How to Ground Animal Rights on African Values: Reply to Horsthemke

THADDEUS METZ
University of Johannesburg, South Africa

I seek to advance plausible replies to the several criticisms Kai Horsthemke (2015) makes of "African modal relationalism," his label for my theory of animal rights with a sub-Saharan pedigree. Central to this view is the claim that, roughly, a being has a greater moral status the more it is in principle capable of relating communally with characteristic human beings. Horsthemke maintains that this view is anthropocentric and speciesist, is poorly motivated relative to his egalitarian-individualist approach, and does not have the implications that I contend. I aim to rebut these and related criticisms, contending that African modal relationalism is in fact a promising way to philosophically ground animal rights.

Key Words: African modal relationalism, animal rights, anthropocentrism, dignity, individualism, marginal cases, moral status, relationality, speciesism, sub-Saharan ethics

1. INTRODUCTION

Kai Horsthemke's *Animals and African Ethics* (2015) now stands as the most thorough reflection on the implications of characteristically African values for animal rights, where by the latter I mean a broad view according to which we have direct duties not to seriously harm animals, at least not for purposes such as enjoying the taste of meat, liking the look of their skins worn as adornment, and ensuring that cosmetics are safe for human beings. African values have often been deemed to be unable to justify animal rights, so construed (e.g., Callicott, 1994, p. 158), and, while there have been recent attempts to argue that they can, in his new book, Horsthemke systematically argues that they cannot.

I am one of those who has contended that certain values salient in the African tradition promise to ground animal rights (Metz, 2010a, pp. 57–58; 2010b; 2012; work by others includes LenkaBula, 2008; Behrens, 2010, 2014; Molefe, 2015). Drawing on recurrent sub-Saharan themes, I have advanced the claim that, roughly, a being has a greater moral status the more it is by its nature capable of being part of a communal relationship with characteristic human beings, and I have invoked this conception of moral status to derive

Journal of Animal Ethics 7 (2): 163–174
© 2017 by the Board of Trustees of the University of Illinois

N
L
LC
JAnE 7_2 text.indd 163 5/18/17 9:31 AM

a number of direct duties toward animals. In *Animals and African Ethics,* Horsthemke (2015) advances several objections to my approach, which he calls "African modal relationalism," arguing that it is anthropocentric and speciesist, is poorly motivated relative to his egalitarian-individualist approach, and does not have the implications that I contend (especially pp. 85–92, 99, 123, 144). My aim in this article is to rebut these criticisms.

I begin by providing a sympathetic overview of Horsthemke's (2015) book, which I contend merits engagement, despite our disagreements about the plausibility of my views (section 2). Next, I sketch the core of African modal relationalism, presenting just enough of it to facilitate debate between Horsthemke and myself (section 3). I then spell out Horsthemke's objections to this theory and reply to them (section 4). I conclude by pointing to the nub of many of our disputes and suggesting what would need to be done in future work to take the debate still further (section 5).

2. OVERVIEW OF ANIMALS AND AFRICAN ETHICS

Animals and African Ethics (2015) is the first book-length treatment of salient African moral perspectives as they bear specifically on animals. By values (and norms) that are "African," "sub-Saharan," and the like, Horsthemke (2015, pp. 2–3) and I both mean ones that have been salient below the Sahara desert among a wide array of peoples and over a long span of time. Neither of us is committed to "essentialism," the view that certain values always inhere in something African or only inhere in something African. Instead, we maintain that there are certain conceptions of the good (and the right) that have been recurrent in Africa in a way they have tended not to be elsewhere. While others have explored environmentalism in general from the perspective of African values, so construed (e.g., Behrens, 2011; Kelbessa, 2011; Chemhuru, 2016), Horsthemke is the first to have focused on the moral status and treatment of animals in particular.

In the book, Horsthemke (2015) provides careful, well-researched analyses not merely of traditional sub-Saharan values, but also of how they plausibly bear on contemporary moral and legal debates about animals, often ones prominent in Africa. For instance, he takes up issues such as the slaughter of animals for ritual purposes (say, to pay respect to ancestors), the eating of bush meat, and the use of what in southern Africa is called "*muti*," animal parts believed to have the powers either to ward off harm or to cure disease.

With regard to these and similar issues, Horsthemke (2015) maintains that such practices are typically immoral and that African values cannot make sense of such a judgment. In reaching these conclusions, Horsthemke does not dismiss the African tradition of thought about animals, but rather takes the time to critically engage with a variety of its recurrent and important manifestations. He considers, and rejects, views commonly held by indigenous black peoples, contending that just as contemporary thought in Africa rightly tends to abjure the sexism recurrent in traditional African ways of life, so it should likewise forego the speciesism he finds in it. In addition, Horsthemke addresses philosophies with an African pedigree that have recently been articulated by academics, finding them to be similarly speciesist or anthropocentric, on the one hand, or too vague to apply, on the other.

N
L

LC

JAnE 7_2 text.indd 164 5/18/17 9:31 AM

By virtue of Horsthemke's (2015) in-depth, thoughtful, and contentious reasoning, any future African-inspired thought about the moral status and treatment of animals must engage with his book. For theorists like me, who both work within the African philosophical tradition and believe in animal rights, his book presents a challenge; for it argues that we cannot coherently do both.

3. AFRICAN MODAL RELATIONALISM

In developing what Horsthemke (2015) calls African modal relationalism, one of my intentions was to mine sub-Saharan worldviews for ideas that would provide a plausible ground for animal rights. I wanted to advance a theory that would be useful to someone, supposing the person wanted a way to invoke African values to make sense of direct duties not to hunt, not to factory farm, not to use animals for trivial experiments, not to kill animals for the sake of clothing, and so on. In this section, I recount three ideas about morality that have been salient in the African tradition, and then indicate how I have drawn on them to create a prima facie attractive philosophy of animal rights.

One idea recurrent among indigenous African peoples has been that entities in the world are ordered in a graded way or form a "chain of being" (Olupona, 1991; Teffo & Roux, 1998, pp. 196, 198–201; Chitando, Adogame, & Bateye, 2012). At the top is God, the source of everything else in the world, after which come ancestors, wise founders of a clan who have survived the deaths of their bodies and continue to reside on earth. Next come human beings, and then animals, plants, and rocks, in descending order.

Sometimes this gradation is conceived metaphysically, in terms of vital force, an invisible energy thought to have its source in God and to permeate everything that exists in various degrees. Other times, however, it is conceived ethically, as a ranking of final value or moral status. Traditionally speaking, the ethical is usually grounded on the metaphysical, so that the more vital force, the more importance a being has.

Such a ranking does imply that human beings have a greater moral importance than animals. However, the latter have their own independent claim to ethical treatment, as do even elements of the vegetable and mineral kingdoms. Despite the hierarchy, it is easy for this worldview to forbid stomping on a caterpillar for the mere fun of it and more generally to prescribe a sense of reverence for all that exists.

A second common theme about ethics in traditional African thought is the idea that relationship is central to it. Moral behavior is ultimately, or at least mainly, a matter of creating, sustaining, and enriching relationships (e.g., Teffo & Roux, 1998, p. 204; Christians, 2004, pp. 244–245; Murove, 2007; Metz, 2012, 2013). Such a view is reminiscent of the ethic of care, but, unlike the latter, which is a relative newcomer to the West and is a minority view there, a relational ethic has been prominent below the Sahara for several hundreds of years.

A third thought about how to live that is salient among precolonial sub-Saharans is communitarianism or communalism (for overviews, see Kasenene, 2000, pp. 349, 354–355; Christians, 2004; Odimegwu, 2007; Wiredu, 2008). Often, African philosophers make claims such as that the community is "prior to" the individual. Although that is

sometimes understood to mean that the group has moral preeminence (corporatism), I prefer the reading according to which a person cannot develop human excellence except by entering into communion with others (relationalism).

In drawing on these ideas, I do not always take them on board as they have been traditionally stated. My project has involved not simply representing African thought and applying it, but reinterpreting it as appears necessary to create a philosophically powerful theory, one that would resonate with people throughout the world, not merely those partial toward sub-Saharan worldviews. Much of this means that I abjure appeals to the existence of invisible persons or forces (or what Westerners would call the "spiritual").

African modal relationalism is in the first instance an account of moral status (i.e., of what in the world is owed moral treatment for its own sake or, equivalently, is the object of direct duties). According to this account, a being has a greater moral status the more it is by its nature capable of relating communally with characteristic human beings. I now spell out the key concepts involved here.

Appealing to elements of the notion of a chain of being, this principle includes the idea of degrees of moral status. Some beings are morally more important than others. However, unlike the traditional conception, as will become clear below, it does not entail that everything in the world has some moral status.

Moral status is a function of the extent to which a being can relate to us in a certain way. Instead of appealing to a highly contested metaphysical notion of vital force, the principle considers moral importance to be determined by a secular concept of the capacity to enter into relationship. This is why Horsthemke's (2015) label of "modal" is apt; it is not actually being a part of a relationship, but rather a being's *ability* in principle to be part of a relationship that counts.

Finally, according to the principle, the relevant relationship is a communal one. Instead of a corporatist interpretation of the African tradition, the principle entails that it is a particular entity, and not a group, that has a moral status. Specifically, a being's moral status is determined by the extent to which it is the kind of thing that can be party to a relationship in which there is communion, understood in terms of identifying with others and exhibiting solidarity with them. That is, a being's moral status is graded according to its ability to be part of a relationship in which there is a sense of togetherness and participation on a cooperative basis (identity), as well as aid consequent to other-regarding attitudes such as sympathy and altruism (solidarity).

There are differential degrees to which beings can commune, so construed, and (only) large differences ground differential degrees of moral status. The most glaring difference between beings in terms of their capacity to relate communally concerns whether they can be subjects or merely objects of such a relation. Having the ability to be a subject of communal relationship means being able to *commune with others*, that is, (i.e., being able to think of oneself as bound up with others, to cooperate with others, to make their lives go better, and to do so out of sympathy and for their sake). In contrast, the ability to be an object of communal relationship means being able to *be communed with by others*. It means that an entity is such that typical human beings, by their nature and its,

N
L

LC

JAnE 7_2 text.indd 166 5/18/17 9:31 AM

could think of themselves as bound up with it, promote its aims, help it, and do so out of sympathy and for its sake.

Consider, now, some of what this account of moral status entails. A very large of majority of human beings can be subjects of a communal relationship (i.e., they can commune with others), and (nearly) all living human beings can be objects of it, too (though perhaps not the permanently comatose). As typical human beings have the capacity to be both a subject and an object of communal relationship, they have the highest moral status, at least of beings on earth. I welcome the claim that they have a dignity.

There is, of course, some debate about whether animals such as chimpanzees, elephants, and dolphins can be subjects of communal relationship. If they can, they probably can to much less of a degree than typical human beings and so would have a somewhat lower moral status than they. However, they would be rightly deemed to be "higher" than other members of the animal kingdom, many of whom can be merely objects of communal relationship with us. Those animals capable of being only objects of communal relationship, such as (for all we know) cats, mice, and fish, do have a moral status, albeit one lower than typical human beings and whichever animals might be capable of being subjects of it.

There are some animals, however, that altogether lack a moral status by the present theory, roughly, those without a teleological orientation and a good, probably insects and bacteria. Since these beings have no aims with which to coordinate and no welfare to protect, we cannot commune with them in these ways, let alone sympathize with them or enjoy a sense of togetherness with them. It does not immediately follow that one may treat them however one likes, but any moral reasons for not harming them will be indirect.[1]

This African modal relational account of moral status naturally grounds certain judgments about how one is required to treat animals. The urgent interests of a being with moral status should not be traded off for the trivial interests of another being, even one with a higher moral status. And, so, if the urgent interests of animals that can be objects of communal relationship with us are stake, it would be wrong to sacrifice them to satisfy our trivial interests. Such an approach forbids a wide array of practices that most readers of this journal will deem to be immoral, such as hunting for sport, eating meat for the taste, and testing cosmetic products on animals.

However, Horsthemke (2015) is not satisfied with this theory. He does not question its African status, but rather maintains that its African status renders it unable to account adequately for animal rights.

4. CONSIDERING HORSTHEMKE'S OBJECTIONS TO AFRICAN MODAL RELATIONALISM

Horsthemke's (2015) three major objections are that any African theory, including the one I advance, is necessarily anthropocentric or speciesist, that my view is poorly defended, and that I have misapplied it, such that it entails that some animals have a moral status comparable to that of typical human beings. I address each in turn.

N
L
LC

JAnE 7_2 text.indd 167 5/18/17 9:31 AM

According to Horsthemke (2015), African ethics in general is essentially anthropocentric, meaning that I have to choose between the Africanness of my view and its ability to avoid anthropocentrism. He makes two arguments in support of this claim. First, he notes, correctly, that one of the most influential ways that Africans sum up their morality is with the phrase "a person is a person through other persons" (for discussion in the context of several African peoples, see Nkulu-N'Sengha, 2009). To English speakers unfamiliar with African worldviews, this maxim says very little. However, it may be usefully interpreted as indicating that one ought to become a real person (i.e., develop human excellence or what is called *ubuntu* in southern Africa, which one can do by relating communally with other persons; see Metz, 2011; Metz & Gaie, 2010). Horsthemke (2015) contends, by this maxim, it is only through other *persons* that one can develop real or complete personhood (i.e., moral virtue): "In focusing exclusively on human beings, *ubuntu* is by definition anthropocentric" (pp. 11; see also pp. 82–83, 93).

However, this maxim can be *essential* to (or typical of) an African ethic without being *exhaustive* of it. Adherents to such an ethic would typically say that someone lacked virtue if the person tortured animals for fun, often enough because of the pain inflicted on the animal, namely for direct reasons. Although adherents to a characteristically African ethic would say that more personhood or virtue would come from treating human beings well, or that it would be more base to mistreat human beings, they are not, merely by virtue of the maxim Horsthemke (2015) cites, committed to thinking that *only* human beings matter for their own sake, which I take to be the defining feature of anthropocentrism as it figures into philosophical ethics.[2]

Horsthemke's (2015) second reason for thinking that African ethics is essentially anthropocentric is that, as he again correctly notes, many traditional sub-Saharan societies call those who fail to develop personhood, and instead act immorally, "animals" (or also "nonpersons," on which see Nkulu-N'Sengha, 2009). According to Horsthemke (2015), this suggests that animals lack moral worth (p. 85).

However, to say that someone is an animal, or, more carefully, is acting like one, is a metaphor indicating that the agent has acted morally *wrongly* (Ramose, 1999, p. 53; Gyekye, 2010). It does not imply anything about moral *status* (i.e., about whether animals warrant moral treatment for their own sake or not). In reply, Horsthemke (2015) can point out that associating wrongful behavior with animality suggests that those in such a culture deem the latter to be lowly. That is true. But it does not follow that anthropocentrism, qua the view that only human beings merit moral treatment, is essential to their culture.

Turning to African modal relationalism in particular, Horsthemke (2015) points out that an implication of it is that, in cases where the urgent interests of animals and human persons conflict, the latter morally should win out. Although the trivial interests of persons do not outweigh the urgent ones of animals, by my view, it is true that where a choice must be made between the urgent interests of two beings, the being with a greater moral status should win out. Horsthemke (2015) calls this view "necessarily anthropocentric" and also "speciesist" (p. 91).

However, African modal relationalism is not anthropocentric in the usual sense of viewing all nonhuman beings as lacking a moral status and having a merely instrumental

N
L

LC

JAnE 7_2 text.indd 168 5/18/17 9:31 AM

value for human benefit. The view instead accords many animals a moral status and entails that it would be wrong to mistreat them in the myriad ways they are wronged in modern, industrialized societies.

Furthermore, African modal relationalism is not speciesist, because the reason for favoring human beings, in cases where their urgent interests are stake, is not the mere fact that they are human. Unlike the claim that it "is with regard to their essential humanity that human beings matter" (Horsthemke, 2015, p. 5), by my view it is rather the fact that typical human beings have certain abilities to commune as subjects. This is a capacity-based view, not one grounded on the property of humanness, and the capacity could well be shared by other beings. Indeed, it appears that chimps, elephants, and dolphins might share it, to some degree.

In his book, Horsthemke (2015) does not discuss the strong intuitions that have led me to construct a theory with the implication that, in cases of forced trade-offs among the urgent interests of two beings, the one with the higher moral status should be favored. There are several cases I have discussed in my work where it appears wrong to forsake a (human) person's life for that of a (nonpersonal) animal. For just one example: "If the reader and I were starving along with a pig, and if I had a gun, it would be permissible for me to shoot the pig to feed us, but impermissible for me to shoot the reader to feed myself and the pig. The best explanation of such a judgment, I submit, is that pigs have a lower moral status than persons" (Metz, 2010c, p. 309; see also Metz, 2012, pp. 389, 399–400).

For Horsthemke (2015) to point out that humans and animals can be equal but "*not* the same in all respects" (p. 91) does not ground a clear answer to the question of how to choose between human and animal lives in those unfortunate cases where a choice must be made. And the fact that such trade-offs might be rare is philosophically irrelevant, since the point is that consideration of such possible worlds reveals something about our implicit values. After all, speciesism is often questioned deeply on the ground that a race of intelligent and sentient Martians would have a moral status, but we have never encountered such beings.

African modal relationalism clearly forbids sacrificing urgent animal interests, such as life and freedom from excruciating pain, for at least the trivial interests of human beings, and so grounds vegetarianism, much antivivisectionist activism, and related animal rights practices. So, I submit that it is not fair to say that my account with a sub-Saharan pedigree "ultimately constitutes little improvement on traditional views, in its perspective on nonhuman animals" (Horsthemke, 2015, p. 92).

Horsthemke's (2015) second major criticism of African modal relationalism is that it is poorly defended, at least relative to his more egalitarian and individualist approach to moral status. One consideration here is whether it is plausible to think that a certain entity has a moral status in virtue of relational or extrinsic factors: "How can 'some kind of interactive property between one entity and another'. . . bestow status on the entities in question and not only on the relation between them?" (Horsthemke, 2015, p. 89; see also p. 99).

In reply, there is, upon reflection, little (if anything) odd or objectionable about saying that what makes a being particularly valuable and worthy of moral treatment is its

natural capacity to relate to others in certain ways. Consider that what I have labeled a "communal" relationship is one that many English speakers would describe as a broad sense of "love." To love others is, in large part, a matter of enjoying a sense of togetherness with them, participating with them on a cooperative basis, doing what one can to make their lives go well, and doing so consequent to sympathy and for the other's sake. It is not strange to suggest that a being might be important in virtue of its capacity to love as well as its capacity to be loved. Such a view implies that an entity's *relational properties* are what make it valuable and do not push one to suggest that it is merely the loving *relationship* that is (cf. Metz, 2010b).

Horsthemke (2015) suggests that such a relational theoretical orientation is akin to objectionably reducing a person to a "mere set of extrinsic relations" (p. 89). According to him, my view does not even get the worth of persons correct, since they have an intrinsic value (i.e., a value based on their intrinsic properties) and are not to be considered valuable merely insofar as they bear on others.

In reply, I note that, for one, there is a significant difference between a modal-relational theory and a corporatist one. The latter deems only groups to matter morally, with individuals serving as mere means, whereas the former grounds moral status on individuals' capacity to relate in principle, and not their actual relations. Although African modal relationalism rejects the idea that people's dignity is a function of properties that make no essential reference to others, it can coherently entail that people have a dignity (i.e., are good for their own sake to a superlative degree) by virtue of an ability to commune that by nature inheres in them.[3]

For another, I presume Horsthemke (2015) believes that animal *species* matter to some degree; if one were rare, it would deserve more protection, and not merely for ecological considerations of usefulness to other animals. If so, then *one* value of an entity can be qua member of a group. Though such does *not exhaust* an entity's value, this example shows that moral value is plausibly *not merely* a function of a being's intrinsic properties, opening up the door for a relational account.

Yet another reason Horsthemke (2015) finds African modal relationalism implausible is:

> If moral status is a matter of degree, then. . . . a moral hierarchy could arguably be erected even within the realm of "normal adult humans": for example, among those who contribute more to communal well-being and life, who engage more readily in friendly, loving and trusting relationships than others. (p. 89)

The natural way for me to reply is to point out that it is the capacity to commune, and not actual communion, that grounds moral status in my view. Perhaps, though, Horsthemke (2015) would reformulate the objection to contend that those by nature able to commune more would counterintuitively have a higher moral status. On this point, I maintain that degree of moral status does not track degree of capacity to commune in a one-to-one fashion (see Metz, 2012, pp. 394–395, 397). Only *large*, and not merely incremental, differences in degrees of natural ability to be either a subject or an

N
L

LC

JAnE 7_2 text.indd 170 5/18/17 9:31 AM

object of a communal relationship constitute differences in moral status. Since there are in fact *not* such great differences among normal adult humans, this particular charge of hierarchy does not apply.

Were a stereotypical Jesus or angel to come on the scene, however, then the theory would be straightforwardly read as entailing that he or she would have a greater moral status than us. But, then, many would be prepared to bite the bullet in such a case. And for those not so prepared, it would not be ad hoc to follow most theorists of dignity in maintaining that it is what is sometimes called a "range property," such that any being with enough of a certain property has an equal standing relative to one another.

At one point, Horsthemke (2015) questions my methodology, the way I argue for my theory of moral status. He notes, "That it is a 'persistent intuition' that 'human beings have a greater moral status than animals'. . . . does not establish much. Many of us have persistent intuitions about all kinds of things, including God's existence, ancestor agency and so on—which does not go anywhere near establishing the correctness of any of this" (Horsthemke, 2015, p. 91).

This point, of course, conflicts with Horsthemke's (2015) own recurrent appeals to intuition—indeed, as evidence against my theory—which are, I submit, unavoidable when doing moral philosophy systematically. More deeply, my *central* intuition was not one of unequal standing between animals and humans; instead, the appeals to intuition doing the most justificatory work were of specific cases in which one faces a forced choice between the lives of animals and humans, such as the pig case above. Those are more widely shared and difficult to give up, and are *best explained*, I submit, by a thesis of unequal standing. They therefore provide strong evidence (though of course no guarantee of truth) of differential moral status.

Horsthemke's (2015) final major objection is that, even if African modal relationalism's account of moral status were plausible, I have applied it incorrectly, failing to recognize that it actually entails that several animals have a moral status equal to ours. Again, even if one took my theory of moral status for granted, Horsthemke (2015) maintains, it would not entail that humans invariably have a greater moral status than animals:

> Apes and monkeys, dogs, dolphins and whales, elephants, horses and birds like crows and jays "are able to coordinate their actions with others, to do what is likely to make others better off, to act for the sake of others, and so on," to use Metz's own description of higher autistic humans. (p. 90)

Of course, the more Horsthemke (2015) is correct that my theory entails comparable moral status between human beings and animals, the less powerful his previous objections to it on grounds of speciesism and the like are. Setting that point aside, though, my main reply is to note that Horsthemke's empirical claims are false or dubious, for all I know of the literature on animal cognition (and human autism) and *given the way I define these terms*. I am convinced that some animals have been shown to have a sense of self, an inner sense that is contrasted with an outer one. However, *having a sense of an other*, or, more carefully, *an other's mind*, is something else and has yet to be demonstrated, where this

N
L
LC

JAnE 7_2 text.indd 171 5/18/17 9:31 AM

property is crucial for being a subject of communion as I construe it. It is very unlikely that dogs and birds can think about what others think about. And if chimpanzees can, then I would be glad to acknowledge their standing above everything else in the animal kingdom as, roughly, being able to love.

5. CONCLUSION: THE NUB OF THE DEBATE

I developed African modal relationalism because I wanted a theory that was not merely African and so grounded on ideas about hierarchy, relationality, and community, but also attractive to a wide array of moral philosophers and ethically reflective people more generally. The key judgments that drove me to develop a theory that entails differential moral status have been those in which it would be wrong to randomize when having to choose between the lives of many animals and persons (as well as those in which it would be wrong to randomize when having to choose between the lives of many animals and plants). Such intuitions, in which human lives should often be prioritized before those of animals (and in which the lives of animals should often be prioritized before those of plants), are plausibly explained by the thought that there is a hierarchy of moral standing. I have sought to cash out this hierarchy in terms of degrees of the ability to be party to a communal relationship.

Horsthemke (2015) would give me the most reason to reconsider African modal relationalism if he were able to provide a satisfactory explanation of how morally to handle cases of forced trade-offs among the urgent interests of particular animals and human persons. Surely, he would not want to flip a coin when determining how to deal with the pig scenario above. Where there is a forced choice to make between feeding a human to a pig or a pig to a human, how are we to decide in a morally defensible way? Appealing to intrinsic properties, such as being sentient, able to flourish, alive, or a subject of life, grounds an egalitarianism that is too strict for entailing that one ought to randomize which life to sacrifice. Of theoretical approaches to moral status, the idea that there is a hierarchy, and that the hierarchy is a function of the ability to commune, seems to me the most promising way philosophically to ground animal rights, while acknowledging their intuitive limits.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This work has benefited from the input of Kai Horsthemke and other participants at the "Conference on African Philosophy: Past, Present and Future" held at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, in 2015.

Notes

1. There are additional, and in some ways even more controversial, implications of my theory of moral status, not central to the debate with Horsthemke (2015). For instance, certain animals are probably much more able to be communed with by characteristic human beings

JAnE 7_2 text.indd 172 5/18/17 9:31 AM

than others (e.g., cats versus fish), meaning the former have a greater moral status. In addition, "marginal" cases of human beings are, I maintain, noticeably more able to be communed with by characteristic human beings than animals, meaning the former have a greater moral status. For discussion of these points, see Metz (2012).

2. Horsthemke (2015) tends to invoke a broader, and vaguer, notion of anthropocentrism, according to which it means "human-centred" or involves assigning "special value or worth to human beings" (p. 5).

3. Compare this account of dignity with the discussion of "nonintrinsic final goodness" common in the value-theoretic literature (e.g., Korsgaard, 1983; Kagan, 1998; Rabinowicz and Rønnow-Rasmussen, 2000).

References

Behrens, K. (2010). Exploring African holism with respect to the environment. *Environmental Values, 19*(4), 465–484.

Behrens, K. (2011). *African philosophy, thought and practice and their contribution to environmental ethics* (Unpublished doctoral thesis). University of Johannesburg, South Africa.

Behrens, K. (2014). An African relational environmentalism and moral considerability. *Environmental Ethics, 36*(1), 63–82.

Callicott, J. (1994). *Earth's insights: A survey of ecological ethics from the Mediterranean basin to the Australian outback*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Chemhuru, M. (2016). *The import of African ontology for environmental ethics* (Unpublished doctoral thesis). University of Johannesburg, South Africa.

Chitando, E., Adogame, A., & Bateye, B. (Eds.), (2012). *African traditions in the study of religion in Africa*. Farnham, England: Ashgate.

Christians, C. G. (2004). *Ubuntu* and communitarianism in media ethics. *Ecquid Novi, 25*(2), 235–256.

Gyekye, K. (2010). *African ethics*. Retrieved from http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/african-ethics/

Horsthemke, K. (2015). *Animals and African ethics*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

Kagan, S. (1998). Rethinking intrinsic value. *The Journal of Ethics, 2*(4), 277–297.

Kasenene, P. (2000). African ethical theory and the four principles. In R. Veatch (Ed.), *Cross-cultural perspectives in medical ethics* (pp. 347–357). Sudbury, MA: Jones & Bartlett.

Kelbessa, W. (2011). *Indigenous and modern environmental ethics: A study of the indigenous Oromo environmental ethic and modern issues of environment and development*. Washington, DC: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy.

Korsgaard, C. (1983). Two distinctions in goodness. *The Philosophical Review, 92*(2), 169–195.

LenkaBula, P. (2008). Beyond anthropocentricity—*Botho/ubuntu* and the quest for economic and ecological justice in Africa. *Religion and Theology, 15*(3/4), 375–394.

Metz, T. (2010a). African and western moral theories in a bioethical context. *Developing World Bioethics*, *10*(1), 49–58.

Metz, T. (2010b). For the sake of the friendship: Relationality and relationship as grounds of beneficence. *Theoria*, *57*(4), 54–76.

Metz, T. (2010c). Animal rights and the interpretation of the South African Constitution. *Southern African Public Law, 25*(2), 301–311.

Metz, T. (2011). *Ubuntu* as a moral theory and human rights in South Africa. *African Human Rights Law Journal*, *11*(2), 532–559.

Metz, T. (2012). An African theory of moral status: A relational alternative to individualism and holism. *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice*, *15*(3), 387–402.

N
L
LC

JAnE 7_2 text.indd 173 5/18/17 9:31 AM

Metz, T. (2013). The western ethic of care or an Afro-communitarian ethic? Finding the right relational morality. *Journal of Global Ethics*, 9(1), 77–92.

Metz, T., & Gaie, J. (2010). The African ethic of *ubuntu/botho*: Implications for research on morality. *Journal of Moral Education*, *39*(3), 273–290.

Molefe, M. (2015). A rejection of humanism in African moral tradition. *Theoria, 62*(2), 59–77.

Murove, M. F. (2007). The Shona ethic of *ukama* with reference to the immortality of values. *Mankind Quarterly, 48*(2), 179–189.

Nkulu-N'Sengha, M. (2009). *Bumuntu*. In M. K. Asante and A. Mazama (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of African religion* (pp. 142–147). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

Odimegwu, I. (Ed.). (2007). *Perspectives on African communalism*. Victoria, BC: Trafford Publishing.

Olupona, J. (Ed.). (1991). *African traditional religions in contemporary society.* New York, NY: Paragon House.

Rabinowicz, W., & Rønnow-Rasmussen, T. (2000). A distinction in value: Intrinsic
and for its own sake. *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, 100*(1), 33–51.

Ramose, M. (1999). *African philosophy through ubuntu*. Harare, Zimbabwe: Mond Books.

Teffo, L. J., & Roux, A. P. J. (1998). Themes in African metaphysics. In P. H. Coetzee and A. P. J. Roux (Eds.), *The African philosophy reader* (2nd ed., pp. 192–208). London, England: Routledge.

Wiredu, K. (2008). Social philosophy in postcolonial Africa: Some preliminaries concerning communalism and communitarianism. *South African Journal of Philosophy, 27*(4), 332–339.

N
L
LC

JAnE 7_2 text.indd 174 5/18/17 9:31 AM