrence Hill Books 1987); *Civilization or Barbarism: An Authentic Anthropology*, ed H. J. Salemson and M. de Jager; trans. Y.-L. M. Ngemi (Brooklyn, NY: Lawrence Hill 1991).
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