UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

POLISHING THE PEARLS OF INDIGENOUS AFRICAN THOUGHTS: A

CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF KWAME GYEKYE'S MODERATE

COMMUNITARIANISM

BY

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DECLARATION

Candidate's Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own original research and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.

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Supervisors' Declaration

We hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the thesis were supervised in accordance with guidelines on supervision of thesis laid down by the University of Cape Coast.

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ABSTRACT

The issue about whether the community is superior to the individual, or vice versa, has been a matter of serious controversy and debate in current academic discourse. Looking at this issue, it is observed that there exists a delicate relationship between the individual and the community. In this regard, Indigenous African Communitarianism (IAC) has maintained that the community ought to be superior over the individual. Kwame Gyekye, a reputable African philosopher, has argued otherwise. Though a communitarian, Gyekye believes that it is radical for IAC to place premium on the community over the individual. Hence, he proposes a new theory called Moderate Communitarianism (MC) where he argues that this theory (MC) would give equal recognition to both the interest of the community and that of the individual. However, through the textual analysis method; where primary and secondary texts were scrutinized, the conclusion reached in this study is that not only was Gyekye unable to give equal balance to the interest of the community and that of the individual but also, contrary to what Gyekye wants us to believe, IAC is not radical. The central contribution of this work is that it has demonstrated that IAC is impartial. This is because IAC recognises both the interest of the community and that of the individual. This study would serve as a reference material to shape ideas about how to improve the relationship that exists between the individual and the community.

KEYWORDS

Human Rights

Indigenous African Communitarianism

Moderate Communitarianism
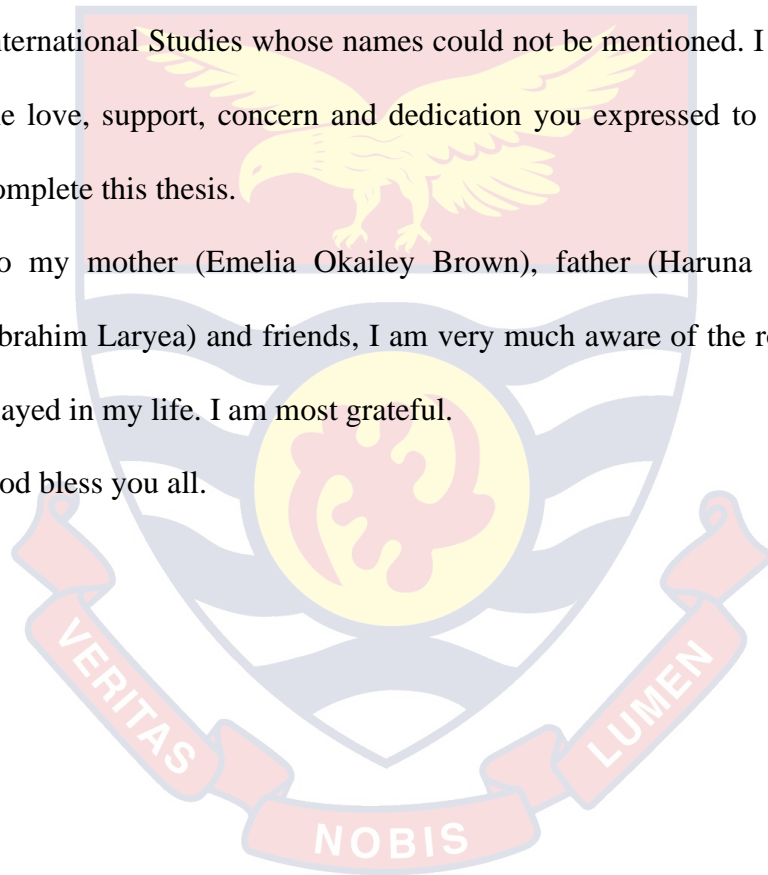
Morality

Personhood

Radical Communitarianism

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To my mother (Emelia Okailey Brown), father (Haruna Laryea), brother (Ibrahim Laryea) and friends, I am very much aware of the roles you all have played in my life. I am most grateful.

God bless you all.

DEDICATION

To my beautiful and supportive sister, Rukaya.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

IAC   Indigenous African Communitarianism

IC   Impartial Communitarianism

MC   Moderate Communitarianism

RC   Radical Communitarianism

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

SPLITTING HAIRS- IAC AND GYEKYE'S MC

This research examines the ontological, axiological and epistemological points of convergence and divergence between the concepts of what has been called Indigenous African Communitarianism (hereafter IAC) by scholars such as John Mbiti, Ifeanyi Menkiti, Kwasi Wiredu, and what Kwame Gyekye, the Ghanaian philosopher, calls Moderate Communitarianism (hereafter MC).[1] John Mbiti is the first to academically engage IAC. In fact, in his book, *African Religions and Philosophy,* Mbiti echoes that African communitarian ethos can be summarised as "I am because we are and since we are therefore I am."[2]

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[1] IAC is about "African societies founded on kinship relations which begin from the household and expand to lineage and clan proportions. Also, in terms of sentiments, people are brought up to develop a sense of bonding with relatives at home and outside it from early childhood. This sense of bonding is a process in which the individual comes more and more to see himself or herself as the center of obligations and rights. At the level of the lineage, one is already affiliated with quite a substantial population. The resulting scope of obligations can be large, but so can the scope of the corresponding rights." Kwasi Wiredu, "Social philosophy in postcolonial Africa: Some Preliminaries Concerning Communalism and Communitarianism," *South African Journal of Philosophy* 27*,* 4 (2008), p. 333.

IAC is a system of reciprocities. It then becomes easy to see that the kind of social formation under IAC when looked at from one hand is a regime of obligations, and on the other hand, is a dispensation of rights. The scope of the interplay of rights and obligations allows for easy extension to the neighborhood, town, region, nation, and so on. See Ibid, p. 333.

Some works of scholars which articulate the notion of IAC include: Ifeanyi Menkiti, "Person and community in traditional African thought," in R.A. Wright, (Ed.), *African Philosophy: An Introduction* ,Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1984, pp.171-181; John Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*; Placide Temples, *Bantu philosophy*, Paris: Presence Africaine,1959; Kwasi Wiredu,"Social Philosophy in Postcolonial Africa"; Kwame Nkrumah, *Consciencism: The Philosophy and Ideology for Decolonization and Development*, London: Panaf Books, 1964 ;Julius Nyerere, *Ujamaa: Essays on Socialism*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1968.

[2] See, John Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers Ltd, 1969, p.108.

Also, Ifeanyi Menkiti, a Nigerian philosopher, for example, pioneered an articulation of an African notion of personhood which he believes is the foundation of IAC. It is imperative to mention that Menkiti's description of IAC makes at least three key points. These are "the moral supremacy of the community over the individual";[3] "personhood is conferred on an individual by the community"[4] and "individual rights in Africa are treated as a secondary matter."[5] However, Gyekye criticised Menkiti's view as defending a radical vision of communitarianism.[6] Consequently, Gyekye proposed MC as that framework which would give recognition to individual rights since, to him, IAC fails to recognise that.[7] However, I think there is nothing radical about IAC. Additionally, the MC of Gyekye is nothing new but an aspect of the already existing IAC.

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[3] See, Ifeanyi Menkiti, "Person and Community in African Traditional Thought," p.171.

[4] This implies the individual need to work toward the achievement of personhood for it is not just something one attains right from birth.

[5] This means that when there is a clash of responsibility between the individual and the community, the latter is preferred.

[6] Radical communitarianism, according to Gyekye, is a view that gives an exaggerated conception of the community, is always seen as superior hence fails to recognise individual rights. Kwame Gyekye, "Person and Community in African Thought," *Person and Community Ghanaian philosophical studies 1* (1992), p.108.

[7] MC or restricted communitarianism, according to Gyekye addresses the dual features of the self: as a communal being and as an autonomous. See, Kwame Gyekye, *Person and Community*, p.113.

 Gyekye's notion of MC can be found in; Kwame Gyekye, *Person and Community*, pp. 101–122; Kwame, Gyekye. *An Essay on African Philosophical Thought: The Akan Conceptual Scheme*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1995; Kwame Gyekye, *Beyond Cultures: Perceiving a Common Humanity, Ghanaian Philosophical Studies*, Accra: The Ghana Academy of Arts and Sciences, 2004; Kwame Gyekye, *African Ethics*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010; Kwame Gyekye, *Tradition and Modernity*: *Philosophical Reflections on the African Experience,* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997.

Background to the Study

Communitarianism emphasises the moral supremacy of the community over the individual. A sharp contrast of communitarianism is liberalism which rather advocates for the moral supremacy of the individual over the community. Michael Eze avers that the community, so understood, is formed by a 'people,' a group of individuals that live together by shared histories and heritage, have a common fate and destiny.[8] He adds that no community exists in a vacuum. At the same time, however, an individual's subjectivity is necessarily located and actualized within a community.[9] Therefore, to argue that the community pre-exists the individual is to argue that there can be a community without a person which I do not think is possible, for the community is necessarily constituted by individuals. Again, to argue that the individuals pre-exist the community is ontologically contradictory for the individual is necessarily a social subjective.[10]

At this point, it could be inferred that the tension between communitarianism and liberalism is being resolved because as Michael Eze affirms, there is an interwoven relationship between the community and the individual where both entities need each other for their survival. Meanwhile, in his book, *Tradition and Modernity*, Gyekye identifies two types of communitarianism: radical and moderate.[11] Gyekye classified scholars such as

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[8] Michael Eze, "What is African Communitarianism? Against Consensus as a Regulative Ideal," South African *Journal of Philosophy* 27, 4 (2008), p.389.

[9] Ibid, p.389.

[10] The impression is that some of the issues between the liberals and communitarians are being resolved in the sense that we cannot talk of the individual when isolated from the community and we cannot equally talk of the community without the individual. Ibid, p. 389.

[11] See, Kwame Gyekye, *Tradition and Modernity*.

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John Mbiti, Ifeanyi Menkiti and Michael Sandels as radical communitarians.[12]

Gyekye accuses the IAC articulated by Menkiti as "radical" because to Gyekye, Menkiti does not appear to have fully recognised the status and relevance of "the individual rights." However, I submit that Gyekye's MC is a derivative of IAC. It is an intrinsic part of IAC. To Gyekye, "radical" communitarianism (hereafter RC), which is implicitly the nature of IAC, promotes the superiority of the community over the individual because the individual is deemed a product of the community. He argues that radical communitarianism is radical because it does not give recognition to individual rights; hence, his labelling of IAC as radical.

Predicating his argument on the Akan ontology of personhood, Gyekye proposes a moderate communitarianism because according to him, it (MC) will give recognition to individual rights. Gyekye grounds human rights on autonomy. He writes that "autonomy must be a fundamental feature of personhood. . . Autonomy is thus, valuable in itself."[13] He adds that:

> The capacity for self-assertion which the individual can exercise presupposes, and in fact derives from, the autonomous nature of the person. By autonomy, I . . . [mean] having a will, a rational will of one's own . . . it means, self-

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[12] According to Gyekye, the aforementioned scholars stress the moral supremacy of the community over the individual thereby neglecting the rights of the individual.

[13] Here, Gyekye grounds rights in a western understanding where the individual is seen as autonomous and as such, has his or her natural right been superior over the sovereignty of the community he or she belongs. See, Kwame Gyekye, *Tradition and Modernity*, p.54.

> governing, self-directing . . . the action emanates
> from his or her rationale will.[14]

What is clear is that Gyekye avers and affirms the existence of the so-called RC by offering an alternative that is MC but his MC is essentially not novel or different or an alternative to IAC. What was is clear is that Gyekye's MC rejects the liberal thesis-the autonomous image of the individual over the community- on one hand, but paradoxically, glorifies it on the other hand. For instance, he argues that though the individual is socially constituted by the community, it is not in the interest of the community to make the individual a robot; a state where the community solely dictates and manipulates the individual.[15] In his attempt to pontificate a "moderate" way of communal living to better the relationship between the community and the individual by recognizing individual rights, he avers that relationship between the community and the individual ought to be reciprocal. The researcher is of the view that there is nothing radical about IAC. This is the position that has been explained and defended in this thesis. In fact, it is the thesis of this thesis.

The motivation for the selection of this topic, is that most African societies are believed to be communitarian; hence, there is the need to know how communitarianism operates. Meanwhile, it is imperative to note that the African concept of communitarianism is distinct from other non-African

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[14] Kwame Gyekye, "Person and Community in African Thought," p. 112.
[15] Kwame Gyekye, *Tradition and Modernity*, p. 63.

concepts such as communism.[16] On this note, an inquiry into African or Afro-communitarianism will shed more light on the character of IAC and the dynamics in it.

To Menkiti, personhood in Africa is not just being born with biological characteristics but something that one must try to achieve. He adds that it is the community that confers personhood on the individual, not the qualities the individual has such as rationality, will, or memory.[17] Gyekye's MC, however, is a direct response to IAC.[18] For instance, according to Gyekye, rights can be derived from nature because an individual has a rational faculty that allows him or her to strive to be the best he or she can be. Therefore to Gyekye, a community cannot disregard individual rights.[19] Gyekye challenges IAC for over-celebrating the community at the expense of individual rights. Gyekye argues that it is because of how personhood is perceived in IAC that is why IAC gives no room for individual rights.

Gyekye adds that rights are not as superfluous as claimed by IAC. He adds that the recognition of rights will make the community flourish better. Therefore, for moderate communitarians such as Gyekye, the relationships

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[16] Communitarianism, communalism, and collectivism are all interchangeable generic terms based on the ethics of egalitarianism, in opposition to the ethics of individualism. Egalitarianism is a socio-political organization where everyone has access to the basic needs of life such as food, clothing, housing and security. This does not imply that there is absence of private property. Communism which is derived from those generic terms is a specific ideological construct describing a socio-political system where there is complete absence of private ownership of the means of production and distribution and therefore no government.

[17] Ifeanyi Menkiti, "Person and Community in African Traditional Thought," pp.171-181.

[18] Kwame Gyekye, *Tradition and Modernity*, pp. 35-76.

[19] Gyekye speaks as though human rights is absent in IAC. The fact that IAC treat rights as secondary does not mean it is absent.

between the community and the individual ought to be reciprocal. According to Gyekye, "the dignity or worth of the individual cannot be diminished by his or her natural membership of the community."[20] Gyekye adds that all human beings are not just members of the community, but "Children of God, by reason of their having been created by God and possessing, in African belief, a divine element called soul."[21]

Statement of Problem

Despite an increase in the discussion of IAC, for more than a decade, scholars are divided on Gyekye's efforts. While some scholars such as Famakinwa (2010) and Matolino (2013) think that Gyekye's moderate communitarianism is not substantial in the sense that it is not different from what Gyekye himself described as; radical or unrestricted communitarianism, others such as Majeed (2018) and Molefe (2016) think Gyekye's MC is adequate in making a distinction between the pro-human individual rights moderate communitarianism and what he calls RC.

However, within these two schools of thought, there is a dearth of literature that approaches the idea of human rights from the African perspective. Therefore, I found out, first, whether IAC is as "radical" as Gyekye labels it when perceived afrocentrically; and, second, whether Gyekye can remove the so-called "radical" communitarian elements in his MC.

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[20]Kwame Gyekye, *Tradition and Modernity*, p.63.
[21] Ibid, p.63.

Thesis Statement

IAC is not radical, in the Gyekyeist sense of the word and idea. Gyekye fails to appreciate the IAC concept of personhood and its connection with individual rights.

Research Questions

After studying Gyekye's position on the matter of communitarianism, the fundamental questions answered are:

1. What is the relationship between the individual and the community with respect to IAC or African/Afro-communitarianism?

2. How different is Gyekye's version of communitarianism from IAC?

3. Is Gyekye correct in describing IAC as "radical"?

4. What happens to the individual who fails to attain personhood?

Objectives

For the study, the principal objective is to provide an assessment of Gyekye's MC to know if it's attainable. Additionally, I identified the following specific objectives for the study:

1. To reach a detailed understanding of the character and essence of IAC.

2. To provide an epistemological window into Gyekye's version of communitarianism.

3. To show that there is nothing "radical" about IAC.

4. To show that the community assists the individual to attain personhood.

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Significance of Study

In the colonial and post-colonial periods, human rights and policies in international, political and academic fora have largely been dictated by and derived from a western (Euro-American) natural rights perspective. However, Josiah Cobbah, indicates that the western notion of human rights denies the economic rights of people who are physically and financially incapable of providing their basic needs[22] as well as society's obligation to satisfy these needs.[23]

It must be added that western social scientists are increasingly questioning the sanctity of the liberal individualist paradigm in their search for answers to contemporary western problems. For example, some scholars have started to question the effect of individualism, especially how it is perceived, upheld and played out from the western social and philosophical contexts, on important social institutions such as marriage and the important societal functions of childcare and the care of the aged in Africa. In this regard, non-western societies may have a lot to offer to the cultural collage of humanity. On this note, the response to whether apart from raw materials, Africa has anything else to offer the rest of the world is in the affirmative as this old question was

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[22] Basic needs include; food, cloth, shelter, drinking water and medicine.

[23] What Cobbah means is that because the basis of western human rights is grounded on individualism which is about the survival of the fittest, there is the suspicion cast on the western view on human dignity and liberty. For example, how do we deal with those who cannot compete because of physical or mental disabilities? Josiah Cobbah "African Values and the Human Rights Debate: An African Perspective," *Human Rights Quarterly,* 9 (1987), p.314.

asked during a Pan-African conference held at University of Ghana, Legon on 13th February 2019. The study is one response to that lingering imperative question.

Moreover, since *Agenda 2063* (also known as *The Africa we want*) of the African Union concerns itself with the implementation of past and existing continental initiative for growth and sustainable development, the study can be a reference material to shape ideas about how to improve the relationship that exists between the African individual and the African community.[24] Additionally, students of African communitarianism and writers alike who have academic and intellectual interests in Gyekye's communitarian ideas will find this work as a useful guide in their scholarly and intellectual pursuits.

Methodology

I adopted a textual analysis for the study. Textual analysis is a research methodology used to describe and interpret the content, structure, and functions

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[24] Over the past fifty years (1963-2013), Africa focused her energy on the decolonization, the struggle against apartheid and attainment of political independence for the continent. On the occasion of the golden jubilee (May 2013) of the African Union (AU), the continent re-dedicated herself to the attainment of the Pan- African vision of an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the international arena. To achieve this vision, the Golden Jubilee Summit of the Union came up with a solemn declaration in eight areas which included social and economic development, integration, democratic governance and peace and security amongst others. In order to make the solemn declaration a reality, the Golden Jubilee Summit of the Union directed the African Union Commission (AUC), supported by the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) Planning and Coordinating Agency (NPCA), the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), to prepare a continental 50-year agenda through a people-driven process outlining the "Africa We Want", namely Agenda 2063. Though this work will be useful for the realization of the seven aspirations of *Agenda2063*, it focuses mainly on the third and fifth aspiration which says "An Africa of good governance, democracy, and respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law," and "An Africa with a strong cultural identity, common heritage, shared values and ethics" respectively. See, African Union Commission, *Agenda 2063: the Africa we want*, Addis Ababa: African Union Commission 2015.

of the messages contained in texts.[25] Despite the flaws of this methodology, that is, texts echo the perspective of the researcher and the specific approaches used to analyze texts are as ideological as the texts themselves, it is a fruitful methodology. Through close and detailed scrutiny, the methodology provided rich discussion as the view of other scholars were considered. This approach was selected because the fundamental goal of the study is to arrive at an understanding of the nature of IAC in general and the character of Gyekye's version in particular through an analytical description of the phenomenon (IAC).

Also, deconstruction was adopted to discover the ontological, epistemological and the axiological significance of IAC.[26] Deconstruction is not just about demolition but also breaking down concepts to expose the true nature of phenomena. Furthermore, because the ideas of a particular philosopher (Gyekye) were under study, I found it imperative to read the original texts by the philosopher as well as commentaries of other scholars under the selected topic area. Through this exercise, I have been able to provide an apt interpretation of the texts. Through this process, I have been able to arrive at a concrete understanding of IAC, an understanding which I have presented in the chapters that follow this introductory section of this thesis.

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[25] See, Michael Patton, *Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods*, London: SAGE Publications, 1990.

[26] I believe that the philosopher under study (Gyekye) adopted a eurocentric approach in studying IAC; therefore, there is the need to re-examine his definition of concepts. In doing this, I adopted deconstruction.

Limitation of the Study

Getting access to some of the relevant books and articles related to the work was difficult due to inadequate funds to purchase original texts as well as the inaccessibility of texts on the internet. However, I made use of available relevant books, articles, and journals. Another challenge was that since I adopted a textual analysis, it was observed that some authors included their prejudice thereby distorting the true nature of certain concepts such as IAC. However, through scrutiny of the texts, I was able to overcome this challenge.

Delimitation of the Study

The debate on IAC became a topical issue in the academic discourse from the 1980s through the works of John Mbiti and Ifeanyi Menkiti specifically.[27] 'Communalism' and 'communitarianism' in the African context according to Kwasi Wiredu is the same.[28] This explains why Gyekye used communalism and "communitarianism as interchangeable synonyms in his book, *Tradition and Modernity*. Communalism is used to refer to and describe the situation in pre-colonial Africa while communitarianism designates contemporary or post-colonial Africa. However for referential accuracy, I adopted the term, 'communitarianism'; therefore, the study situates Gyekye in

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[27] During this period, most African countries had gained independence from their colonial masters. As a result, some African leaders tried to apply European ideologies in reorganizing their respective countries. However, these ideologies turned out to be incompatible and fruitless on the continent of Africa hence there was a need for Africans themselves to come up with ideologies from within the continent because as Karl Marx argues man needs to analyze the objective condition from which he (man) can deduce a theory that will suit his condition. IAC on this note was seen as a framework that responded directly to how the continent can be fashioned.

[28] Kwasi Wiredu, "Social Philosophy in Postcolonial Africa," p. 335.

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this post-colonial period. The research, therefore, basically focuses on Gyekye's MC. Gyekye systematically espouses his moderate communitarian idea in his book, *Tradition and Modernity*.

Conceptual Framework

Several scholars have posited definitions in describing IAC. Léopold Senghor, for instance, argues that IAC is about African societies based on the community and the individual and since it is grounded on dialogue and reciprocity, the community had primacy over the individual without crushing the individual rather permitting him or her to blossom as a person.[29]

Concerning the African communitarian ethos, Jomo Kenyatta writes that "an individual is first and foremost several people's relative and several people's contemporary, while his or her uniqueness is a secondary fact about him or her."[30] On this note, John Mbiti states that "the individual can only say I am because we are; and since we are, therefore I am."[31] Taking inspiration from Mbiti, Ifeanyi Menkiti writes that "as far as Africans are concerned, the reality of the communal world takes precedence over the reality of the individual life histories."[32] Menkiti immediately adds that "in the African understanding, priority is given to the duties which individuals owe to the collectivity, and their rights, whatever these may be, are seen as secondary to the exercise of their duties."[33]

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[29]Léopold Senghor, "Negritude: A Humanism of the 20th Century," p.5.
[30] Jomo Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya*, New York: Vintage, 1965, p. 297.
[31]John Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, p.108.
[32] Ifeanyi Menkiti, "Person and Community in Traditional African Thought," p.171.
[33] Ibid, p.180.

However, according to Gyekye, "radical communitarianism is a view that gives an exaggerated conception of the community, wherein the community is construed as always prior to the individual . . . this conception of the community fails to recognise the individuality of the individual and the rights that naturally belong to a human person in so far as a person is essentially autonomous."[34] He further states: "But here I want to point out that in as much as all the scholars [Senghor, Kenyatta, Mbiti and Menkiti] referred to do not appear to have fully recognised the status and relevance of individual rights, their views patently model the notion of radical and unrestricted communitarianism."[35]

Contrary to Gyekye's claim, no society can be classified as 'radical communitarian.' Scholars such as Kwasi Wiredu and Kwasi Boadi rightly indicate that no society is purely communitarian-whereby the individuality and individual rights of its members are totally ignored.[36] Hence, for Gyekye to think of a brand of communitarianism which is 'radical' is misleading. Also, it is invalid for Gyekye to identify IAC as RC. Menkiti, for instance, made it clear in his submission that IAC treats rights as a secondary matter. This means that rights are present in IAC and not absent. Hence for Gyekye to register that IAC is RC is fallacious since human rights features in the IAC.

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[34] Kwame Gyekye, "Person and Community in African Thought," p.108.
[35] Kwame Gyekye, *Tradition and Modernity*, p.39.
[36] See, Kwasi Wiredu, "Social Philosophy in Postcolonial Africa,"pp.332-339: Kwasi Boadi, "The Ontology of Kwame Nkrumah's Consciencism and the Democratic Theory and Practice in Africa: A Diopian Perspective," *Journal of Black Studies* 30, 4 (2000), pp.475-501.

Gyekye used a eurocentric approach in analysing IAC because Gyekye grounds rights in a western understanding where the individual is seen as autonomous and as such, his or her natural right is superior over the sovereignty of the community he or she belongs. Hence, his conclusion that IAC is RC. The Eurocentric approach denotes analysing non-European cultures with European lenses; thus, putting European culture(s) at the centre of understanding phenomena. Contrarily, an Afrocentric approach, in my view, will best explain the true nature of IAC.

Molefe Asante provides the necessary Afrocentric paradigm in the quest for the study of the phenomena, which demystifies the assertion that western perspective is the universal standard for studying the phenomena. Based on the pioneering work of Cheikh Anta Diop, the Senegalese physicist-turned historian, Asante defines Afrocentric paradigm or Afrocentricity as "[that] which infuses all phenomena from the standpoint of African people as subjects in human history rather than as one that fringes on someone else's culture."[37] What this implies is that as an African, one understands phenomena starting from the African culture so that when one is questioned on any philosophy, for instance, one has to start from African philosophy because that is what is first to him or her. The same applies to history; one needs to start from African history because that is an African's history before other histories. It must be

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[37] Diane Turner, "An Oral History Interview: Molefi Kete Asante," *Journal of Black Studies* 32, 6 (2002), p.718.

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mentioned that Afrocentricity is not the opposite of Eurocentricity, nor does it seek to replace Eurocentricity.

The gist of the argument by Afrocentrists, such as Asante, is that the European view must not be imposed as universal. Just as much as Europeans, Africans are entitled to give their perspective on the African experience. Afrocentricity becomes valuable also for Europeans by giving them a new perspective, an ability to see from different angles and by so doing, put them in a position to explore different views and bring new perspectives.[38]

Thus, with the Afrocentric approach, the African culture(s) become the lenses or centre through which I gaze phenomena. Also, within the Afrocentric approach, "[one] could determine where a writer is located whether in the centre or the margins, by analyzing the text."[39] In that sense, it becomes a perspective on facts, not the data themselves but the orientation that you have towards the data.

Far from being relative, Afrocentricity embodies universalism in that it emphasizes the continuity of human knowledge. Diop emphasizes that neither formal logic nor mathematics are mutually exclusive to Afrocentricity.[40] Unlike the Eurocentric view which seeks to deny the contribution of Africa to world civilization, the Afrocentric paradigm state the records as it is. For instance, Van Sertima asserted and provided both physical and historical proof that

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[38] Molefi Kete Asante, *Afrocentricity: The Theory of Social Change*, Chicago: Peoples Publishing Group, 1997, p.3.

[39] Diane Turner, "An Oral History Interview: Molefi Kete Asante," p.718.

[40] Cheikh Anta Diop, *The African Origin of Civilization: Myth of Reality*. New York: Lawrence Hill, 1974, p. xiv.

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Africans were in the Americas long before Christopher Columbus' journey.[41] Yet, eurocentric view of history makes no mention of this. Also, Herodotus, who is eurocentrically considered to be the 'father of history,' is believed to have studied in Egypt where he glorified the achievements of Egypt to Greece.[42] Chidozie Chukwuokolo added weight to the contention that Afrocentricity intends to reveal the truth when he avers that-

> Afrocentricity which means African centeredness, does not violently confront any person or people, but is a resolute attempt to put the records right. It is about placing African people within their historical framework. It is a demand that the contributions of Africans in all areas of civilization be reflected in world history.[43]

In this regard, Wiredu calls for the conceptual decolonization of African philosophy.[44] This means that the whole range of concepts that have been handed down through the medium of slavery and colonization has to be re-evaluated to reflect the African experience. On this note, I believe that if Gyekye had looked at IAC from the Afrocentric perspective; thus putting the African culture at the centre, he (Gyekye) could have immunized himself from

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[41]Ivan, Van Sertima, Early *America Revisited*, New York: Transaction Publishers, 1998, p.43.
[42] Ibid, pp.43-45
[43]Chidozie Chukwuokolo, "Afrocentrism or eurocentrism: The dilemma of African development." *OGIRISI: A new Journal of African Studies* 6 (2009), pp. 24-39.
[44] Kwasi Wiredu, *Cultural Universals and Particulars: An African Perspective*. Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1996, p.137.

the fallacies and contradictions he runs into. I have, therefore, in this study, conceptualized the operational definitions afrocentrically to expose a more accurate description of IAC.

Operational Definitions

In this work are certain keywords and concepts. These require definition. I presently define these key concepts.

Autonomy

Etymologically, the word, 'autonomy', originates from two Greek words. That is, 'autos', which means 'self" and 'nomos' which means 'laws.' Hence literally, autonomy means 'self-laws' or 'having its laws' which are regarded as supreme over any other law. Autonomous being in this research, implies a being possessed with natural rights that are before and supreme over the sovereignty of all associations of which he or she is a part.

Community

A community is a group of people who have a sense of bonding which includes, but is not limited to, a common language, religion, historical background and culture; whose members may or may not be necessarily living together at a particular geographical space. Having said this, a family, lineage, clan, ethnic group, nation, and a continent can be classified as a community. It would not be erroneous to argue that there can be communities within a community. For example, Ghana as a community is made up of several communities -ethnic groups. On the continental level, countries in Africa such

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as Togo, South Africa, Ethiopia, among others can be classified as communities within a community (Africa).

Duty

Duty is the possession of an obligation to do or avoid some act or the actual action or inaction. Rights possessed by a person necessarily entail a duty on another person's part; a person's duty allows another to enjoy correlative rights. There are two types of duties. The first is affirmative duties which oblige a person to do an act. The second is negative duties which tend to ensure people's abstention from certain acts. For instance, a person's right to life confers a negative duty on every other person to abstain from killing the subject of the right. Also, a person's right to education creates an affirmative duty to parents to provide education for their children.[45]

Impartial Communitarianism (IC)

This is a brand of communitarianism that recognizes both the interest of the individual and the community.

Individual

The word, 'individual,' as used here is restricted to humans and refers to a being who has biological features such as rationality, will, talents and the ability to make choices.

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[45]Austin Fagothey, *Right and Reason: Ethics in Theory and Practice*, Saint Louis: Mosby, 1976, p.225.

Morality

Morality is not alien to the African continent. However, its conceptualization is traceable to the Greek word, 'ethos', meaning 'character' and the Latin word, 'mores,' which means 'habits' or 'social behaviours.' From this, moral maturity used in this study implies the wrong and right behaviours or acceptable and unacceptable behaviours determined by the community. There are three main sources of morality. These, I call rational foundation, religious foundation and cultural foundation.

Rational foundation is morality that stems from our consciousness. In other words, the rightness or wrongness of an action is determined by the performer of an action or a moral agent. A moral agent is one who has the moral capacity to make moral decisions. It is imperative to note that moral agent is restricted to only humans. What this means is that animals, such as dogs, are not considered as moral agents. However, not all humans are considered as moral agents. For example, mad or insane people and children below ten years are not considered as moral agents because they are out of the reach of making moral decisions.

Concerning the religious foundation, the rightness or wrongness of an action is solely determined by religion. For example, the Ten Commandments in the Old Testament of the Bible can be considered as a source of morality for Christians.

Meanwhile, the cultural foundation of morality is generally the acceptable and unacceptable behaviours determined by the society in which one

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finds himself or herself. It must be maintained that among the three foundations of morality, the fundamental among them is the cultural foundation because it is from the cultural environment that for instance, the individual develops his or her rational capacity. What this means is that as humans, our consciousness is determined or informed by our cultural environment. On this note, morality in this work is based on the cultural community; where acceptable and unacceptable behaviours are determined by the community.

Person

The word, 'person,' as used in this study refers to human beings with biological features such as rationality, will, talents and the capacity to make choices, and exhibits moral maturity in the form of respect and concern for others.

Rights

There is no univocal definition for 'rights' because scholars differ in their definition of moral rights. They also differ in terms of how to philosophically justify their existence and function in society and in terms of why they are special.[46] However, the term, 'rights,' may be used in line with the Latin term 'ius', from which words like 'justice' and 'jury' are derived.[47] Hence, an action is right in so far as it maximally promotes the common good, without violating human dignity. It is important to note that rights are defined by the

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[46]Jack Donnelly, "Human Rights and Human Dignity: An Analytic Critique of Non-western Conceptions of Human Rights," *American Political Science Review* 76, 2 (1982), pp. 303-316; Joel Feinberg. "The Nature and Value of Rights," *The Journal of Value Inquiry* 4, 4 (1970), pp. 243-260; Amartya Sen, *Rationality and Freedom,* Harvard University Press, 2004.
[47]Austin Fagothey, *Right and Reason*, p. 239.

community and as such, the individual may exercise his or her rights within that community. This sense of rights tends to go hand in hand with duty even though the two concepts have their distinct meanings. Again, one must not lose sight of the fact that what is right is somewhat determined by one's culture. On this note, human rights used in this study are claims every human being has to such things as life, liberty and property which in turn create a duty for the community and the individual to respect these claims.

Organization of Study

The study is organized into five chapters. Chapter One, which is this present section, introduces the subject matter of this thesis by way of offering the background. Bearing the title of "Splitting Hairs-IAC and Gyekye's MC," it outlines and explains the problem and thesis statement, research questions, objectives, significance, limitation, delimitation, methodology, and organization of my study.

Chapter Two, which has the title of "Literature Review," discusses the views of scholars such as Wiredu, Boadi, Menkiti, among others. This helped to situate the study within current academic discourse. Chapter Three, which has the title of "A Comparative Enquiry into IAC in General and Gyekye's MC in Particular," discusses Menkiti's view on IAC. I did this for three reasons. Firstly, because Menkiti believes it is a distinct conception of personhood that births IAC. Second, Gyekye's idea of personhood in African thought is a response to Menkiti's view that personhood, as understood in indigenous Africa, is a sort of thing one has to achieve. Gyekye identifies this claim of

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Menkiti as erroneous. Finally, Gyekye argues that Menkiti's view on communitarianism is radical or unrestricted since it does not give room for individual assertiveness as well as recognition of individual rights.

Hence, exploring the concept of personhood in the African context provided an understanding of whether indeed IAC is radical or not. Also, a part of this chapter considers the nature of IAC by taking into consideration the views of other scholars such as Wiredu, Mbiti, John Famakinwa, Bernard Matolino, among others. This enterprise enhanced a better understanding of IAC. In this same chapter, Gyekye's criticisms against IAC as well as MC were considered.

Chapter Four whose title is "IAC and Gyekye's MC Compared," is devoted to an assessment of Gyekye's MC. Here, I endeavored to locate and point out positions of ontological, epistemological and axiological divergences and convergences between Gyekye' MC and IAC. I also considered if Gyekye was able to eliminate the so-called radical communitarian elements in his MC. I used deconstruction as a technique because I observed that Gyekye uses Eurocentric lenses in examining IAC, which taints his definition of concepts in meaning.

Finally, Chapter Five, which has the title of "IAC- A holistic Phenomenon of how the community ought to relate with the individual," offers my views and estimations which conclude the thesis. I submit here that per the indigenous worldviews, African societies apply communitarianism, which recognizes human rights as its intrinsic feature. Seeing and understanding this

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quality offers an understanding of the concept of human dignity. Also, I submitted that an Afrocentric approach, which allows the analysing of concept(s) from the African perspective or the view of the African people themselves, is particularly suitable for taking human rights seriously. I point out that indigenously, Africans do not adopt a philosophy of human dignity that is derived from a natural right and individualist framework. Africans function within a communitarian or communal structure where a person's dignity and honour flow from his or her role as a social and cultural being.

Conclusion

Despite the changing world, basic African values such as respect and reciprocity remain. These values should be admitted into the international debate on human rights. Thus, international academic and public debates at the international, continental and national levels should be interested in how to inculcate the African conception of human rights into the globalised frame of human rights and social justice which is often referred to as the international standard under the aegis of the United Nations, and which to a very large extent is directed by the hegemonic politics, economics and ideologies of non-African communities and worldviews.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The literature that has been reviewed is divided into two themes. The first part considers 'communitarianism versus liberalism' while the second considers 'moderate versus radical communitarianism.' Through this enterprise, the researcher has exposed issues surrounding the area of the study as well as identifying the gaps in knowledge present in the studies of some scholars.

Communitarianism vs. Liberalism

Communitarianism is a sharp contrast to liberalism. For instance, Didier Kaphagawani argues that communitarianism emphasizes the supremacy of the community over the individual while liberalism emphasizes the supremacy of the individual over the community.[48] It is imperative to note that although communitarianism is ancient to Africa and other parts of the world, Greek philosopher, Plato, is considered one of the earliest theorists on the concept.
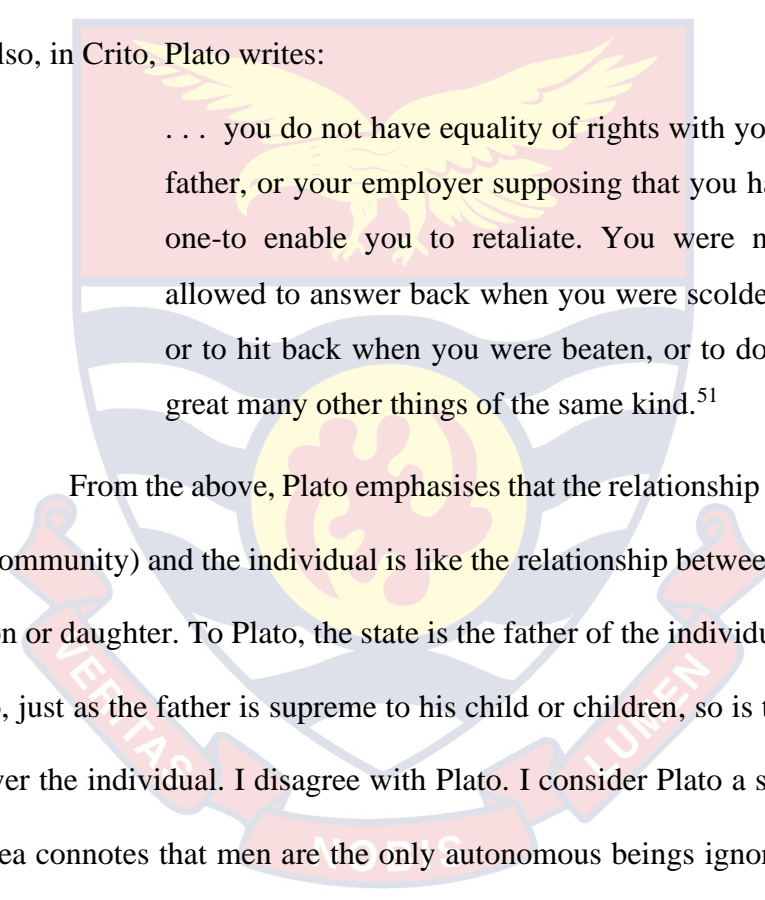
Plato advanced his communitarian idea in Book II of the "Republic" and "Crito." According to the "Republic," Plato commented that human social nature is necessitated by economic needs and adds that no human is self-sufficient.[49] What Plato implies is that the individual is naturally a dependent being and thus, no individual is created to be able to provide for himself or

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[48] Didier Kaphagawani, *On African Communalism: Philosophical Perspective*, Indiana: University Press, 1988.
[49] Plato, "The Republic" BK 11 369b, Trans. in E. Hamilton and H. Cairns (Eds.), *The collected Dialogue of Plato: Including the Letters*, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1973, p. 746.

herself all his or her needs. Therefore, the natural inability of the individual to personally meet all his or her economic needs, without external support, requires him or her to seek the fellowship of others.[50] I agree with Plato in the sense that when a child is born, he or she needs to be taken care of by others (either parents or other members of the community) before the child develops his or her consciousness. Hence, seeking the fellowship of others is equally as important as one's existence itself.

Also, in Crito, Plato writes:

> . . . you do not have equality of rights with your father, or your employer supposing that you had one-to enable you to retaliate. You were not allowed to answer back when you were scolded, or to hit back when you were beaten, or to do a great many other things of the same kind.[51]

From the above, Plato emphasises that the relationship between the state (community) and the individual is like the relationship between a father and his son or daughter. To Plato, the state is the father of the individual members, and so, just as the father is supreme to his child or children, so is the state supreme over the individual. I disagree with Plato. I consider Plato a sexist because his idea connotes that men are the only autonomous beings ignoring other human species such as women. He refuses to acknowledge women as relevant members of society. Also, Plato's idea of communitarianism will certainly strip the

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[50] Ibid.

[51] Plato, "The Apology, Phaedo and Crito," Trans. Benjamin Jowett, *The Howard Classics*, Vol.II, New York: P. F. Collier and Son, 1909, pp.3-39.

individual of his or her rights. This is because Plato's idea presents a one-way affair where the community (father) always dictates to its members (sons and daughters) and its members are forced to comply.

I do not think such is the case with indigenous African communitarianism. I submit here that the relationship between the individual and the community with regards to IAC is a symbiotic relationship where the community depends on the individual and the individual also depends on the community. In this vein, the community permits the individual to exercise his or her rights and talents without being crushed. That is to say African societies provide the world with a better framework from which even non-African societies can tap.

On the communitarian primacy thesis, Aristotle is of the view that the state is by nature prior to the individual just as the whole is prior to its parts.[52] He adds that the state (community) is morally supreme because it aims at the 'Summum Bonum' (the highest good) which, in tend serves the overall good of the individual.[53] Aristotle's view is in harmony with the indigenous African communitarianism. I discuss this further in chapter four.

Although Plato and Aristotle were not recognised as communitarians, its conceptualization could be traced to them. As mentioned earlier in this

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[52] Aristotle, "Nicomachean Ethics," in D. Bonevac (Ed*.), Today's Moral Issues: Classic and Contemporary Issues*, London: Mayfield Publishing Company, 1996, p.9.

[53] The highest good is that which all our actions are geared towards. To Aristotle, the highest good of life is *happiness*. This he calls *Eudaimonia*. See, Thomas Nagel, "Aristotle on Eudaimonia," Phronesis (1972), pp. 252-259.

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chapter, liberalism as a theory emphasises the direct opposite of communitarianism. To understand liberal political philosophy, it is crucial to understand the medieval western conception of society that precedes the liberal era.[54] The political philosophy of liberalism was largely a reaction to this medieval thought.[55] It was the philosophical opposition to traditional authority that was based on divine wisdom, religion, and the common law. The roots of the western concept of human rights lie in liberalism.[56]

To support this claim, Lewis Hinchman argues that it is the writings of Thomas Hobbes and John Locke that ushered in a new intellectual and political tradition in which the individual as a political actor was extracted from the harmonious and holistic totality of the medieval society.[57] Hobbes indicates that in the state of nature, life was short, brutish, poor and nasty.[58] The state of nature then is one in which man heeds his natural passion for security and survival. In this state, Hobbes sees man as possessing a natural right to all the objects he desires and as such, man is responsible for the preservation of his nature, which is his own life.[59]

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[54] See, Josiah Cobbah, "African Values and the Human Rights Debate: An African perspective," *Human Rights Quarterly*, 9, (1987), pp.309-331.

[55] Gerald Frug, "The City as A Legal Concept," *Harvard Law Review*, 93, 6 (1980), pp. 1059-1153.

[56] That is not to say in the medieval period, rights were not given consideration, for Lewis Hinchman tells us that in the medieval period, rights existed for the individual as a member of an established, ongoing community. Lewis Hinchman, "The Origin of Human Rights: A Hegelian Perspective," *Western Political Quarterly* 37 (1984), p.8.

[57] Thomas Hobbes for instance introduced the idea of human rights from the concept of human nature. "The state of nature" was the grounds upon which Hobbes built his political philosophy. See, Lewis Hinchman, "The Origin of Human Rights," p.10.

[58] I get the impression that chiefly the fear of violent death, was the motive which Hobbes thought to be the most "natural" or fundamental of all." See, Thomas Hobbes, The *Leviathan*, 1651; reprint, London: Oxford University Press, 1909.

[59] Lewis Hinchman, "The Origin of Human Rights," p.12.

Like Hobbes, Locke saw individuals as persons stripped off all historical loyalties and beliefs, who are out in the world in pursuit of their security.[60] In this regard, Hobbes posited that although man is essentially selfish and wicked, human reason and necessity led the species into a community contract, through which humans formally agreed to surrender their private rights to a divine ruler.[61] In Locke's scheme, however, there were two contracts. The first contract brought individuals together to form a community and the second contract appointed an individual from among the community to become the ruler. To Locke, the ruler could govern as long as he remained acceptable to the community.

Jean Jacques Rousseau adds that the rights of the ruler did not compromise the fundamental rights of the individual community members.[62] Hegel, however, rejected the liberal theorists' (chiefly, Hobbes and Locke) classical ideas of man in the state of nature. According to Hinchman, Hegel believes that-

> In taking apart existing society, studying its parts,
> and reconstructing it, Hobbes and Locke have left
> something out- not something accidental, but the
> very essence of man's social and political
> relationships. For this reason, their project of
> grounding human rights in man's pre-political
> state appeared to Hegel fundamentally mistaken
> . . . Only if one could somehow purge human

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[60] Ibid, p.12.
[61] Thomas Hobbes, *The Leviathan*.
[62] Jean Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract Book I,* London: Dent, 1913, chaps. 6, 7.

> memory of everything not included in Hobbes'
> and Lockes' state of nature, could one re-
> condition man to think and act as the liberal
> theorist say they do, example, solely and always
> for the sake of self-preservation.[63]

From the above, we get the understanding that man is first and foremost a cultural being before anything else. Hegel adds that 'individual rights' can only be achieved within the state or community. This, he calls the 'Ethical Order.'[64] Hegel further argues that "the right of individuals to be subjectively destined to freedom is fulfilled when they belong to an actual ethical order because the conviction of their freedom finds its truth in such an objective order."[65] Bertrand de Jouvenel was making this same point when he wrote that "social contract theories are views of childless men who must have forgotten their childhood."[66]

However, what is factual is that from the revolutionary ideas of Hobbes and Locke a new western world evolved. The seventeenth and eighteenth-century produced the English Petition of Rights (1627), the U.S. Declaration of Independence (1776), the U.S Constitution (1787), the French Declaration of Rights of Man and Citizen (1789), and the U.S. Bill of Rights (1791). All these were based on the image of the autonomous man championed by Hobbes and

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[63] Quoted from Josiah Cobbah, "African Values and the Human Right Debate," p.317.

[64] Hegel G. W. F. *The Philosophy of Right*. Trans. Knox, T. M, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967, p.55.

[65] By "objective order", Hegel refers to "community." See, Ibid, p.57.

[66] What Bertrand de Jouvenel, means is that contractarians speak as though they were not once children to have been taken care of by their parents or the community at large. See, Bertrand de Jouvenel, *The Pure Theory of Politics,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963, p. 45.

Locke. According to these contractarians, man was possessed in nature with natural rights that were prior to and supreme over the sovereignty of all associations of which he is part, including the sovereign state.

Jack Donnelly argues that rights are alien to the African continent in the sense that rights are foreign to Afro-communitarianism. He avers that Africans typically emphasized duties to secure a dignified life.[67] Motsamai Molefe adds that "when rights come face-to-face with the Afro-communitarian axiology, they will be surely affected."[68] Both Donnelly and Molefe sound as though the concept of human rights is alien to the African continent. Contrarily, I disagree with the aforementioned scholars. It must be acknowledged that it is rather Africans' respect for human rights that make them pursue the commonweal-the interest of all members of the community.

It is a misconception that Africans have no place for human rights and that it was only through colonialism that western concepts of individual rights and law have found a place in Africa.[69] For example in December 1948, at a time when most of the population of Africa, south of the Sahara, was still under colonial rule, a General Assembly dominated by the western world adopted a Universal Declaration of Human Rights at the United Nations.[70] There is no

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[67] Jack Donnelly, "Human Rights and Human Dignity: An Analytic Critique of Non-Western Conceptions of Human Rights," *American Political Science Review* 76, 2 (1982), p. 309.

[68] Molefe Motsamai, "A Defense of Moderate Communitarianism: A Place of Rights in African Moral-Political Thought,"*Phronimon* 18, 1 (2017), pp.181-203.

[69] During the colonial period, the political and the legal system of the colonizer were superimposed upon the customary, political and legal processes of African peoples. In British West Africa, for instance, the policy of indirect rule ensured that although certain minor disputes could be settled in a customary manner, the English common law was the ultimate source of authority. See, Josiah Cobbah, "African Values and the Human Right,"pp.309-331.

[70] Ibid, p. 309.

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doubt that the Declaration was a product of western liberal ideology. At the time of political independence, the new African countries inherited a liberal state with all the paraphernalia of western individual rights and constitutional law.[71]

It is in this light that in the 1960s when most Africans gained independence, there was a newfound need to reorganize the continent.[72] It was rare for any African country to adopt capitalism because that was the framework the European used to impoverish Africans. Socialism became an anti-colonial ideology adopted by many African leaders. Julius Nyerere argues that socialism was not alien to the African continent and that Africans need to just take a step back to indigenous African society (communalism) because in Nyerere's words "that was socialism and that is socialism."[73]

Kwame Nkrumah adds that communalism is "the social-political ancestor of socialism." He further states that "socialism has characteristics in common with communalism, just as capitalism is linked with feudalism and slavery. In socialism, the principles underlying communalism are given expression in modern circumstances."[74] It is imperative to reckon that socialism is an ideology that philosopher-kings such as Nkrumah placed on a phenomenon such as communalism. Kwame Gyekye, however, has commented that our

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[71] Ibid, p.315.

[72] This is because the Europeans fashioned the African continent in a way that will benefit them and not the African indigenes. See, Kwame Nkrumah, *Africa must Unite*, London: Heinemann, 1963.

[73] Julius Nyerere, *Ujamaa: Essays on Socialism*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1968, p. 300.

[74] Kwame Nkrumah, *Consciencism: The Philosophy and Ideology for Decolonization and Development with Particular Reference to the African Revolution*, First Edition, London: Panaf Books, 1964, p.73.

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philosopher kings such as Nkrumah and Nyerere made a mistake in supposing that modern socialism was 'prefigured' in IAC.[75] He goes on to say "I do not think that there is a necessary connection between communitarianism [communalism] and socialism; nor is communitarianism [communalism] a necessary condition of socialism. The European societies that gave birth to Marxian socialism were not marked by communitarian societies; they were in fact societies characterized by the ethos of individualism."[76]

Gyekye argues correctly. Nyerere, for instance, could have simply talked about the indigenous African society without comparing it with socialism, because as soon as he made that comparison, one is expecting to see a similar philosophical underpinning between the indigenous African system and classical socialism (usually accredited to Karl Marx) which, as Gyekye argued, are different. Nyerere's misunderstanding of Africans' reality explains why his Ujamaa Villiagization, where Nyerere moved people from the urban areas to settle in the rural areas to engage in agriculture by using sample tools such as holes, failed. I submit here that Nyerere's "Ujamaa Villiagization" was to experiment with socialism in Tanzania. I think however Nyerere should be given the benefit of the doubt because during that period, in the 1960s, socialism and capitalism were the two competing ideologies on the African continent so that one was neither here nor there.

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[75] Kwame Gyekye, *Tradition and Modernity: Philosophical Reflections on The African Experience*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997, p.146.
[76] Ibid, p.149.

My problem with Gyekye, however, is that he uses the terms, 'Communitarianism' and 'Communalism,' interchangeably, without making any attempt to show why he uses these two terms interchangeably.[77] He takes the similarity between the two concepts for granted.[78] Communalism is a very old concept used by philosophers in Africa, such as Nkrumah, Senghor, and Nyerere. They often used the term, Communalism, in relation to African Socialism.

Kwasi Boadi indicates that even though the indigenous African society favoured communitarianism, it does not necessarily imply that they were socialist in the sense of lacking private wealth or conflict.[79] If there was any such thing, Sudarkassa argues it had to be only at the basic productive unit of the large family, which is a cluster of matrilineal and patrilineal families residing together in a single compound as a political and economic unit.[80] In other words, it was the large family, not a liberalist individual, which was the primary unit of the society. One could, therefore, argue that in indigenous African societies, the private acquisition had to have set in beyond the level of the extended family because naturally, some extended families had to be more productive than others. As such, the property of an extended family is thus

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[77] Kwame Gyekye, Tradition *and Modernity*, pp.35-36.

[78]I submit here that the principles that underpin the concept of communitarianism are not essentially similar to the principles that underpin the concept of communalism.

[79] Kwasi Boadi, "The Ontology of Kwame Nkrumah's Consciencism and the Democratic Theory and Practice in Africa: A Diopian Perspective," *Journal of Black Studies* 30, 4 (2000), p. 496.

[80]Niara Sudarkasa, "African and Afro-American Family Structure: A Comparison," *The Black Scholar* 11, 8(1980), pp.37-60.

public only to the members of the family and private in relation to other extended families.[81]

Boadi adds that in Africa, an individual family is seen as private while the state which is made of individual families is seen as public. As such, property which belongs to an individual family is public among members of that family and private in relation to members of different families.[82] I find this revealing because it explains why when there is a clash of responsibility between the state and an individual's family. Gyekye's response, for instance, will be that the latter, which is the individual family, ought to be preferred. I observe that Gyekye remains committed to the communitarian thesis that represents the moral supremacy of the community (public) over the individual (private). This is because, in terms of property, the individual family becomes public while the state becomes private. This has been discussed further in chapter four.

Daly affirms that communitarianism emerged as a challenge to the liberal culture that had allowed community values to degenerate. This is to the extent that a rescue mission becomes inevitable.[83] The communitarian 'common good' does not refer to the non-personal, non-private good of each individual

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[81] Kwasi Boadi, "The Ontology of Kwame Nkrumah's Consciencism and the Democratic Theory and Practice in Africa: A Diopian Perspective." p. 496.

[82] Ibid, p.496.

[83] Markate Daly, *Communitarianism: A New Public Ethics*, California: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1994.

but instead refers to the good of the community as a whole.[84] Hence, the communitarian goodwill refers to the community itself.

Famakinwa suggests that there are two key points between communitarians and liberals and these are the image of the individual and the primacy thesis.[85] While the liberals advocate for the autonomous image of the individual, the communitarians advocates the supremacy of the community.[86] For instance, John Rawls states that "each person possesses an inviolability founded on justice that even the welfare of society as a whole cannot override . . . the rights secured by justice are not subject to political bargaining or to the calculus of social interests."[87] On the other hand, communitarians propagate the social image of the community.[88] The identity of the individual becomes blurred the moment his or her relationship with other people in the community is disconnected.[89] The liberal autonomous conception of the individual is an error because the individual's natural identity is derived from history, culture, and tradition. In the words of Michael Sandel:

> To imagine a person incapable of constitutive
> attachment such as these is not to conceive an

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[84] Edward Bond, *Ethics and Human Well Being* New Jersey: Blackwell Publishers, 1996, p.219.
[85] John Famakinwa, "How Moderate is Kwame Gyekye's Moderate Communitarianism?" Thought and Practice 2, 2 (2010), pp. 65-77.
[86] Ibid, pp. 65-77.
[87] John Rawls, A *Theory of Justice*, Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1995, pp.3-4.
[88] For instance, Maclntyre argues that the individual person is defined by the story of those communities in which the story of his or her life is rooted. He further indicates that an individual is a historical being with a concrete (not imagined) past where his or her history occurs within a particular culture or tradition into which he or she is born. See, Alasdair Maclntyre, *After Virtue*, Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press 148 (1984), p.221.
[89] See, Kwame Gyekye, "Person and community in African Thought," *Person and Community: Ghanaian Philosophical Studies 1* (1992), p.103; John Kuzmickas, "The Person, Society and the State", in P. Peachey, et tal. (Eds.), *The Place of the Person in Social Life*, Washington D. C: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 1991, p.99.

> ideally free rational agent, but to imagine a
> person wholly without character, without moral
> depth; to have character is to know that I move in
> a history I neither summon nor command, which
> carries consequences nonetheless for my choices
> and conduct.[90]

Sandel further rejects the liberal non-constitutive image of the individual because to him, the self-rules out the possibility of the public life in which, for good or ill, the identity as well as the interest of "others", could be at stake.[91] Kwame Gyekye, Charles Taylor, Amitai Etzioni, and Robert Bellah support Michael Sandel's view.[92] Charles Taylor's acceptance of the general communitarian social identity of the individual is better captured in the following words:

> I am arguing that the free individual of the west
> is only what he is by virtue of the whole society
> and civilization which brought him to be and
> which nourishes him; that our family can only
> form us up to this capacity and these aspirations
> because they are set in this civilization; and that a
> family done outside of this context-the real old

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[90] Michael Sandel, "The Procedural Republic and the Unencumbered Self," in Avineri Shlomo and De-Shalit Avner, *Communitarianism and individualism*, Indiana: University Press, 1992, p.23.

[91] Michael Sandel*, Liberalism and the Limits of Justice*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.1983.

[92] For instance Taylor commented that the rights liberals claim on behalf of the individual can only flourish within the human community and that the individual is a bearer of rights in view of his or her social nature or natural membership of the community. See, Charles Taylor, "Atomism," in Avineri Shlorno and De-Shalit Avner, *Communitarianism and Individualism*, Indiana: University Press, 1992, p.33.

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patriarchal family was a quite different animal
which never tended these horizons.[93]

Concerning whether the individual is really free in the African context,
Chukwuemeka Nze argues that the individual is free or still enjoys his freedom
and autonomy, despite his duties and obligations to the community.[94] He
maintains that the individual is free even though his or her will is determined
by the community. Nze adds that the individual as a member of the whole
enjoys the amount of freedom which he derives from the collectivity.[95]
Meanwhile, Chukwudum Okolo contends that Nze's postulation is misleading.
Okolo writes that "in African philosophy, self as a subject suffers; it is
accounted for almost totally in terms of relation to others."[96] What Okolo
implies is that in most African communities, there is little or no room for
individual values such as personal initiative, responsibility, spontaneity, auto
decision, and self-determination, which individuals cherish because that is the
hallmark of true liberty and autonomy. Okolo concludes that Afro
communitarianism reduces man to 'a means' rather than 'an end' in itself. He
adds that instead, "man must be self, not other determined."[97]

For Gyekye, the individual, although originating from and inseparably
bound to his family and community, possesses a clear concept of himself as a

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[93] Ibid, p.45.
[94] Chukwuemeka Nze, Aspects *of African Communalism*, Dublin: Veritas Publishers, 1989.
[95] Ibid.
[96] Chukwudum Okolo, "Self as a Problem in African Philosophy," *International Philosophical Quarterly* 32, 4 (1992), pp.477-485.
[97] Ibid, p.483.

distinct person. It is from this combined sense of personhood and communal membership that the family and community expect individuals to take personally enhancing and socially responsible decisions and actions.[98] Although Gyekye accepts that the dominant entity of African social order in the community, he has this to say:

> It would be more correct to describe that order as 'amphibious', for it manifests features of both communality and individuality. African social thought seeks to avoid the excesses of the two exaggerated systems, while allowing for a meaningful, albeit uneasy, interaction between the individual and the society.[99]

Philip Selznick tells us that there is no individual without a community and there is no community without individuals.[100] Over time, the bone of contention which existed between communitarians and liberals has gradually dissipated. Liberals need not reject the communitarian's 'common good', and communitarians need not reject the liberal rights because though the liberal individual is autonomous, the same individual is not an 'asocial being.'[101] Hence, liberals must not deny the fact that the individual's autonomous capacity is communally cultivated.[102] This has been discussed further in chapter four.

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[98] Kwame Gyekye, *An Essay on African Philosophical Thought: The Akan Conceptual Scheme*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1995.

[99] Kwame Gyekye, *An Essay on African Philosophical Thought,* p.154.

[100] Philip Selznick, "Foundations of Communitarian Liberalism," in A. Etzioni (Ed.) *The Essential Communitarian Reader*, Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publisher, 1998, pp. 3-13.

[101] "Asocial being," means a being that can exist in isolation of the community. See, John Famakinwa, "The Liberal Common Good,"*Diametros* 12 (2007), pp.25-43.

[102] David Gauthier, *Morals by Agreement*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987, p.346.

Radical vs. Moderate Communitarianism

Currently, the dispute has shifted to arguments among communitarians themselves. Two rival models of communitarianism have been identified. In Gyekye's book, *Tradition and Modernity,* he identified two types of communitarianism; that is unrestricted or radical and restricted/moderate communitarianism.[103] According to Gyekye, radical communitarianism emphasizes the uncompromising stance on the moral supremacy of the community over and above the individual. On this note, Gyekye classified scholars such as John Mbiti and Ifeanyi Menkiti as radical communitarians.

Gyekye adds that radical communitarians also push for the inseparability thesis. This can be found in John Mbiti's book, *African Religions and Philosophy*, specifically in the line that reads as "I am because we are and since we are therefore I am."[104] What this implies is that the existence of the individual is dependent on the community and hence, the individual cannot exist in isolation of the community.

Mogobe Ramose maintains that 'Ubuntu', as a socio-ethical imperative of African peoples, is not merely restricted to Bantu-speaking peoples who use the word 'Ubuntu' or any equivalent thereof.[105] It also includes the worldview of other ethnic groups of sub-Saharan Africa who share similar principles

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[103] Kwame Gyekye, *Tradition and Modernity*.

[104] John Mbiti, *African Philosophy and Religion*, Nairobi: African Educational Publishers 1969, p.108.

[105] Ubuntu is a Bantu term meaning "humanity." It is often translated as "I am because we are," or "humanity towards others". See, Michael Eze, "What is African communitarianism? Against consensus as a regulative ideal," *South African Journal of Philosophy* 27, 4 (2008), pp.386-399.

embodied in Ubuntu.[106] The reason for this broad similarity is based on the notion of interrelatedness of cultural affinity and kinship:

> Our point of departure is that Ubuntu may be seen as the basis of African philosophy . . . [And] . . . a persuasive philosophical argument can be made that there is a 'family atmosphere', that is, a kind of philosophical affinity and kinship among and between the indigenous people of Africa.[107]

Ubuntu is at once a philosophy and a culture. This is what Ramose means when he writes of Ubuntu as the foundation of African philosophy. Analytically speaking, 'Ubuntu' is a term used to describe the quality or essence of being a person amongst many sub-Saharan ethnic groups of the Bantu language family. The African notion of 'person' must be understood differently from the western codification of a person as essentially rational, where 'rationalism' remains a sole criterion for subjectivity.

I submit here that while rationality is presupposed to all persons, rationality need not be the only criterion to determine who is a human being. More critical for the current purposes is the understanding of a person as located in a community, where being a person is to be in a dialogical relationship in the community. Accordingly, a person's humanity is dependent on the appreciation, preservation, and affirmation of another person's humanity. To deny another's humanity is to depreciate my humanity. To be a person is to recognize therefore

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[106] Ubuntu is a brand of IAC; popular among the Bantu speaking people of sub-Sahara Africa.
[107] Mogobe Ramose, *African Philosophy through Ubuntu*, Harare: Mond Books, 1999, p.49.

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that my subjectivity is in part constituted by other persons with whom I share the social world. This social world is dependent on our constitutive social intercourse. On this view, Mbiti writes:

> Only in terms of other people does the individual become conscious of his own being, his duties, his privileges, and responsibilities towards himself and toward other people . . . whatever happens to the individual happens to the whole group and whatever happens to the whole group happens to the individual. The individual can only say; "I am because we are, and since we are therefore I am." This is the cardinal point in understanding the African view of man.[108]

Ike Odimegwu avers that Mbiti's proposition reduces the individual to a derived being, whose freedom is curtailed while the socio-economic interpretation of the aforementioned claim of Mbiti implies that the individual is parasitic.[109]   Though Ernest Albert Ruch and K. Anyanwu agree with Mbiti when they observe that in indigenous African societies, the individual does not do anything, receive anything, or suffer anything alone. Ruch and Anyanwu with Odimegwu however together concede that this attitude of the indigenous African society restricts and even stifles individual creativity, originality, and freedom.[110] Meanwhile, Gbadegesin says the contrary.

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[108]John Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, p.108.

[109] Ike Odimegwu, "How Communalist is Africa," *Philosophy and Praxis, Journal of the Nigerian Philosophical Association*, (2007), p.2.

[110] Ernest Albert Ruch and K. Anyanwu, *African Philosophy: An Introduction to the Main philosophical Trends in Contemporary Africa*, Rome: Catholic Book Agency, 1981, p.144.

Segun Gbadegesin argues that in indigenous African communitarianism (hereafter IAC), individuals are valued in themselves as potential contributors to the communal survival because many individuals have the wisdom to guide the community and such people are well respected.[111] He concludes by saying that the social structures of African societies are communal, where human persons are conceived as communal beings embedded in a context of interdependence, sharing the same common interests and values. This assertion of Gbadegesin has been discussed further in chapter four of this research.

Meanwhile, I also disagree with Odimegwu because the '*we*' in Mbiti's argument (I am because *we* are: and since *we* are therefore I am) implies that the individual is part of his or her existence. Odimegwu will be right if Mbiti had replaced the '*we*' with '*they*' because that will imply that the individual is totally dependent on the group. Ifeanyi Menkiti advances Mbiti's argument and argues that-

> The community which defines the person as person, not some isolated static quality of rationality, will, or memory . . . in the African understanding, human community plays a crucial role in the individual's acquisition of full personhood.[112]

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[111] Segun Gbadegesin, *African Philosophy Traditional Yoruba Philosophy and Contemporary African Realities,* New York: American University Studies Series 4, 1991.

[112] Ifeanyi Menkiti, "Person and Community in African Traditional Thought," in R. A. Wright (Ed.), *African Philosophy: An Introduction*, Lanham: University Press of America, 1984, p.179.

This communitarian view proceeds from the assumption that the welfare, values, and goals of the community are supreme and form the overriding consideration for morality and social justice. It stresses the value of specifically communal and public goods and conceives of values as rooted in communal practices. Alasdair MacIntyre observes that-

> . . . the story of my life is always embedded in the story of those communities from which I derive my identity. I am born with a past; and trying to cut myself off from the past, in the individualist mode, is to deform my present relationships. The possession of a social identity coincides. Notice that rebellion against my identity is always one possible mode of expressing it.[113]

From the two extracts quoted above, there is the understanding that the histories of an individual in a culture or society are what constitutes the self, and these histories and the self are so intimate that the individual cannot detach himself or herself from such histories. This is so because any attempt to define one's self outside these histories will result in the deformation of the individual's current social relationships. Given all these points, Famakinwa identified three key points in IAC: firstly, the moral supremacy of the community over the individual; secondly, the individual is an inseparable member of the community and thirdly, rights in a community are regulated by

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[113] Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press 148, 1984, p.211.

love and shared values.[114] These cardinal points of IAC-also called 'radical communitarianism' by scholars such as Famakinwa and Gyekye-has been discussed further in chapter three of this research.

In *The Unexamined Life: Philosophy and African Experience*, Gyekye presents his moderate or restricted communitarianism.[115] Gyekye challenges the IAC stance of Menkiti who argues that in Africa, the communal ethos is ontologically and epistemologically prior to the individual and so, it is in fulfilment of the interests of the community alone that the individual derives his or her personhood.[116] Menkiti adds that "just as the navel points men to umbilical linkage with generations preceding them-so also do language and its associated social rules point individuals to a mental commonwealth with others whose life histories encompass the past, present, and future.[117] This emphasizes that the individuals come from a common gene pool and belongs to a common linguistic community. Menkiti avers that personhood in Africa is defined by the community and not by qualities such as rationality, will, or memory.

Gyekye accuses Menkiti of defending a radical communitarian version. According to Gyekye, Menkiti speaks as though the individual is wholly molded and constituted by his or her immediate community.[118] The motivation behind the clamour for acceptance of moderate communitarianism (hereafter MC),

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[114] John Famakinwa, "How Moderate is Kwame Gyekye's Moderate Communitarianism?" pp.67-77.
[115] Kwame Gyekye, *The Unexamined Life: Philosophy and the African Experience*, Legon: University of Ghana, 1988.
[116] Ifeanyi Menkiti, "Person and Community in African Traditional Thought," pp.171-181.
[117] Ibid, p.172.
[118] Kwame Gyekye, *Tradition and Modernity*, pp.36-37.

according to its proponents of whom Gyekye himself is part, is to deal with the so-called radical nature of IAC by recognizing individual assertiveness as well as individual rights. In other words, Gyekye's MC is a rejection of what he considers as 'the excesses' of IAC.

MC, as a new model of communitarianism, therefore recommends adjustments to IAC. Moderate communitarians are of the view that since it is wrong for the liberals to over-celebrate the rights of the individual, in the same vein, it is equally wrong for the communitarians to over-celebrate the community.[119] The moderate communitarians on this note adopt what could be described as 'the Aristotelian golden rule.' They choose to live in the middle ground between the two extremes. Therefore, moderate communitarians advocate for a balance between the good of the community and that of the individual.[120] Moderate communitarians are of the view that both the community and individual should enjoy equal moral worth because no society is fully communal or fully individualistic.[121] Other proponents of MC include Bellah, Etzioni, and Selznick.[122] It is however interesting to note that the moderate communitarian's recognition of rights does not amount to a rejection of core IAC values. Details of this have been discussed in chapter four.

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[119] John Famakinwa, "How Moderate is Kwame Gyekye's Moderate Communitarianism?" pp.67-77.

[120] Kwame Gyekye, *Tradition and Modernity*, p.41.

[121] Ibid.

[122] MC, call for the recognition of both rights and responsibilities see, Etzioni Amitai, New Communitarian Thinking: Persons, Virtues, Institutions, and Communities, Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1995; Robert Bellah, et al., (1985), *Habits of the Heart*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985; Philip Selznick, "Foundations of Communitarian Liberalism," pp.3-13.

Moderate communitarians are of the view that both the community and the individual are morally important, for just as there cannot be an individual without the community, there cannot be a community without the individual. In the same vein, Gyekye is of the view that communitarianism is not necessarily a negation of individual rights. Gyekye has this to say:

> The respect for human dignity, a natural or fundamental attribute of the person which cannot, as such, be set at naught by the communal structure, generates regard for personal rights. The reason is that the natural membership of the individual person in a community cannot rob him of his dignity or worth, a fundamental and inalienable attribute he possesses as a person.[123]

Gyekye further argues that failure to recognize individual rights can lead to exaggerating the normative status and power of the community in relation to those of the individual, and this can lead to "obfuscating our understanding of the real nature of the person."[124] Meanwhile, scholars such as Anthony Oyowe have argued that the principle of equal regard for both the community and the individual is fundamentally problematic. According to these scholars, this principle of equal regard supposes that both the community and the individual can be regarded equally when in fact they cannot.[125] The reason that the demands of the community and the individual usually pull in different directions

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[123] Kwame Gyekye, "Person and Community in African Thought," p.114.
[124] Ibid, p.106.
[125] Anthony Oyowe, "Strange bedfellows" *African Human Rights Law Journal* 13, 1 (2013), pp. 1-22.

and therefore it is impossible to recognize both equally, for eventually, one will be privileged over the other.[126] I agree with Oyowe because there are conflicts between the individual and the community hence a theory that proposes to address these conflicts ought not to restate them but rather resolve them. The resolution, however, is not possible when both entities are regarded as equal.

Furthermore, Oyowe claims that we cannot ascribe equal moral standing to both the community and the individual for eventually one will be privileged over the other holds in the sense that even in Gyekye's MC, he does not consider individual rights as primary social values that ought to be promoted hence, he ironically ends up giving more prominence to social responsibilities. In effect, the good of the community takes precedence over that of the individual. Famakinwa in this vein adds that the recognition of individual rights under Gyekye's MC is for the sake of the community, not that of the individual.[127]

Gyekye is also of the view that if personhood is determined solely by relations to the community, individual rights will not be recognized within that community. Although individuals are social by nature, they are other things as well. On this point, Gyekye writes:

> I have in mind such essential attributes of the person as rationality, having a moral sense and capacity for virtue and, hence, for evaluating and making moral judgments: all this means that the

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[126] Literally, the bone of contention between the community and the individual is as a result of our regards of both entities as fundamental. Hence a theory that maintains this equality cannot take us beyond the tension. See, Anthony Oyowe, "Strange bedfellows: Rethinking Ubuntu and Human rights in South Africa."

[127] John Famakinwa, "How Moderate is Kwame Gyekye's Moderate Communitarianism?"

individual is capable of choice. If we do not choose to be social because we are social by nature-neither do we choose to be intelligent or rational beings with a moral sense or, capacity for virtue?[128]

Moreover, Gyekye holds that though the community discovers and nurtures the individual, human mental features are not a creation of the community. The community then, in Gyekye's view, only plays a partial role in the formation of the individual as well as providing the forum for the individual to realize all his or her goals and dreams. He also thinks that the capacity for self-assertion shows that an individual has his or her own rational will and can follow his own goals and dreams. He argues that this is not the case with IAC.

Gyekye argues that IAC fails to give adequate recognition to the creativity, inventiveness, imagination, and idealistic proclivities of some human individuals in matters relating to the production of ideas and the experience of visions.[129] He adds that the powers of inventiveness, imagination, and so on are not entirely a function of the communal structure. They are instead a function of natural talents or endowments, even though they can only be nurtured and exercised in a cultural community.[130]

Scholars have responded to various issues raised in Gyekye's Moderate Communitarianism. For instance, Matolino notes that Gyekye plunges himself

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[128] Kwame Gyekye, *Tradition and Modernity*, p.53.
[129] Ibid.
[130] Ibid, p. 59.

into inconsistency. On the one hand, Gyekye wants a schema that takes rights seriously; but, on the other hand, he does not expect moral agents to be obsessed with rights. He further notes that if MC obsesses about socio-communal values then it is the same as IAC.[131]

I agree with Matolino when he argues that Gyekye's MC is inconsistent. My objection to Matolino, however, is that he argues that MC is not sufficiently different from IAC which he also calls radical communitarianism (RC), concerning the treatment of rights. The conclusion that Matolino draws is that there is no discernible difference between Menkiti and Gyekye with regards to rights; and, as such, both are instances of a radical form of communitarianism. Contrary to Matolino's view, it is observed that Menkiti is after the normative notion of personhood that is concerned essentially with assessing how moral agents conduct their lives, whether in ways that produce virtuous or defective characters. Those human beings that do well are considered to be persons, a commending term; and those that fail are blamed or frowned upon. Details of this have been considered in chapter four.

Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed the literature on communitarianism in general and Gyekye's moderate version in particular. It has also discussed the two main versions of communitarianism-radical and moderate. The intent is to carry out detailed discussions of major and relevant issues generated in Gyekye's

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[131]Benard Matolino, "Radicals versus Moderates,"pp.160-170.

moderate communitarianism in the subsequent chapters of this thesis. In subsequent chapters, the thesis of this discussion is developed and argued.

CHAPTER THREE

A COMPARATIVE ENQUIRY INTO IAC IN GENERAL AND GYEKYE'S MC IN PARTICULAR

Introduction

Though Gyekye predicates his communitarian ideas on the Akan philosophy, he nevertheless generalizes his conclusion on sub-Saharan Africa. For instance, in the preface of *Tradition and Modernity,* Gyekye writes that: "Because I consider the post-colonial experiences of the African people – experiences in dealing with problems attendant to transition to a new era or phase of development – to be largely common, I have made the whole of sub-Saharan Africa (rather than a specific nation or region of it) the focus of my attention in this book."[132] While not ignoring the diversities of the cultures of Africa, Gyekye emphasizes that there are certain underlying similarities between the cultures of Africa. According to him, one of the commonalities among African cultures is a communitarian social order. What this means is that Gyekye's book, *Tradition and Modernity*, intends to deal with an issue that borders largely on Africans within the sub-Saharan region.

In *Tradition and Modernity,* Gyekye's module of communitarianism-Moderate Communitarianism (hereafter MC), attempts to ascribe equal moral standing between the community and the individual. By this approach, Gyekye suggests that individual human rights are not fully considered in IAC. Gyekye

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[132] Kwame Gyekye, *Tradition and Modernity: Philosophical Reflections on the African Experience*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997, p.xii.

disagrees with Ifeanyi Menkiti. Gyekye describes Menkiti as a strict or radical communitarian thinker. In this chapter, therefore, Menkiti's views on communitarianism will be considered for three reasons: First, Gyekye's idea of how communitarianism should be practiced in Africa is a direct response to Menkiti's description of Indigenous African Communitarianism (hereafter IAC). For instance, Gyekye states that-

> Making Mbiti's statement, "I am, because we are; and since we are, therefore I am," his point of departure, the African philosopher Ifeanyi Menkiti, from Nigeria, for instance, infers that the African view asserts the ontological primacy of the community, that "as far as Africans are concerned, the reality of the communal world takes precedence over the reality of the individual life histories, whatever they may be."[133]

Second, Gyekye's idea of personhood in African thought is a response to Menkiti's view. This is especially evident when one sees that Menkiti argued that personhood, as understood in indigenous Africa, "is the sort of thing which has to be attained."[134] Gyekye identifies this claim of Menkiti as erroneous. Finally, Gyekye argues that Menkiti's view on communitarianism is radical or unrestricted since it does not give room for individual assertiveness or recognition of individual rights. Hence, Gyekye proposes his moderate

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[133] Ibid, p.37.

[134] Thus, according to Menkiti, personhood in the African worldview is not just something a person is born with. Rather, it is something an individual needs to achieve. Here, we could observe that Menkiti is talking about African axiology of personhood rather than the mere ontology of personhood. Ibid, p.48.

communitarian theory.[135] Having set the tone for the discussion of the contradicting views about IAC, let's now consider Menkiti's argument.

Menkiti's Argument about IAC

Bernard Matolino avers that the origin of Menkiti' argument is traceable to John Mbiti, whose argument is also traceable to that of Placide Temples, whose thesis on the Bantu people is ultimately communitarian.[136] According to Matolino, Temples argues that the individual, among the Bantu ethnic group, is essentially in ontological relations with his or her community.[137] Temples maintains that ". . . the living 'muntu'[138] is in relation of being to being with God, with his [or her] clan brethren, with his [or her] family and with his [or her] descendants. He [or she] is in a similar ontological relationship with his [or her] patrimony, his [or her] land with all that it contains or produces, or with all that grows or lives in it."[139] Matolino adds that this ontological relationship with other beings and things involves moral achievement and worthiness.[140] Further, Temples holds the view that the Bantu cannot see the individual as a lone being.[141] Instead, the individual is seen as a force involved in intimate relations with other forces. In this regard, Temples affirms that the individual:

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[135] The rational for this version is to show that individual rights ought to be recognized in a communitarian framework. Thus, to Gyekye, MC recommends a readjustment of IAC.

[136] Bernard Matolino, "Radicals versus moderates: A Critique of Gyekye's Moderate Communitarianism," *South African journal of philosophy* 28, 2, (2009), p. 3.

[137] Ibid, p.3

[138] The word, "muntu", inherently incorporates an idea of excellence or plenitude. See, Placide Temples, *Bantu Philosophy*, Paris: Presence Africaine, 1959, p.66.

[139] Ibid, p.66.

[140] While drawing inspiration from Temples, what Matolino means is that in order for one to be seen as a person, one ought to exhibit moral worth or attainment.

[141] For the Bantu, it is not even enough to describe the individual as a social being. See, Bernard Matolino, "Radicals versus Moderates," p.3.

> . . . knows himself [or herself] to be a vital force,
> even though influencing some forces and being
> influenced by others. The human being apart
> from the ontological hierarchy and the interaction
> of forces has no existence in the conception of the
> Bantu."[142]

From the above, it can be deduced that first of all, according to Temples, personhood in the African context is one's relationship with the community. Secondly, the individual should display moral values as failure to do so prevents him or her from achieving personhood. Matolino captures it better when he argues that "this relation should exhibit some form of moral excellence as failure to show this plenitude deprives one of the status of personhood."[143]

John Mbiti advanced Temples' work with his notion that an individual cannot exist in isolation from the community. According to Mbiti, in the African worldview,[144] the individual's identity and existence are interwoven with the existence of the community. Mbiti is of the view that the individual can hardly survive when isolated from the community; in fact, the individual is part of the whole (community). On this note, Mbiti writes that:

> . . . the community must therefore make, or
> produce the individual; for the individual
> depends on the corporate group. Physical birth is
> not enough: the child must go through rites of
> incorporation so that it becomes fully integrated

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[142] Placide Temples, *Bantu Philosophy*, p.69.
[143] Bernard Matolino, "Radicals versus Moderates," p.3.
[144] Here, Mbiti used the term, "African worldview", to imply a shared ethos among African cultures but not to imply that all African cultures are the same.

into the entire society. Through this process does
the individual come to be conscious of his own
being, his own duties, his privileges and
responsibilities towards other people."[145]

It must be reckoned that the 'other people' whom Mbiti refers to in the statement quoted above are fellow members of the individuals' community with whom he or she shares the same fate. In this regard, Mbiti writes that "whatever happens to the individual happens to the whole group, and whatever happens to the whole group happens to the individual."[146] Mbiti adds that this is a cardinal point in the understanding of the African view of human being. For Mbiti, it follows that the 'we are', which includes the individual, gives meaning to 'I am' hence, the 'I am' cannot exist when taken out of the community.

In the same vein, in his book- *Facing Mount Kenya*-, Jomo Kenyatta mentions that in Gikuyu ways of thinking, nobody is an isolated individual. He argues further that the "pronoun 'I' was used rarely in public gatherings."[147] This does not mean that the pronoun 'I' is not used at all. The uniqueness of an individual is not ruled out completely. Rather, it is given a secondary position. He holds that "an individual is first and foremost several people's relative and several people's contemporary, while his or her uniqueness is a secondary fact

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[145]Three ideas of the individual can be identified from Mbiti's argument. Firstly, an individual's existence has to do with one's relation with the community. Secondly, the individual is a product of the community and his successful integration into the community has to do with the rites of incorporation being performed on him throughout his life. Thirdly, the fate of the individual and the community are intertwined. See, John Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, p. 141.
[146] Ibid, p.14.
[147] Jomo Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya* (1938), New York: Vintage, 1965.

about him or her."[148] Ifeanyi Menkiti endorsed Mbiti's position but advances the idea of the importance of the community.

In *Person and Community in African Traditional Thought*, Menkiti argues that in Africa, the community had priority over the individual. He advances this view by differentiating between Western and African conception of a person. According to Menkiti, in the western view, a person is defined as a lone individual while in the African view, a person is defined in relation to the community, quoting Mbiti's proposition, to support his thesis.[149] Menkiti adds that "as far as Africans are concerned, the reality of the communal world takes precedence over the reality of the individual life histories."[150] Menkiti further defends IAC on biological and social grounds, in the sense that the individual comes from a common gene pool and belongs to a linguistic community. Thus, Menkiti states that-

> Just as the navel point's men to umbilical linkage with generations preceding them, so also does language and its associated social rules point them to a mental commonwealth with others whose life histories encompass the past, present, and future.[151]

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[148] Jomo Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya* as quoted by Gyekye in *Tradition and Modernity*, pp.36-37.

[149] Ifeanyi Menkiti, "Person and Community in Traditional African Thought," in R.A. Wright, (Ed.), *African Philosophy: An Introduction*, Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1984, p.171.

[150] That is to say, IAC has both ontological and epistemological precedence. Ibid, p.171.

[151] Ibid, p. 172.

Maintaining the notion of the ontological primacy of the community, Menkiti makes the inference that according to the African worldview[152], it is the community that defines the person as person, not some isolated static quality of rationality, will, or memory.[153] On that note, Menkiti rejected and tagged the western definition of a person as 'minimal' since it only considers an aspect of a person. Thus, in the western view, a person is whoever has a soul, or rationality, or will, or memory. Menkiti used the word 'maximal' to indicate that the African view of a person has other criteria and is not only limited to soul, rationality, or will.[154] In IAC, an individual is not just defined by personal characteristics, which are unique or introspective to him or her but by "other criteria."[155]

Menkiti articulated the IAC view of personhood by affirming a procedural mode of being in African thought in which an individual becomes a person through social, and ritual incorporation in which a person is taught the moral values of the community. He adds that personhood is achieved, not endowed (as is perceived by the western view) in Africa, hence one could fail at achieving it.[156] Menkiti adds that there are rules governing social rituals of

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[152] Menkiti's use of the term, "African worldview, implies a shared ethos Africans have in common just as Mbiti used it and not to imply that Africans have one culture. In other words, by "African worldview", Menkiti means the similarity between African cultures.

[153] Here, Menkiti is exposing the axiology of IAC. What Menkiti means is that one needs moral maturity in order to attain the status of personhood in Africa.

[154] This inference supports the notion that personhood is not just defined by the individual but also by the community to which he or she belongs.

[155] "Other criteria" implies the individual relation to the community. After all, Kenyatta affirms that an individual is both a communal and unique being. See, Jomo Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya.*

[156] Ifeanyi Menkiti, "*Person and Community in African Traditional Thought*," p.173. However, I pick issues with Menkiti on the grounds that though he correctly indicates that one could fail

incorporation designed to help the individual attain personhood. He affirms that the older an individual becomes, the more of a person the individual becomes. He does this by citing an Igbo proverb which holds that "what an old man sees sitting down, a young man cannot see standing up" to support his claim that personhood is acquired as one gets older.[157]

What Menkiti implies is that among African societies, ideally, one becomes more of a person as one becomes older since one is expected to go through certain ritual incorporation (this includes puberty rite and marriage) which grooms one's moral maturity. That is not to suggest that all old persons in the community are morally matured. This goes to tell why Menkiti opined that one can fail at the achievement of personhood in Africa. In other words, not all old persons can attain the status of personhood.

Menkiti further defended the indigenous African communitarian ethos by arguing that people use the neuter pronoun, 'it', to refer to a child rather than the personal pronouns, 'him' or 'her,' because the child has not yet attained personhood.[158] He also argues that when a child dies, the funeral ceremonies are brief. However, when an older person dies, elaborate funeral celebrations take place because the older individual has achieved personhood and has now become an ancestor who lives among the people.

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at achieving personhood, he refuses to indicate what happens to a person who fails in the attainment of personhood. This issue has been addressed in the next chapter.

[157] See, Ifeanyi Menkiti, "Person and Community in African Traditional Thought," pp.172-174.

[158] This does not suggest that a child cannot be morally upright like the old or adult for there are children who exhibit moral maturity. However, ideally, children are not expected to display a moral sense of maturity as compared to the old or adult since they are not in the reach of making moral decision.

In general, when one dies, he or she ceases to be a person. At the beginning of life, an individual who has no name will work towards personhood, and at the end of life, that individual loses personhood because he or she has departed for the next world. The departed ones may be referred to with the neuter pronoun 'it' because their contact with the physical human community has been disconnected and as such, they cannot aspire for personhood like the living. Thus, it is clear that people at both ends of life are not persons because the young are yet to attain personhood while the dead have completed their development. On this note, Menkiti writes that-

> It is the carrying out . . . [of] obligations that transforms one from the 'it'-status of early childhood, marked by an absence of moral function, into the person-status of later years, marked by a widened maturity of ethical sense - an ethical maturity without which personhood is conceived as eluding one.[159]

In the same vein, Meyer Fortes argues that, among the Tallensi of Ghana, "no one can be certainly known to have been a full human person until he is shown, at the time of his death to have been slain by his ancestors and therefore to deserve a proper funeral."[160]

Meanwhile, it is worth noting that Menkiti's view that brief mourning periods indicate the degree of personhood of the deceased has been contested

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[159] Ifeanyi Menkiti, "Person and Community in African Traditional Thought," p.176.
[160] Meyer Fortes, *Kinship and Marriage among the Ashanti*, New York: Routledge, 1987, p. 257.

by some scholars including Elias Bongmba. Bongmba has argued that funeral rites of children among the Wimbum of Cameroon are brief and sad for reasons that do not reflect a child's status as a person but are because the Wimbum people mourn the fact that the young person has not lived life fully. Bongmba adds that the Wimbum take personhood for granted but consider the death of a young person "rkwi bipsi shu", meaning "death that has spoiled the mouth." This means that the death of a young person shocks and numbs the appetite for food or drink, which people consume when an elderly person dies.[161]

There is a problem and a gap in Bongmba's explanation because it does not tell indicate what the Wimbum ethnic group means by "living life fully." However, if marriage is a criterion among the Wimbum to live life fully then the argument of Menkiti that in Africa, one becomes a person through social and ritual incorporation holds. This is because rites are performed for an individual before, during and after marriage. Hence, for the child not to get to the stage of marriage because he or she died, that child automatically cannot attain personhood. We should note that Menkiti linked personhood not only to rationality or will but also to the performance of duties and rites.

Menkiti cited John Rawls, who argued that justice is owed by a moral personality, "a potentiality that is ordinarily realized in due course,"[162] to support his claims that individuals acquire personhood as they carry out their obligations. Though one could argue that Rawls emphasized moral potential and

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[161] Elias Bongmba, Religion *and Social Reconstruction in Africa*, New Delhi: Routledge, 2018.
[162] John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1995, pp. 505–506.

not personality, I think both scholars: Menkiti and Rawls are making a similar argument because though a child is a potential moral agent like Rawls put it, the child is not considered as a moral agent because that child is out of the reach of making moral decisions. It is through the child's engagement with the society that the child grows his or her consciousness to become a moral agent or being.

Menkiti rejected Jean-Paul Sartre's definition of individualism because it stipulated unconditioned freedom and choice, which Sartre assumed, was available to all including animals.[163] Afrocentrically that is a misnomer. Such an idea of freedom is wrong because it ignores the community which plays an important role in the life of the individual. Additionally, Sartre was wrong to place children and adults on the same level of choice. Finally, Menkiti rejected the western view that the community is a collectivity of self-interested individuals. This makes the community an aggregation of separate individuals. In Mbiti's phrase- "I am because we are-", the 'we' is not additive according to Menkiti "but a thoroughly fused collective we"[164] In short, African societies emphasize duty while western societies emphasize rights.[165]

However, it is interesting to know that though Kwasi Wiredu describes the IAC articulated by Menkiti as *locus classicus* and as *superlative beauty,*[166] Gyekye thinks otherwise. He challenges some of the arguments raised by

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[163] Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, Trans. Barnes Hazel, London: Methuen and CO. Ltd, 1963.

[164] Ifeanyi Menkiti, "*Person and Community in African Traditional Thought*," p.179.

[165] This does not mean individual rights are alien to the African but as Menkiti and Kenyatta put it, individual rights are treated or given a secondary status for the sake of the common interest, which the individual is part of.

[166] Captured in Motsamai Molefe, "A Defence of Moderate Communitarianism: A Place of Rights In African Moral-Political Thought," *Phronimon* 18, 1 (2017), p. 193.

Menkiti out of which he proposes the so-called moderate communitarianism theory. The motivation for this version of communitarianism, according to Gyekye, is to show that individual rights are recognized in a communitarian framework. Gyekye believes that this is what IAC failed to realize, and that is what makes IAC radical.[167] Thus, Gyekye's MC which intends to re-adjust the traditional picture of IAC purports to show that IAC is indeed radical. But is IAC really radical? This question will be answered in the next chapter. But before then, the study does an exposition of the main tenets in Gyekye's MC.

This exposition is undertaken on the lines of the objections which Gyekye raises against the three main claims of IAC suggested by Famakinwa in the previous chapter. That is: first, the community has moral supremacy over the individual; second, personhood is conferred on the individual by the community; and, third, individual rights are treated as a secondary matter to those of the community. Each claim shall then be followed by Gyekye's reaction and then his MC.

Gyekye's Critique of IAC about the Moral Supremacy of the Community over the Individual.

Gyekye observes that the social nature of the individual is highly celebrated in African communities. In other words, African communities have high regard for the community. Gyekye makes references to some African leaders and scholars who have studied African cultures, to validate his claim.

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[167] Kwame Gyekye, *Tradition and Modernity*, p. 38.

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Some of these references include Kwesi Dickson argues that the sense of community is a "characteristic of African life of which attention has been drawn by both African and non-African writers on Africa. Indeed, to many, this characteristic defines Africannes."[168] Reference is also made to Kenyatta who writes that-

> According to Gikuyu ways of thinking, nobody is an isolated individual. Or rather, his uniqueness is a secondary fact about him; first and foremost he is several people's relative and several people's contemporary.[169]

Further, Leopold Senghor observes that "Negro-African society is a collective or, more exactly, communal, because it is rather a communion of souls than an aggregate of individuals."[170] Elsewhere, Senghor states:

> Negro-African society is collectivist or . . . communal, because it is rather a communion of souls than an aggregate of individuals . . . Negro-African society puts more stress on the group than on the individual, more on solidarity than on the activity and needs of the individual, more on the communion of persons than on their autonomy. Ours is a community society.[171]

Senghor clearly emphasises the communal nature of African societies and the precedence the community takes over the individual. In this perspective,

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[168] Kwesi Dickson, *Aspects of Religion and Life in Africa*, Accra: Ghana Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1977, p.4.
[169] Jomo Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya*, p.297.
[170] Leopold Senghor, *On African Socialism*, New York: Praeger, 1964, p.83.
[171] Ibid, p.94.

Senghor is joined by Julius Nyerere who advocates "Ujamaa" as the ideal of social solidarity where people agree to subordinate their interests to the interest of the common objective of the collective. He maintains that Ujamaa emphasizes "the Africanness of the politics we intend to follow . . . it brings to the mind of our people the idea of mutual involvement in the family . . . regards all human beings as members of this ever-extending familyhood."[172]

Having made all these observations about African communities and pronouncements by African-centered scholars[173] on African culture, Gyekye, however, cautions us to be careful in our interpretation of the role of the community in the formation of the individual's identity. The reason, according to Gyekye, is that the pronouncements made by the African scholars mentioned above is misleading, for these scholars, he adds, assume that the individual is wholly defined by the community.[174] To Gyekye, this type of communitarianism is extreme or unrestricted and should be rejected. Gyekye reasons that the individual is indeed communal, but he or she is also an individual who has autonomy-the capacity for re-evaluation and self-assertiveness. Though Gyekye is a communitarian, he thinks there is a problem with IAC, hence at this point, we shall focus our attention on how Gyekye deals with the supremacy thesis in his MC.

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[172] Julius Nyerere, *Ujamaa-Essays on Socialism*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1968, p.2.

[173] By African-centered scholars, I have in mind scholars who put Africa at the centre of their observation. In other words, they reflect the true nature of the African situation starting from the African people.

[174] Gyekye's argument is that the individual's dependency on the community is exaggerated by scholars like Mbiti, Menkiti, MacIntyre, Sandel and Charles Taylor who, according to Gyekye, argue that the individual is produced wholly by the community.

Gyekye's MC about the Moral Supremacy of the Community over the Individual.

Gyekye argues that "an individual human being is born into an existing human society and, therefore into human culture, the latter being the product of the former."[175] Gyekye defends the community as a fundamental human good. Here, the community is understood as one that advocates a life lived in harmony and cooperation with others. Consequently, a life of mutual consideration, reciprocities, concern for others and interdependence is proposed. Gyekye specifically indicates in the quotation below that when communitarians talk about community, it is the normative sense they have in mind. This sense of community means:

> the sharing of an overall way of life, which can be said to be inspired by the understanding of the notion of the common good. It expresses itself in each member's acknowledging the existence of common values, obligations, and understandings as well as demonstrating loyalty and commitment to the interests of the community. Sharing an overall way of life involves demonstrating a concern not only for the social good, but also for the well-being of one another, bearing each other

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[175] By this, Gyekye's intention is to portray the relational and the social features of the person in the context of the cultural community. It thus follows that the idea that a person is born into an existing community supports the view that a person is by nature a communal being and therefore community life is not optional. See, Kwasi Wiredu and Kwarne Gyekye, *Person and Community: Ghanaian Philosophical Studies Washington*, DC: Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 199, p.104.

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up. . . I regard this moral or normative sense of
community as primary, thus, as community.[176]

For Gyekye, this sense of community requires the sharing of a way of life, and sharing implies the existence and acknowledgement of common roles, values, obligations and meanings or understandings. He is of the view that this communitarian moral sense of community is different from other senses of community where each member recognizes a loyalty and commitment to the community and expresses this through the desire to advance his or her interests in a way that cannot be fully expected in a social context in which individuals are concerned solely and primarily with the promotion of their interests, ends, and well-being. Such individuals pay attention to the common good of the society only occasionally and only in the face of danger or crises that are seen as potentially deleterious to their well-being.[177] Gyekye calls it a non-community social context. A context where neither the advancement of the common good nor the demonstration of concern for the well-being of others is normatively perceived as a socio-ethical testament, principle or requirement.

From the foregoing, it is clear that Gyekye shares with IAC, which he calls Radical Communitarianism, the understanding of communities wherein membership is not a matter of individual choice.[178] At this point, it is important

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[176] Kwame Gyekye, *Beyond Cultures: Perceiving a Common Humanity,* Washington D.C: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2004, p.95.
[177] Kwame Gyekye, *Tradition and Modernity*, p.43.
[178] This interpretation of community sits well. This is because the IAC notion of community where there exists a bond that is created by members of the community having shared goals and values, is likely to produce better results.

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to note that there is a moral problem that resonates from this moral interpretation of community. Gyekye himself notes that the concept of community is a notion of particular social settings and networks characterized by such social and normative features. These social settings and networks differ in forms and shapes like as the family (both nuclear and extended), clan, village, 'tribe',[179] city, nation and the international community.[180]

It is interesting to note that an individual in such a situation may face a real problem when he or she is to make a moral choice between, for instance, his or her family and the state, for there is indeed the possibility that the values proffered by the state may clash with those of the individual's family. Which of these values does the individual choose? Is it those of the family or those of the community (more than one family)? Which of these two communities is morally supreme? What criteria should be employed in upholding one community's values over the other community?

Gyekye responds that we owe allegiance to our immediate cultural community which is the family. Kwasi Boadi explains better, as discussed earlier in chapter one, that although the individual's family is seen as private, properties among members of the individual family is public while property in relation to members of different families is private per the dynamics in IAC.[181]
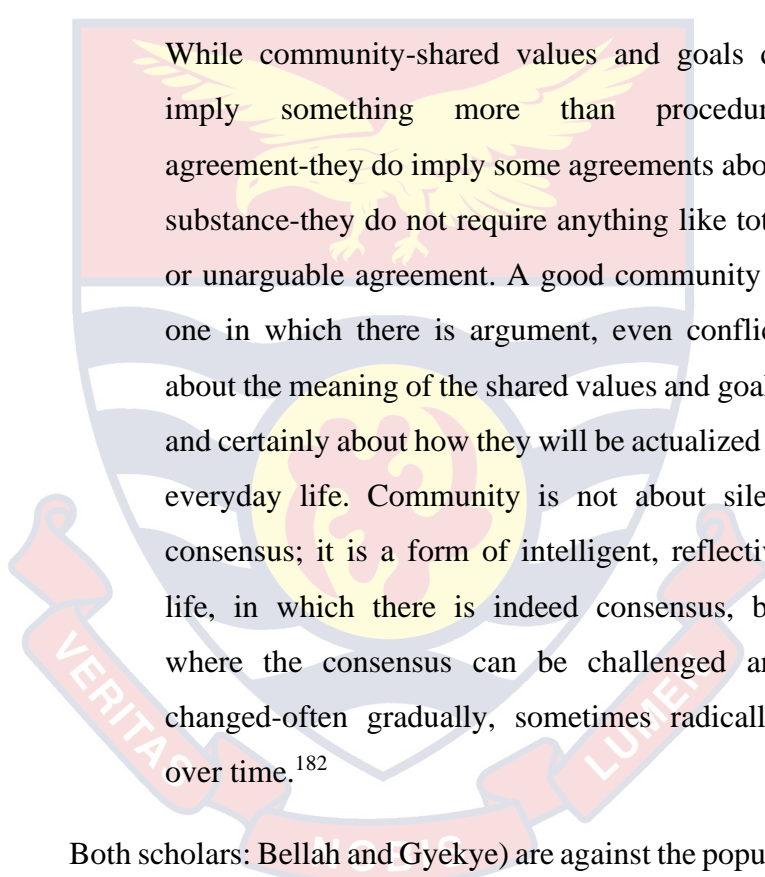
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[179] "Tribe" is derogatory and an archaic word used in the 12th century to identify primitive culture(s). An appropriate word Gyekye could have used instead of "tribe" is "ethnic group."

[180] What this means is that the individual does belong to all these communities and since the community has a role to play in the constitution of the individual, he or she is bound to all these communities. See, Kwame Gyekye, *Tradition and Modernity*, p.43.

[181] This is because property (or responsibility) of an extended family is public thus only to the members of the family and private in relation to other extended families. See, Kwasi Boadi,

Gyekye remains committed to IAC. In other words, he chooses the family which is public over the community which is private. Gyekye, however, cautions that though the individual owes allegiance to his or her family (community), the individual needs to critically evaluate the shared values of the community. Similarly, in *Community Properly Understood: A Defense of Democratic Communitarianism,* Robert Bellah reinforces Gyekye's view.

Bellah writes that-

> While community-shared values and goals do imply something more than procedural agreement-they do imply some agreements about substance-they do not require anything like total or unarguable agreement. A good community is one in which there is argument, even conflict, about the meaning of the shared values and goals, and certainly about how they will be actualized in everyday life. Community is not about silent consensus; it is a form of intelligent, reflective life, in which there is indeed consensus, but where the consensus can be challenged and changed-often gradually, sometimes radically-over time.[182]

Both scholars: Bellah and Gyekye) are against the popular view of critics that communities thrive on silent consensus and this invariably amounts to

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"The Ontology of Kwame Nkrumah's Consciencism and the Democratic Theory and Practice in Africa: A Diopian Perspective," *Journal of Black Studies* 30, 4, (2000), p. 496.
[182] Robert Bellah, "Community Properly Understood: A Defense of 'Democratic Communitarianism," in A. Etzioni (Ed.), *The Essential Communitarian Reader,* New York: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 1998, p.17.

oppression. This criticism of the community is not true. Bellah's perception is apt because a good community is one in which the consensus, that conceals the shared goals and values, can be changed upon re-evaluation and argumentation. This view of Bellah is not alien to the indigenous African communities.

For instance, David Kaunda, former president of Zambia, echoed that "in our original societies, we operated by consensus. An issue was talked over in solemn conclave until agreement could be achieved."[183] Julius Nyerere, a former president of Tanzania, eloquently affirmed Kaunda's position when he too wrote that ". . . in African society, the traditional method of conducting affairs is by free discussion . . . the elders sat under a big tree, and talked until they agree."[184] Kwasi Wiredu calls this consensual democracy as opposed to majoritarian democracy-which is identical to utilitarianism-where the views of the majority are considered while neglecting that of the minority.[185]

Gyekye explains further that a person comes to know who he or she is in the context of relationships with others in such communities.[186] On this, Daniel Bell, further affirms Gyekye's position by indicating the implications of such a communitarian concept of community. Daniel Bell agrees that our deeply-felt attachments to several communities constitute our identity.[187] This allows us to experience our life as bound-up with the good of these

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[183] Quoted from Gideon-Cyrus Mutiso and S.W. Rohio, *Reading in African Political Thought*, London: Heinemann, 1975, p. 476.
[184] Ibid, p.478.
[185] Kwasi Wiredu, "Democracy and Consensus in African Traditional Politics: A Plea for a Non-Party Polity," *The Centennial Review* 39, 1 (1995), pp.58-59.
[186] Kwame Gyekye, *Tradition and Modernity*, p.43.
[187] Daniel Bell, Communitarianism and its Critics, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993, p.93.

communities.[188] These constitutive communities define the sense of who we are and provide a large background of our being in the world of thinking, acting and deciding. Bell argues that we cannot easily shed off what we are since we are principally connected with these constitutive features of our identity in a way that often resists articulation. To reject those sentiments leads to an identity crisis or an acute form of disorientation which damages our personality.[189]

Bell argues that we can answer the question of what these constitutive communities are by asking a question of ourselves: "Who are you?"[190] The answer will certainly include family name, nationality, language, culture, and religion-all of which are derived from the community. At this juncture, I will interrogate and discuss Gyekye's criticisms of IAC's conception of personhood.

Gyekye's Critique of IAC's Notion of Personhood as Status Conferred on the Individual by the Community

As noted earlier in this chapter, Mbiti avers that the individual is an inseparable member of the community. This is because a person, when born, finds himself or herself, not in isolation but, among other individuals. This, therefore, establishes the relational nature of a person. However according to Gyekye, the implication of this inseparability of person and community thesis is the denial of autonomy, and this results in the belief that the individual is wholly defined by the community. Gyekye admits that the individual is a

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[188] Ibid, p.93.
[189] Ibid, p.93.
[190] Daniel Bell, "A Communitarian Critique of Authoritarianism," p.97.

communal or social being but he or she is as well a rational or autonomous being.

Also, earlier, this chapter presented Menkiti's view that in the African worldview, it is the community that defines the person as a person, not some isolated static quality of rationality, will, or memory. Menkiti adds that it is the exhibition of moral maturity on the path of the individual that enables the community to confer personhood on him or her. What Menkiti means is that in Africa, the criterion for a person to attain personhood is when he or she demonstrates moral maturity; and it is through social and ritual incorporation that a person gains moral maturity.

It is worth mentioning that although Gyekye recognizes that the community plays a significant role in the constitution of a person, he rejects the indigenous African thought that a human being becomes more of a person through a process of socialization where he or she undergoes various rites of incorporation for him or her to be recognized as a person in the community. Meanwhile, Gyekye accepts that young people are taught about their moral roles in society and told about the importance of observing these moral dictates through socialization. He is not in agreement about how morality (a product of the community, founded, shaped and operationalized by the community) is a determinant of personhood and can be made real at the stage of rituals of incorporation.[191]

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[191] This is because to Gyekye, morality as a lived-out determinant of one's personhood or otherwise is very different from the mere process of going through rituals and the former is not a product of the latter. See, Kwame Gyekye, *Tradition and Modernity*, p.48.

Similarly, Gyekye rejects the claim within IAC that the human being becomes more of a person at old age. Gyekye finds this notion to be bizarre and incoherent. On the contrary, Gyekye holds that if we were to assume that the attainment of moral excellence would represent the success of the individual in his or her moral life, an indication that he or she had fully abided by moral virtues, tying this attainment to growing old would raise one major difficulty. The difficulty, according to Gyekye, lies in considering elderly people as necessarily moral or, at least, as having the natural outlook of practicing moral virtues. Gyekye writes:

> for surely there are many elderly people who are known to be wicked, ungenerous, unsympathetic: whose lives, in short, generally do not reflect any moral maturity to excellence. In terms of a moral conception of personhood, such elderly people may not qualify as persons.[192]

Gyekye maintains that the natural sociality of the individual, the organic character of the relations between individuals and the relevance of the community to the total well-being of the individual can give rise to a hyperbolic and extreme view of the functional and normative status of the community.[193] Thus, from a Gyekyeist perspective, it is risky and erroneous to conclude that the community wholly constitutes the individual. This is because there are other features of the individual, features that are not created or generated by the

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[192] Ibid, p. 49.
[193] Ibid, p. 47.

community. These features, according to Gyekye, emanate solely from the individual and insofar as these features are defining characteristics of one's identity, personhood is only partially defined by the community. What then are these features that Gyekye talks about?

According to Gyekye, the individual is an inherently communal being, embedded in a context of social relationships and interdependence, and not an isolated individual.[194] However, the individual possesses other attributes, such as rationality and the capacity for evaluation and making moral judgments that may also be said to constitute his or her nature. Thus, Gyekye is of the view that the individual is only partly constituted by the community and the other characteristics of the individual mentioned above derive solely from the individual. They are products of the individual's mental feature, a feature that according to Gyekye is owned only by the individual because it is biological, not social.[195] However, from a materialist perspective, this argument made by Gyekye is not entirely true because ideas are shaped by matter – the material world or environment outside the person. Thus, choice, rationality and talents are shaped by a person's relationship and experience of the outside world which leads to impression and ideas.

Gyekye describes an individual "as a communal being and also as an autonomous, self-determining, self-assertive being with a capacity for evaluation and choice."[196] Contrary to Gyekye's view, I think such evaluation

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[194] Ibid, p.47.
[195] See, Kwasi Wiredu and Kwame Gyekye, Person *and Community*, p.106.
[196] Kwame Gyekye, *Tradition and Modernity*, p.113.

and choice altogether are from thought and consciousness. Thought and consciousness are produced and shaped by the material environment which includes other human beings– community– which nurtures the individual. The effect of Gyekye's idea of personhood is that an individual member of an ethno cultural group is not obliged to show strong allegiance towards that group for him or her to achieve personhood. My question to Gyekye is that: is it possible for one to have a sense of individuality and still be communal and contribute to the wellbeing of others even though he or she does not think that his or her being is tied to or emerges from the community?

Consequently, a person is free to make choices. Gyekye thus argues:

> The individual is by nature a social (communal) being, yes; but he is, also by nature, other things as well; that is, he possesses other attributes that may also be said to constitute her[his] nature. The exercise or application or consideration of these attributes will whittle down or delimit the "authoritative" role or function that may be ascribed to, or invested in, the community. Failure to recognize this may result in pushing the significance and implications of the individual's social nature beyond their limits, an act that would in turn result in investing the community with an all-engulfing moral authority to determine all things about the life of the individual.[197]

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[197] Kwame Gyekye, *Tradition and Modernity*, pp.47-48.

Gyekye's argument then is that if the mental feature of the individual plays a vital role in the formation and execution of his or her goals or plans, as does the community, then it cannot be argued that the individual is wholly constituted by the communal structure or social relationships.[198]   It can only be partial. Gyekye backs this conclusion of his with the notion that within the communal or social framework that individuals achieve their goals and plans, individuals who participate in the shared values and practices may find that portions of these "cultural givens are inelegant, undignified, or unenlightened and would thoughtfully want to question and re-evaluate them."[199] On this note, Gyekye argues that it is through these questioning and re-evaluations that the communal goals and values may be affirmed, amended or rejected to give way to a better alternative. Hence, Gyekye proposed a readjustment of the IAC notion of personhood. I shall now consider how Gyekye treats his notion of personhood in his MC.

Gyekye's MC about Personhood

Gyekye argues that the community plays a vital role in the formation of the individual's personhood or identity. Gyekye bases this claim on the notion that when a person is born, he or she finds himself or herself among other individuals but not in isolation; thus, establishing the relational nature of a person. Gyekye argues that IAC sees the individual as an inherently communal

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[198] Ibid, p.53.
[199] Ibid, p.54.

being, embedded in a context of social relationships and interdependence.[200] Per the inherently communal nature of the individual, Gyekye's MC also considers the community as vital in human development. For Gyekye, members of the community may be bound together by other factors such as the common good and shared values, instead of biological ties. To Gyekye, therefore, the community serves as the bedrock on which the individual realizes and fulfils himself or herself.
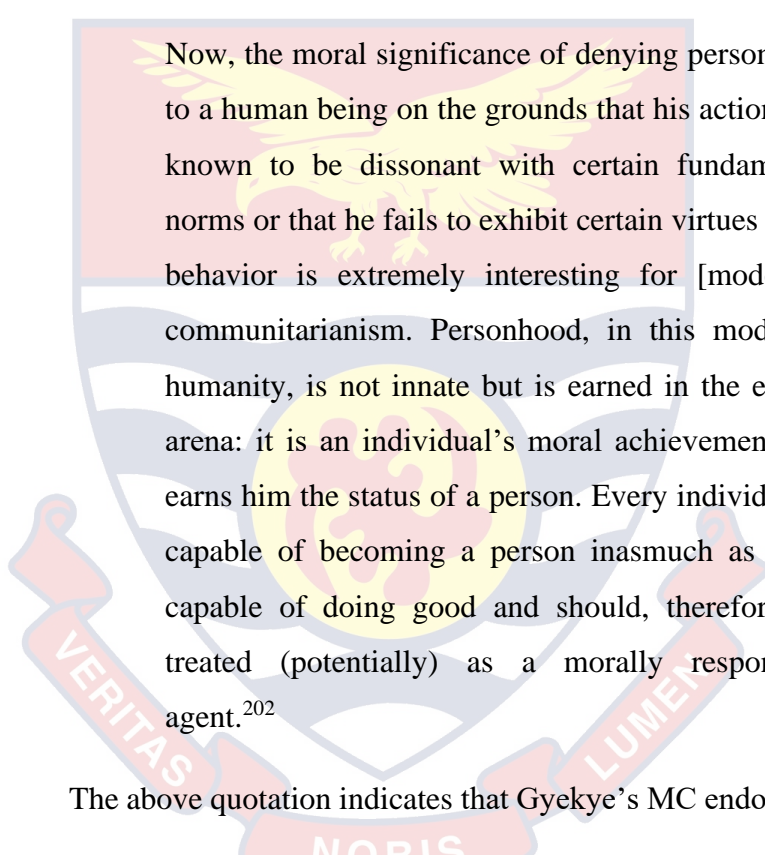
According to Gyekye, the mood of the community is manifested in the feeling of the individual members of the community. Gyekye affirms that the normative understanding of community supports a life in which a person shares in the fate of the other. It encourages a life that provides a viable framework for the fulfilment of the individual's potentials and goals, and it is in such interactions in the community that the individual's personhood is grounded. In this regard, Gyekye writes:

> The community constitutes the context for the
> creation and development of a person's identity
> . . . for, a person comes to know who she [he] is
> in the context of relationships with others, not as
> an isolated, lonely star in a social galaxy . . .
> person's identity derives, at least in part, from a
> cultural context, that is, a community.[201]

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[200] Ibid, p.42.
[201] Ibid, p.43.

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Understandably, the quotation above portrays the community as the framework within which the individual's identity is fashioned. This identity is formed through the process of going through social relationships with others by each individual. Gyekye further explains that the social context that hosts the individual's identity could deny the individual the status of personhood when the individual fails to exhibit certain moral virtues. For instance, consider Gyekye when he says:

> Now, the moral significance of denying personhood to a human being on the grounds that his actions are known to be dissonant with certain fundamental norms or that he fails to exhibit certain virtues in his behavior is extremely interesting for [moderate] communitarianism. Personhood, in this model of humanity, is not innate but is earned in the ethical arena: it is an individual's moral achievement that earns him the status of a person. Every individual is capable of becoming a person inasmuch as he is capable of doing good and should, therefore, be treated (potentially) as a morally responsible agent.[202]

The above quotation indicates that Gyekye's MC endorses the assertion that it is the community that confers personhood on an individual so long as the individual exhibits moral maturity. Yet, Gyekye called Menkiti a "radical

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[202] Ibid, pp.51-52.

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communitarian" when Menkiti argued that personhood in Africa is defined by the community. This is how Gyekye defines his MC:

> The view [moderate communitarianism] seems to represents a clear attempt to come to terms with the natural sociality as well as the individuality of the human person. It requires the recognition of communality and individuality . . . I think the most satisfactory way to recognize the claims of both communality and individuality is to ascribe to them that status of equal moral standing.[203]

Gyekye adds that the social interactions among individuals in a community are the grounds for describing the individual's identity or personhood. Inherent in these social relationships are the exhibition of moral virtues, the absence of which an individual may not qualify as a person. This seems to suggest that as far as the communal constitution of the individual is concerned, personhood is achieved, and so far as something is achievable, it goes to say that one can as well fail at achieving it.

For Gyekye then, in the community context where morality is the yardstick for determining one's identity, the principles of the common good on one hand and the community of mutuality, reciprocity, and responsibilities, on the other hand, are vital. The common good, according to Gyekye, literally means a good that is common to human beings and is embraced within a community. Gyekye avers:

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[203] Kwame Gyekye, *Tradition and Modernity*, p.41.

> The common good means a good that can be said
> to be commonly, universally, shared by all human
> individuals, a good the possession of which is
> essential for the ordinary or basic functioning of
> the individual in a human society.[204]

The deduction made from this definition of the common good is that the common good ought to be shared by all the individual members of the community, with nobody exempted. The common good then is considered as a set of basic virtues that members of the community need and strive to attain. It is a set of goods that is essential for the survival of all members. Gyekye argues:

> It should be understood that by "the goods of all
> the members" one is referring only to what can be
> regarded as the basic or essential goods to which
> every individual should have access. There is no
> human being who does not desire peace, freedom,
> respect, dignity, security, and satisfaction.[205]

To achieve such a good, it seems that all individual members of the community ought to live morally acceptable lifestyles that accrue to the sustenance, and promotion of the common good. The attainment of the common good implies a shared life. A shared life connotes common values, common interests, common purposes, and understandings. Gyekye emphasizes that the sharing of an overall way of life is an important characteristic of a cultural community that distinguishes it from a mere association of individuals who are

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[204] Ibid, p.45.
[205] Ibid, p.46.

held together and sustained merely contractually.[206] Living a shared life then expresses living in mutuality, reciprocity and having a responsibility towards the needs of other members of the community to advance common interests and the common good. As Gyekye himself notes, members of the community "have intellectual and ideological as well as emotional attachments to their shared goals and their values and, as long as they cherish them, they are ready to pursue and defend them."[207]

It is clear that for Gyekye, the moral criterion for personhood, which is exhibited in the individual's interaction with others in the community or state, is vital in the formation of one's identity. This process, for Gyekye, is proof that the individual is not enmeshed into the community and that he or she can leave himself or herself out of the community and assert an individuality of a sort. In other words, the individual is separable from the community.

For Gyekye, the individual is autonomous, not in the sense that he or she is self-complete but instead, that he or she is a being with the capacity to make choices-be they moral or not. The individual has the capacity to choose his or her own goals and life plans to achieve some kind of self-realization. What could be deduced from Gyekye's dual conception of the individual is that the individual is both social and autonomous. While it is true that the individual is social as claimed by IAC and Gyekye himself, the individual's social constitution does not obliterate his or her autonomy. In essence, Gyekye is of

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[206] Ibid, p.42.
[207] Ibid, p.42.

the view that the individual is both social and autonomous. At this point, the study considers Gyekye's third critique of IAC that individual rights are given secondary consideration.

Gyekye Critique of IAC with respect to the Individual Rights

Gyekye concedes that the individual is a social being who is born into a society made up of people who he or she interacts with but this does not mean that the individual ought to be stripped of all his or her attributes and capabilities. His view is that IAC fails to take the individual's rights seriously. Charging IAC with such a shortcoming, Gyekye consequently avers that individual rights are as morally important as the community. In view of this, Gyekye rejects the line IAC draws between the common good and individual good, rights, and responsibilities. The treatment of rights as secondary values in the context of IAC is rejected by Gyekye.[208] Having observed that Gyekye views IAC as radical, because it fails to take rights seriously and treats rights as a secondary matter, we shall now consider how his MC deals with individual rights.

How Rights are perceived by Gyekye within his MC

Concerning IAC, Menkiti writes that-

> In the African understanding, priority is given to
> the duties which individuals owe to the
> collectivity, and their rights, whatever these may

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[208] Kwasi Wiredu and Kwame Gyekye, *Person and Community*, p.113.

be, are seen as secondary to the exercise of their duties.[209]

Meanwhile, Gyekye's MC partly states that-

> It is possible for people to assume offhandedly that with its emphasis on communal value, collective good and shared ends, communitarianism invariably conceives the person as wholly constituted by social relationships; that it tends to whittle down the moral autonomy of the person; that it makes the being and life of the individual person totally dependent on the activities, values, projects, practices, and ends of the community; and consequently, that it diminishes his freedom and capability to choose or question or re-evaluate the shared values of the community.[210]

Gyekye attempts to make a case for the recognition of individual rights. Which one is morally supreme: the community or the individual? It is necessary to take a look at Gyekye's thoughts on the issue. After making a case for the recognition of rights, Gyekye cautions that we must not lose sight of responsibilities that foster the good of the community. Gyekye says that

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[209] Ifeanyi Menkiti, "Person and Community in African Traditional Thought," p.180.
[210] Kwasi Wiredu and Kwame Gyekye, *Person and Community*, p.102.

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responsibility- "a caring attitude or conduct that one feels one ought to adopt with respect to the well-being of another person or persons"[211]- outweighs the exercise of rights, for "in the [moderate] communitarian political morality, priority will not be given to right if doing so will stand in the way of . . . a more preferable goal of the community."[212]

Gyekye says that although his theory is not opposed to individual rights, it consciously gives equal attention to communal values, all (or some) of which it may regard as overriding and so his MC cannot be expected to be obsessed with rights.[213] In simple terms, according to Gyekye's MC, when individual rights clash with those of the community which include responsibilities, the latter ought to override on the former. That is to say, whereas Gyekye's MC discourages the insistence of individual rights, it certainly encourages the insistent pursuit of duties and responsibilities.

IAC draws a line between the individual interest and the interest of the community as a whole. While the former-which is the individual interest- refers, in the literal sense, to a personal rational plan of life, the latter- which is the interest of the community-refers to values shared by all members of the community. The Indigenous African Communitarian's commitment to the common good enjoins individuals to rise above their self–interest and join together to form public policy and work to bring the community vision to

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[211] Kwame Gyekye, *Tradition and Modernity*, p.66.
[212] Ibid, p.116.
[213] Ibid, p.65.

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fruition. The commitment to the common good recommends the pursuit of the virtues of responsibility, accountability, participation, and support.

The Indigenous African Communitarian common good refers to the good of the community as a whole. Interestingly, the primary communitarian common good is the community itself. The community is not a personal good but a good that equally belongs to all those who are born into it. Given this point, IAC emphasizes the moral supremacy of the community-the cultural community. In the case of a moral clash between the community and rights, adherents of IAC are of the view that the former (community) ought to be favoured. The community is morally superior to individual rights.

To Gyekye, on the other hand, however, rights belong primarily and irreducibly to the individual, for they are a means of expressing an individual's talents, capacities, and identity. Gyekye's argument for the recognition of rights rests on his understanding that if his MC acknowledges individual autonomy, then this acknowledgement must involve the recognition of rights. In this regard, Gyekye writes:

> . . . a communitarian denial of rights or reduction of rights to a secondary status does not adequately reflect the claims of individuality mandated in the notion of the moral worth of the individual. Such a claim would be extreme and would be at variance with the moderate communitarian view that I think is defensible.[214]

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[214] Ibid, p.62.

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Gyekye, thus, argues for the recognition of rights in the arguments that follow.

> [Moderate] Communitarianism cannot disallow arguments about rights which may, in fact, form part of the activity of a self-determining autonomous individual possessed of the capacity for evaluating or re-evaluating the entire practice of his community. Some of such evaluations may touch on matters of rights, the exercise of which a self-determining individual may see as conducive to the fulfilment of the human potential, and against the denial of which he may raise some objections.[215]

Gyekye's view implies that the human individual is both a social and rational or autonomous moral agent. By being a rational agent, the individual possesses the capacity and wherewithal to make independent moral decisions and choices through the processes of re-evaluation and assessment. When an individual is evaluating a particular community value or practice, for example, he or she may consider how such a value infringes, or not, on the rights of individuals to whom these values and practices are applied. The individual doing the re-evaluation then may demand that values or practices that are inimical to the overall progress and development of the community should be jettisoned. Because of this capacity, the exercise of rights by the individual does not parochially aim at the individual good alone but it equally aims at enhancing the overall community weal. Thus, according to Gyekye:

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[215] Ibid, pp.62-63.

> The respect for human dignity, a natural or fundamental attribute of the person which cannot, as such, be set at nought by the communal structure, generates regards for personal rights. The reason is that the natural membership of the individual person in a community cannot rob him of his dignity or worth, a fundamental and inalienable attribute he possesses as a person.[216]

Gyekye sees the individual as intrinsically valuable and need to be accorded respect and dignity. The value for human dignity can be argued for from both theistic and non-theistic perspectives. For theists, the individual is seen as one who has a soul as part of his or her ontological makeup. The soul is believed to be the spark of God in human beings, evidence that God created human beings. Gyekye, thus, quotes an Akan proverb, "All humans beings are children of God; no one is a child of the earth", to support the theistic argument.[217] From a non-theistic perspective, reflections on the nature of human beings have resulted in some scholars grounding human dignity in the human capacity for moral autonomy.[218]

This leads Wiredu to say that a person needs to do unto others what he or she wants others to do unto him or her. This is called the 'Golden Rule.'[219] Wiredu, however, remarked that we need to be discouraged from thinking that

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[216] Ibid, p.63.

[217] Kwame Gyekye, "The Akan concept of a person," *International Philosophical Quarterly*, 18(3), (1978), pp.277-287.

[218] Kwasi Wiredu and Kwame Gyekye (Eds.), *Person and Community,* p. 114: Kwame Gyekye, *Tradition and Modernity*, p. 63.

[219] Michael Eze and Thaddeus Metz, Emergent Issues in African Philosophy: A Dialogue with Kwasi Wiredu, *Philosophia Africana* 17, 2, (2015), p.81.

such a principle is largely a western or Christian principle. To Wiredu, the golden rule has always been present in indigenous African thought.[220]

Conclusion

Gyekye's MC is no different from IAC-or RC as Gyekye chooses to call it. For instance, with regards to Gyekye's MC, he argues that social interactions among individuals in a community are the bases on which the individual attains personhood.[221] Inherent in these social relationships are the exhibition of moral virtues, the absence of which an individual may not qualify as a person. This suggests that as far as Gyekye's MC is also concerned, personhood is achieved. Yet, Gyekye wants us to believe that his MC is distinct from IAC.

Again, Gyekye believes that by equally emphasizing the rational or autonomous character of the individual, which he thinks IAC takes for granted, he has created a gap between his moderate version and IAC. This, he believes, therefore makes his theory better than the IAC. Gyekye argues that radical communitarians are in the wrong for treating rights as secondary values. Instead, he believes that certain rights should be respected because the reign of such rights benefits the community itself. Gyekye crowns his moderate communitarian argument by indicating that though rights ought to be recognized, the common good is morally supreme over rights and so responsibility should be encouraged. Do the allegations Gyekye level against IAC makes IAC radical? Was Gyekye successful in removing the so-called

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[220] Ibid, p.81.
[221] Kwame Gyekye, *Tradition and Modernity*, pp.51-52.

radical communitarian element from his MC? Is Gyekye's MC an aspect of

IAC? The next chapter addresses these questions.

CHAPTER FOUR

IAC AND GYETYE'S MC COMPARED

Introduction

In the previous chapter, the tenets of Gyekye's Moderate Communitarianism (hereafter MC) as matched against that of Indigenous African Communitarianism (hereafter IAC) were discussed. The arguments that Gyekye used to conclude that IAC is radical were exposed. For instance, Gyekye claimed that IAC places excessive emphasis on the normative value of the community thereby diminishing rights.[222] On that note, Gyekye said his "moderate communitarianism . . . acknowledges the intrinsic worth and dignity of the individual human person and recognizes individuality, individual responsibility and effort"[223] and the implication was that the individual was allowed room to exercise his or her rights.

What is noticeable is that Gyekye's MC does not bring about anything new or is not significantly different from IAC. This chapter used logical tools such as validity and soundness of arguments, contradictions, fallacies and deconstruction to evaluate Gyekye's MC to find out whether indeed he was able to remove the core tenets in IAC in his supposed MC. Thus, this chapter first shows the point of convergence and divergence between Gyekye's MC and IAC, and, second, points out that, contrary to Gyekye's claim, IAC is not radical.

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[222] Kwame Gyekye, *Tradition and Modernity: Philosophical Reflections on the African Experience*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997, p. 37.
[223] Ibid, p.40.

Gyekye's Misconception of the Original Dilemma

I set off by evaluating Gyekye's position that his MC will ascribe equal moral standing between the community and the individual.[224] Anthony Oyowe termed this position of Gyekye as "[a] misunderstanding of the original dilemma."[225] Oyowe is referring to the tension between communitarianism and individualism which is: What ought to be superior- the individual or the community? Here, according to Oyowe, Gyekye has misconstrued the original dilemma as resulting from the absence of equally recognizing individuality. Oyowe predicates his argument on what Gyekye's MC intends to do. Gyekye opined that his MC "acknowledges the intrinsic worth and dignity of the individual human person and recognizes individuality, individual responsibility and effort." The implication, therefore, is that IAC does not give room for the exercise of individual rights and self-assertiveness.

Oyowe disagrees with Gyekye because to Oyowe, there is no human society which is absolutely communal or individualistic. What is factual is that when a society is identified as communal, it means that society has both individualistic and communal tendencies, but has its communal tendencies outweighing its individualistic tendencies. Thus, individual rights, as incorporated in individuality, are recognized in typical communitarian societies such as indigenous African societies. In the same vein, when we say a society is individualistic, it implies that the said society has both individualistic and

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[224] Ibid, p.41.
[225] See, Anthony Oyowe, "Strange Bedfellows: Rethinking Ubuntu and Human Rights in South Africa," African *Human Rights Law Journal* 13, 1 (2013), p.13.

communal tendencies, but its individualistic tendencies outweigh its communal tendencies. That is to say, to talk of a communal or individualistic society is a matter of degree.[226] It follows that no society is completely individualistic and no society is completely communitarian.

It is imperative to mention that IAC gives recognition to individuality, which is why it stresses on social relationships so that the individual can develop his or her talent(s), creativity and innovation by associating with other members and institutions of the society. Gyekye himself explicitly states that ". . . communalism [or communitarianism], as conceived and understood in . . . African social philosophy, is a consistent theory, one that is not opposed to the fundamental interests of the individual."[227] If this is true, then a framework like Gyekye's MC that merely requires the recognition of individuality in the communitarian scheme is tautologous[228] since the idea of individuality is already accommodated in and by IAC.
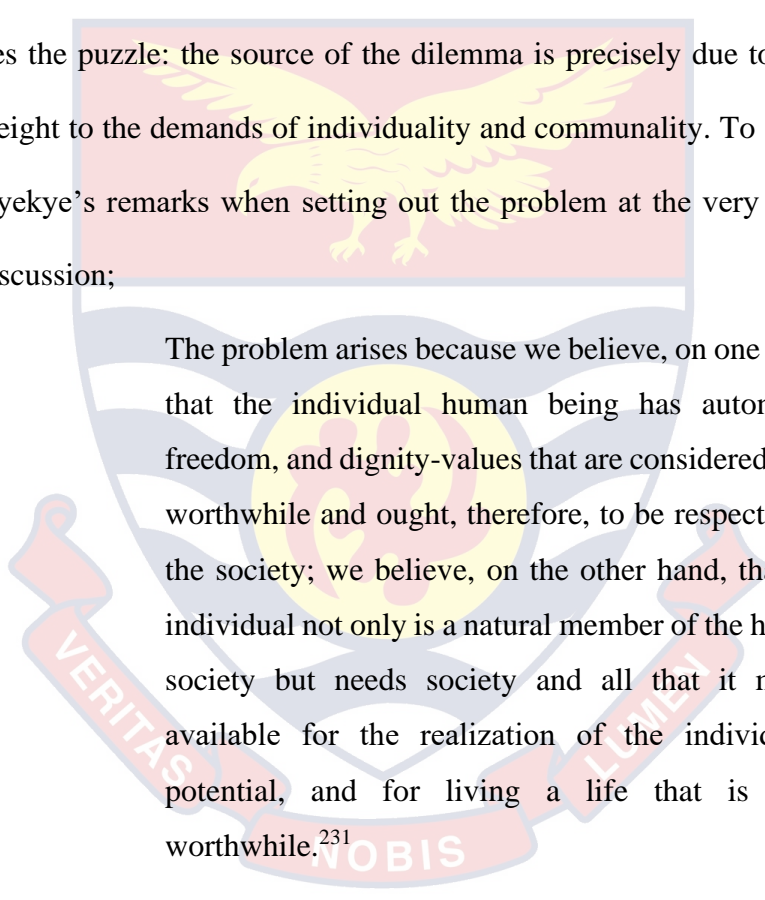
Oyowe opines that the source of the controversy regarding the tension between the individual and the community is that both the individual and the community are considered to be fundamental so, the treatment of the two

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[226] Kwasi Wiredu, "Social Philosophy in Postcolonial Africa: Some Preliminaries Concerning Communalism and Communitarianism," *South African Journal of Philosophy* 27, 4 (2008), pp.332-339.
[227] Kwasi Wiredu and Kwame Gyekye, *Person and Community: Ghanaian Philosophical Studies* Washington, DC: Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 1992; Kwasi Boadi, "The Ontology of Kwame Nkrumah's Consciencism and the Democratic Theory and Practice in Africa: A Diopian Perspective," *Journal of Black Studies* 30, 4 (2000), p.496; Josiah Cobbah, "African Values and The Human Rights Debate: An African Perspective," *Human Rights Quarterly*, 9, (1987), p.323.
[228] Tautology is the repetition of an idea or statement.

entities requires the recognition of their fundamentality.[229] Now, if the source of the controversy was not merely about recognition, perhaps it was about equal recognition. Part of Gyekye's point is that the individual and community should be equally recognized. In this way, Gyekye hopes that his metaphysics would go beyond the simple individual or community priority dichotomy. He also wants to say that metaphysical equality has some merits over priority-it holds better promise in resolving the individual or community dilemma.[230] But herein lies the puzzle: the source of the dilemma is precisely due to assigning equal weight to the demands of individuality and communality. To see this, consider Gyekye's remarks when setting out the problem at the very beginning of his discussion;

> The problem arises because we believe, on one hand, that the individual human being has autonomy, freedom, and dignity-values that are considered most worthwhile and ought, therefore, to be respected by the society; we believe, on the other hand, that the individual not only is a natural member of the human society but needs society and all that it makes available for the realization of the individual's potential, and for living a life that is most worthwhile.[231]

Gyekye's point here is that because we do not accept any less in the fundamentality of individual autonomy and freedom than we do in the

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[229] Anthony Oyowe, "Strange Bedfellows," p.13.
[230] Kwame Gyekye, *Tradition and Modernity*, p. 76.
[231] Ibid, p. 35.

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fundamentality of the community, we are confronted with the problem of explaining how these two components are related, since the claim that an individual is on one hand an autonomous being and on another, a social being by Gyekye pulls the individual in different directions. But if the original controversy was a function of equally recognizing the claims of individuality and communality, my question is: how can a metaphysics that proposes equal regard for both, by recoiling from distinguishing which one is basic, take us any further beyond the original dilemma? Supposing a consensus is reached because of accepting that these two frameworks can be given equal regard, can a theory that proposes the same properly articulate what the appropriate relationship between individual and community should be?

The correct response is that it cannot. Thus, the metaphysics underlying Gyekye's MC is inadequate to water down the heat of the debate. The reason is that because it advocates equal recognition of communality and individuality, which was always at the root of the controversy, MC does not go beyond the original dilemma. Thus, Gyekye's MC is not convincing enough to deflate tensions between the individual and the community.

Analysis of Personhood in Gyekye's MC

Defenders of IAC such as Menkiti have argued that personhood is achieved and that one becomes more of a person as he or she grows.[232] If so,

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[232] Ifeanyi, Menkiti "Person and Community in African Traditional Thought," in R. A. Wright (Ed*.), African Philosophy: An Introduction*, Lanham: University Press of America, 1984, pp.171-181; Ifeanyi Menkiti, "On the Normative Conception of a Person," in Wiredu, Kwasi (Ed.), *A Companion to African Philosophy*, Malden: Blackwell, 2004, pp. 324-331.

then the implication is that one can fail at it. Gyekye, on the other hand, disagrees with the view that within the context of IAC, an individual becomes more of a person or fails to become a person as he or she grows. I am however not persuaded by the arguments Gyekye raises to reject the ontology of personhood in IAC.

Gyekye argues that IAC's ontology indicates that the individual is wholly defined by the community. He adds that this is what justifies the view and reality, that within the environment of IAC, it is the community that confers personhood on the individual. To Gyekye, this is extreme or unrestricted and should be rejected. Gyekye reasons that the individual is indeed communal, but he or she is also an individual who has autonomy, that is, the capacity for re-evaluation and self-assertiveness.

Gyekye continues to argue that though morality plays a significant role in the constitution of a person, personhood is not achieved and even if it were, this achievement is not processual. Thus, according to Gyekye, any claim that an individual becomes a full person with time as he or she gets older in the community is incorrect. Gyekye particularly notes that-

> The notions of 'full personhood; and 'more of a person' are as bizarre as they are incoherent. How does one know exactly when a person becomes a 'full' person, whatever this word means as applied to a person? And, when, and how does a person become 'more of a person?'[233]

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[233] Kwame Gyekye, *Tradition and Modernity*, p. 49.

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Gyekye anticipates the possible response by defenders of IAC such as Menkiti to be that, full personhood is attained when a person is old and at that stage, he or she would have attained moral excellences that are considered essential in the definition of a person or acquisition of personhood. On the contrary, Gyekye thinks otherwise. Gyekye argues that there are some elderly people in society "who are known to be wicked, ungenerous [and] unsympathetic."[234] That is to say generally, there are some elders whose lives do not reflect any moral maturity hence for Menkiti to tie acquisition of personhood to old age concerning IAC is misleading.[235]

In response, Bernard Matolino argues that Gyekye's critique against IAC is not apt. He alludes to two accounts to buttress his point. First, Gyekye does not explicitly suggest the account of IAC to be false; Gyekye's newly proposed MC which attempts to claim authenticity over IAC is an affirmation that IAC is not entirely false.[236] Secondly, understanding personhood is something comparable to an activity and thus, it is dynamic and not static.[237] It is amenable to gradual acquisition.[238] Matolino's observation is tenable. Why?

Supposing tailoring is akin to the status of personhood. The attainment of tailoring is not static. Suppose an individual chooses tailoring as a future

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[234] Ibid, p.49.

[235] Ibid, 49.

[236] Bernard Matolino, "Radicals versus Moderates: A Critique of Gyekye's Moderate Communitarianism," *South African Journal of Philosophy* 28, 2 (2009), p. 164.

[237] It is imperative that though Bernard Matolino is a critique of Gyekye, he recognize IAC as radical. This can be found in the thesis of his article "Radicals versus Moderates" where he argues that Gyekye's MC is as radical as IAC.

[238] Bernard Matolino, "Radicals versus Moderates: A Critique of Gyekye's Moderate Communitarianism," p.165.

profession: first of all, that individual would have to be an apprentice. During the period of apprenticeship, the individual would have the opportunity to assist the master with sewing work as part of the individual's training to become a tailor. At this stage, the individual is surely less of a tailor. After going through the apprenticeship and passing successfully, after which he or she will feel encouraged to demonstrate the acquired skills and knowledge, the individual becomes more of a tailor than he or she used to be when he or she was beginning the apprenticeship.

However, it is also possible that the individual may not be successful in imbibing the qualities and skills that are required of one to be a good tailor. In this case, the individual would have failed the quest to attain the status of a tailor. This is similar to the case of personhood. One could fail at the attainment of personhood or even attain it fully or partially. There is nothing incoherent or bizarre about this. The point being established here is that if a state of being is determined by a processual acquisition of certain features, some individuals may acquire most or all of those features while others may acquire much less or none of those features. It is eventually members of the community that proclaim that you have successfully acquired certain features or not and that you have become a person or not. So, moral excellence as a virtue that has to be acquired, can be attained at differing degrees. From the logic of the illustration made, it is observed that there is nothing absurd and incoherent about the view that in the context of IAC, an individual becomes more of a person as he or she grows.

Concerning Gyekye's point about what happens to old people who are not morally upright, it is difficult to see how that affects the view that the individual becomes more of a person as he or she grows. Gyekye agrees that morality is essential in any communitarian scheme. However, he thinks that the view that full personhood is attained at old age is problematic because it implies that all elderly people are capable of acquiring and exhibiting moral virtue. This is evident when Gyekye avers that-

> Since achievement here clearly involves a dynamic interplay between potentiality and actuality, the problem relates to the actualization of the potential. An examination of this problem, within the context of morality, would involve a discussion of such concepts as trying, moral will, and moral weakness, which is beyond the scope of my present purposes.[239]

Gyekye is suggesting that there is no logical link between old age and the actualization of potential for virtue. For him, the consideration of an individual's capacity to concretize his or her virtuous potentials will require an investigation into concepts like moral will and weakness, for these concepts facilitate the actualization of potentials for virtue. Interestingly, Gyekye chooses not to undertake this investigation. His reason is that such an investigation is beyond the scope of his theory. However, Matolino thinks otherwise; he opines that probably the real reason why Gyekye recoils from this task is that the results of the investigation into these concepts will unveil the incoherencies in Gyekye's

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[239] Kwame Gyekye, *Tradition and Modernity*, p. 52.

MC in the same way that it does in IAC-Matolino also refers to as RC.[240] These concepts (moral will and moral weakness) according to Matolino reveal challenges faced by human beings in general, whether from the background of IAC or that of MC.

The point being made is that if both IAC and MC are likely to shoulder the same burden, it is difficult to see how Gyekye's argument about the involvement of a dynamic interplay between potentiality and actuality connects. For these reasons, Gyekye's critique of IAC about the moral conception of personhood is invalid. If it is invalid, then Gyekye's does not eliminate the so-called 'radical' communitarianism elements from his MC.

Another argument that Gyekye's MC retains is that IAC claims border on the observation that an individual could fail in the quest to achieve personhood. In one breath, Gyekye rejects the claim of IAC that personhood is achieved and that one can fail it.[241] However, in another breath, Gyekye commits himself to this same claim of the IAC school of thought; which he identifies as RC. This is evident when he says:

> Now, the moral significance of denying personhood
> to a human being on the grounds that his actions are
> known to be dissonant with certain fundamental
> norms or that he fails to exhibit certain virtues in his
> behaviour is extremely interesting for [moderate]
> communitarianism. Personhood, in this model of
> humanity, is not innate but is earned in the ethical

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[240] Bernard Matolino, "Radicals versus Moderates,"pp.160-170.
[241] Kwame Gyekye, *Tradition and Modernity*, pp.49-51.

arena: it is an individual's moral achievement that earns him the status of a person. Every individual is capable of becoming a person inasmuch as he is capable of doing good and should, therefore, be treated (potentially) as a morally responsible agent."[242]

Richard Ansah and Modestha Mensah observe that two points can be deduced from the quotation above. First, Gyekye explicitly commits his definition of personhood to moral achievement in the same way that the school of thought that he refers to as radical communitarians does.[243] In the same way, Gyekye opines that the communitarian conception of personhood is not innate but acquired in the moral arena. By accepting that personhood is achieved, Gyekye raises contradictory arguments.

Again, Ansah and Mensah argue that Gyekye's acceptance of the dynamic nature of personhood aligns him with the 'radical communitarian' definition of personhood.[244] At this point, it is not clear what difference exists between IAC and Gyekye's MC as far as this matter about personhood is concerned. The second point deduced from the quotation is that Gyekye admits that the community can deny an individual his or her personhood because certain communal virtues and norms are expressed and observed respectively. This

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[242] Ibid, pp.51-52.

[243] It must be mentioned that Ansah & Mensah also mentioned that IAC is radical. See, Richard Ansah and Mensah Modestha, "Gyekye's Moderate Communitarianism: A Case of Radical Communitarianism in Disguise," *UJAH: Unizik Journal of Arts and Humanities* 19, 2 (2018), pp. 62-87. However, this issue has been addressed in the subsequent parts of this chapter.

[244] Ibid, pp. 62-87.

makes Gyekye to say nothing new from what already exists and is upheld in the context of IAC.

However, Gyekye adds that the individual who is denied personhood still qualifies as a human being his or her rational or autonomous character. I realize here that Gyekye distinguishes between a person and an individual. While a person is one who exhibits moral virtues and so is in tune with the community, an individual is one who is detached from the community and so fails at personhood. Gyekye says that even though the individual is not a person, he or she ought to be respected and treated as such because he or she is still a human being.[245] However, Gyekye's distinction of person and individual does not seem to make his argument very convincing. Ansah and Mensah write that so far as Gyekye claims that morality is the key ingredient of personhood and that one who misses this ingredient fails at it, just as IAC avers, he is not very different from a 'radical communitarian.'[246] Hence, Gyekye's MC also collapses and morphs into IAC.

In my view, IAC and Gyekye's MC address two distinct concepts of personhood. On one hand, the position of IAC, as articulated by Menkiti,[247] is more concerned with the axiological notion of personhood whereas Gyekye[248] is concerned with the ontological conception of personhood, which is typified

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[245] Kwame Gyekye, *Tradition and Modernity*, p.50.
[246] Richard Ansah and Mensah Modestha, "Gyekye's Moderate Communitarianism,"pp.67-87.
[247] See, Ifeanyi Menkiti, "Person and Community in African Traditional Thought,"pp.171-181; Ifeanyi Menkiti, "On the Normative Conception of a Person," pp.324-331.
[248] Kwasi Wiredu and Kwarne Gyekye, *Person and Community: Ghanaian Philosophical Studies* Washington, DC: Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 1992.

by the western conception of human rights. The axiological notion of a person refers to the respect an individual human being earns relative to her performance in the moral arena.[249] The "ontological" notion identifies some features of human nature that warrant respect due to all human beings merely because they possess the relevant descriptive properties like rationality. This is the basis of the western conception of person.

For example, a 17th-century western philosopher, Rene Descartes, is noted to have said *cogito ergo sum*; which translates as *I think therefore I am*.[250] This establishes that a person in the western worldview is any individual that has a mind or can think. Hence, within the context of that western philosophy or school of thought, personhood is definable entirely according to this abstracted feature. The concept of personhood in IAC is significantly different.

In the African worldview, it is not enough to define a person by certain qualities such as rationality but also a person ought to be defined in relation to his or her relation to the community before he or she could be considered as a person. This can be traced in Mbiti's book, *African Religion and Philosophy,* where he writes that "I am because we are and since we are therefore I am."[251] This according to Mbiti is a cardinal point in the understanding of "person" from the African perspective.

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[249] Ifeanyi Menkiti, "Person and Community in African Traditional Thought," pp.171-181; Kwasi Wiredu, "The African Concept of Personhood," in H. E. Flack and E. E. Pellegrino (Eds.), *African-American Perspectives on Biomedical Ethics*, Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1992, pp. 104–117.

[250] Richard Watson, *Cogito, ergo sum: The life of Rene Descartes*, Boston: David R. Godine Publisher, 2007.

[251]John Mbiti, *African Religions & Philosophy*, p.108.

From the above, what can be deduced is that according to the western worldview, any individual or human being is automatically a person. The question then is that can babies and lunatics (people who are mentally ill) be considered as persons even though we do not know if they think or are aware and conscious that they think? Also, how do we know if an individual is a thinking or rational being? Meanwhile, the African conception of personhood does not entangle itself with these problems. As a matter of fact, in the African worldview, an individual is not necessarily an individual with features such as rationality. An individual needs to exhibit moral maturity in the form of selflessness, respect and concern for others before he or she is considered by the community as a person. Also, it is the exhibition of this moral maturity that indicates that one is a thinking/rational being. At this juncture, from the Afrocentric paradigm, I will distinguish between 'person' and 'individual,' as these two concepts keep coming up in the study.

Person vs. Individual

In distinguishing between 'person' and 'individual,' I will rely on the Akan language since it is the widely spoken language in Ghana.[252] Kwasi Wiredu correctly argues that in Akan, the word for 'person' is 'onipa'.[253] 'Onipa' could also mean 'human being' or 'individual'. This implies that 'onipa' is an ambiguous word. However, its meaning would be exposed when kept in the context it is used.

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[252] Adu Boahen, *Ghana: Evolution and Change in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, Boston: Addison-Wesley Longman Limited, 1975.
[253] Michael Eze and Thaddeus Metz, "Emergent Issues in African Philosophy: A Dialogue with Kwasi Wiredu," *Philosophia Africana* 17, 2 (2015), pp. 75-76.

When an individual's conduct persistently appears cruel and selfish, the Akan will say of that individual as 'onnye onipa' which translates as 'he or she is not a person.'

Gyekye made two deductions from this statement. First, the distinction between 'individual' and 'person' is that an individual can be a human being without being a person.[254] Second, there are certain basic norms and ideals to which the behaviour of an individual, if he is a person, should conform.[255] This indicates that an individual ought to display moral maturity to move him or her from being 'individual' to 'person.' The individual to whom 'he or she is not a person' is applied would be one whose conduct is known to the community to be unethical. However, this does not imply that the individual loses his or her right as a human being. Only that he or she is not a morally worthy individual.

The judgment that a human being is 'not a person,' made based on that individual's consistently morally-reprehensible conduct, implies that the pursuit or practice of moral virtue is intrinsic to the conception of person held in IAC. Invoking the modus tollens logical rule, the position here is that for an individual to be a person (*p*), he or she must exhibit moral maturity(*m*); if the individual fails to exhibit moral maturity (*not m*), then it follows that the individual is not a person (*not p*). This argument is deductively valid in the sense that the conclusion tallies with the premises. Logically, this can be represented as follows:

Let 'P' represent 'person' and 'M' represent 'exhibition of moral maturity.'

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[254] Kwame Gyekye, *Tradition and Modernity,* p.49.
[255] Ibid, p.50.

If   P then   M

   Not   M

Therefore, not P

The statement 'he or she is a person' then is a moral statement. It is worth mentioning that babies and lunatics are human beings or individuals and are members of the community. "Babies are potential persons and will achieve the status of personhood in the fullness of time when they can exercise moral capacity.[256]" However, lunatics are out of the reach of making moral decisions hence they cannot attain the status of personhood. Personhood, therefore, is not innate but it is earned in the ethical arena. In short, individual is given by nature, but person is acquired from the community. It is based on this reason that Menkiti maintains that individuals become aware of themselves as persons because the community serves as a frame of reference. To him, the communal world provides resources necessary for an individual to develop mental and linguistic abilities, and it serves as a womb for one to form a personal identity.[257]

On the part of Gyekye, he echoes that the relevant ontological properties constitutive of human nature are the social and autonomous nature of a human being and the latter grounds rights.[258] It is crucial at this point to reckon that the axiological notion of personhood in the African worldview goes beyond human

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[256] Ibid, p.50.
[257]Ifeanyi Menkiti, "Person and Community in African Traditional Thought," p. 171.
[258] Stephen Darwall, "Two Kinds of Respect," *Ethics* 88, 1 (1977), pp.36-49.

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nature. Thaddeus Metz adds that it rather concerns itself with what is to count as an ideal human life.[259]

Another way to make sense of the axiological idea of personhood is to appeal to Stephen Darwall's idea of 'appraisal respect.'[260] This idea refers to a kind of respect an individual earns relative to his moral performance. This kind of respect is not due every human being, but it is a reserve of some human beings-those whose deportment embodies relational virtues prized by IAC such as friendliness, respect, hospitality, generosity, harmony, and mutual aid.

In his article, *African and Afro-American family structure: A comparison*, Niara Sudarkasa identified four moral qualities that when an individual exhibits, he or she could be classified as a person in the African worldview.[261] These qualities are respect, restraint, responsibility, and reciprocity.[262]

Concerning respect, Sudarkasa argues that this is the cardinal principle that underpins African societies. He maintains that although African societies are communal, they are hierarchical. What he means is that respect governs the behaviour of younger members towards the elderly in the community and also governs the behaviour of the elderly towards younger members in the

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[259] Here, African scholars draw a distinction between being merely human as an invariable property-a biological category; and, being a person as a variable property-a moral category. The one is a fact of birth; and the other of performance. In IAC, it is not enough to be merely human; one is expected to become a moral being, exuding excellences and virtues befitting a human life. See, Thaddeus Metz, "Human Dignity, Capital Punishment, and an African Moral Theory: Toward A New Philosophy of Human Rights," *Journal of Human Rights* 9, 1 (2010).

[260] Stephen Darwall, "Two Kinds of Respect," p.34.

[261] Niara Sudarkasa, "African and Afro-American Family Structure: A Comparison," *The Black Scholar* 11, 8 (1980), p. 50.

[262] Ibid, pp.50-51.

community. A popular Akan adage avers that "the African child learns to respect his elders even before he or she learns to speak." Among the Tallensi of northern Ghana, for instance, everyone older than you even by one day, ought to be respected. This respect is manifested in bows, curtsies, greetings and other gestures that signal recognition of seniority. Hence, as one grows up in any African society, one acquires seniority right. It must be mentioned that seniority right bears no relation to one's other attributes.[263] These rights are strictly guaranteed.

Also, the principle of restraint is that which makes communitarianism within the African cultures possible. This is because it indicates that a person does not have complete freedom. Individual rights must always be balanced with the requirement of the community. This is evident in the sacrifice expected of parents to provide for their children and the sacrifices expected of grown children to provide for their parents. This can be found in the Akan proverb which stipulates that "just as parents are expected to take care of their children to grow their teeth, so are children expected to take care of their parents to lose their teeth." It is imperative to know that this notion is common among African societies.

In terms of rights, the principle of restraint requires that members of the community remain flexible in their own rights to consider that of the group, that is, community. Responsibility, according to Sudarkasa, is a much broader

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[263] By other attributes, I have in mind; rationality, talents, self-assertiveness as well as personnel achievements.

concept for Africans. For the African, "this offers a network of security, but it also imposes the burden of obligation."[264] What this implies is that among African societies, the concept of "concern for each other" is as indigenous as the continent itself, where each and everyone is a keeper of the other. I submit that one needs to be discouraged in believing that the term "neighbour's keeper" is a Christian or a European construct. Although I agree with Sudarkasa, the use of the word 'burden' which could connote 'liability' appears as if taking up responsibilities is punishment. This is not the case because you cannot enjoy rights without taking up responsibilities. On this note, Sudarkasa could have ignored the word 'burden' from the quote and his point will still be apt.

Reciprocity is an indigenous African principle that characterizes African societies. When in action, it assumes acts of generosity among members of African communities which will be reciprocated in the short or long run. It is almost impossible to see an individual benefiting from others without returning that generosity.[265] Sometimes, the obligations of one generation can be carried over into the next generation.

From the above, it is clear that there are certain qualities that an individual needs to display to attain the status of personhood so far as IAC is

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[264] Niara Sudarkasa, "*African and Afro-American Family Structure*," p.50.

[265] Julius Nyerere, the first president of Tanzania, adds that in indigenous African society, when one visits a neighbour's house, he or she enjoys the comfort of hospitality for two days and on the third day the visitor accompanies his host to the farm to work. The idea of reciprocity can be deduced from this scenario. Julius Nyerere, *Ujamaa: Essays on Socialism*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1968.

concerned. The axiological notion of personhood in the African worldview is not in dispute in the literature.[266] For instance, Wiredu avers:

> One major point of doctrinal disagreement is, actually, between . . . Gyekye and myself. Gyekye in chapter 5: "Person and Community in Akan Thought" strongly disputes the view advanced by a Nigerian philosopher Ifeanyi Menkiti that personhood, as conceived in African thought, is not something one is born with but rather an ideal one may or may not attain in life. I happen to have independently arrived at basically the same view as Menkiti.[267]

It is the case that IAC which is enunciated by Menkiti is essentially concerned with assessing how moral agents conduct their lives, either in ways that produce virtuous or in ways that produce defective characters. Those human beings that do well are considered to be persons, a commending term and, those that fail are blamed or frowned upon. In this vein, Wiredu averred that in the African communal context, instead of saying a bad person, you rather say not a person at all. You are not a person if you have not displayed certain moral

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[266] Kevin Behrens, "Two 'Normative' Conceptions of Personhood," *Engaging with the Philosophy of Dismas A. Masolo* 25, 1-2 (2011), pp.103-118; Polycarp Ikuenobe, *Philosophical Perspectives on Communalism and Morality in African Traditions*, Lanham: Lexington Books, 2006; Thaddeus Metz, "Human Dignity, Capital Punishment, and an African Moral Theory,"pp.81-99; Motsamai Molefe, "African Ethics and Partiality," *Phronimon* 17, 2 (2016), pp.1-19; Kwasi Wiredu, "The African Concept of Personhood," pp.104-117; Kwasi Wiredu, "Social Philosophy in Postcolonial Africa,"pp.332-339; Kwasi Wiredu, "An Oral Philosophy of Personhood: Comments on Philosophy and Orality," *Research in African Literatures* 40, 1 (2009), pp.8-18.

[267] Kwasi Wiredu, "The African Concept of Personhood," p.111.

qualities. It is therefore not presumptuous to register here that this notion of personhood does not have any reference or connection with human rights.

In Gyekye's case, however, the notion of personhood under analysis appears to be intrinsically connected with human rights. Gyekye's analysis of 'personhood' can rightly be construed as belonging to or derived from the western conception of rights, wherein some descriptive human features are specified by virtue of which human beings are considered to be bearers of rights.[268] This interpretation of Gyekye is suggested by this assertion:

> The restricted communitarianism offers a more appropriate and adequate account of the self . . . in that it addresses the dual features of the self: as a communal being and as an autonomous, self-determining.[269]

Here, Gyekye is concerned with delineating features that constitute human nature. He understands human nature to be constituted by features of sociality and autonomy, and then he grounds the enterprise of rights on the human capacity for autonomy. It is to be noted that talk of rights invokes the kind of respect that belongs to all human beings as human regardless, all things being equal, of their moral conduct. One does not earn rights and one cannot

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[268]Jack Donnelly, "Human Rights and Human Dignity: An Analytic Critique of Non-western Conceptions of Human Rights," *American Political Science Review* 76, 2 (1982) pp, 303-316.
[269] Kwasi Wiredu and Kwame Gyekye, *Person and Community*, p.113.

lose dignity; for dignity and rights are things a human being has, merely because he or she is human.[270]

This analysis of the two disparate notions of personhood shows that IAC and Gyekye's MC is addressing different issues. IAC is concerned with the axiology (normative) of personhood. Gyekye, on the other hand, is concerned with the western ontology (metaphysical) of personhood. This is the point of divergence between IAC and Gyekye's MC. In view of this understanding, I consider Polycarp Ikuenobe's points that "it is the normative and not the metaphysical idea of personhood that is germane to African communal traditions, as personhood is a status earned".[271] I find Ikuenobe's statement very enlightening within the context of IAC. Gyekye himself notes that:

> . . . a moral conception of personhood is held in African thought; personhood is defined in terms of moral achievement. Personhood conceived in terms of moral achievement will be most relevant to the communitarian framework that holds the ethic of responsibility in high esteem: the ethic that stresses sensitivity to the interests and well-being of other members of the community, though not necessarily to the detriment of individual rights"[272]

Thus, one can realise that there is consensus in the literature that the normative idea of personhood is a characteristic feature of African moral thought.

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[270]Manuel Toscano, "Human Dignity as High Moral Status1," *The Ethics Forum*, 6, 2 (2011), pp.4-25.

[271] Polycarp Ikuenobe, *Philosophical Perspectives on Communalism and Morality in African Traditions*, p.117.

[272] Kwame Gyekye, *Tradition and Modernity*, p.52.

This idea captures the moral insight that a human being is judged to be a person or not, relative to her moral achievement. On this note, it is inapt on Gyekye's part to consider that IAC is a radical version of communitarianism since IAC and his MC look at and deal with two different notions of personhood.

Analysis of Rights in Gyekye's MC

The motivation for Gyekye's MC is to fully recognize individual rights, which according to him IAC refuses to consider.[273] Thus, the most salient feature of Gyekye's theory borders on the recognition of rights of the individual, which express individuality. Gyekye thinks that this is what IAC is missing. On the other hand a critical reading of IAC and Gyekye's MC proves that this thought of Gyekye about IAC is not apt. I will provide arguments to underscore the position that Gyekye's recognition of rights does not make his theory moderate and preferable to IAC. First of all, Gyekye's claim that IAC does not recognize rights[274] is not correct. Second, Gyekye's MC treats rights as secondary values, just as IAC does.[275]

First, Gyekye thinks that his moderate version of communitarianism is equipped to recognize individual rights. Gyekye notes that rights primarily belong to the individual. According to Gyekye since IAC has no regards for the individual, it cannot have regard for rights. Gyekye criticizes defenders of IAC more especially Menkiti that his (Menkiti) view on IAC denies rights or reduces rights to a secondary status and this does not adequately reflect the claims of

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[273] Ibid, p.39.
[274] Ibid, p.61.
[275] Ibid, p.62.

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individuality mandated in the notion of the moral worth of the individual.[276] Gyekye says IAC claims that "the politics of rights should be given up and replaced with the politics of the common good."[277] He says such claims are indefensibly extreme and would be at variance with the moderate communitarian view.

Gyekye thinks that his moderate version is defensible because the 'mental feature' which is constitutive of the individual in his MC is a commitment to the expression of rights. As individuals showcase this mental feature through values like self-assertiveness and capacity for re-evaluation, individual rights are exercised. Furthermore, Gyekye argues that his version recognizes human worth and dignity and this recognition translates to the respect for individual rights. This is because the notion of human dignity and worth, for him, generates and compels the recognition of innate or natural rights. He is convinced that his theory recognises rights but IAC does not. Hence Gyekye claims that IAC is radical.

However, I submit that Gyekye's conclusion that radical communitarians reject rights is misleading. This is evidential in Menkiti's lines which read as follows:

> In the African understanding, priority is given to the
> duties which individuals owe to the collectivity, and

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[276]Ibid, p.61; John Famakinwa, "How Moderate is Kwame Gyekye's Moderate Communitarianism?" *Thought and Practice* 2, 2 (2010), pp.65-77.
[277]Kwame Gyekye, *Tradition and Modernity*, p.62.

their rights, whatever these may be, are seen as secondary to the exercise of their duties.[278]

Here, it is factual that Menkiti is prioritizing duties over rights, but it will be unsound to describe IAC as radical since it gives rights a place- at least a second place. Ansah and Mensah add that basic rights such as right to life, right to freedom of speech, and right not to be treated unjustly are not rejected in the "radical communitarian" scheme.[279] On this, Wiredu states:

> 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.[280]

Wiredu's account on human rights points to the fact that individual rights are an integral part of IAC.[281] He predicates his argument on the Akan culture. Wiredu correctly indicates that in the indigenous Akan society of Ghana, a new-born child in his or her fragile and helpless state requires attention and care from family members to survive. As the child grows, the obligation falls on members of his or her family or clan to avail resources that will enable

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[278] Ifeanyi Menkiti, "Person and Community in African Traditional Thought," p.180.

[279] Richard Ansah and Modestha Mensah, "Gyekye's Moderate Communitarianism," p.81.

[280] Michael Eze and Thaddeus Metz, "Emergent Issues in African Philosophy: A Dialogue with Kwasi Wiredu," *Philosophia Africana* 17, 2 (2015), p.76.

[281] Kwasi Wiredu, "*Cultural Universals and Particulars: An African Perspective*," Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1996.

the child to be independent and cater for himself or herself. This is where the right to properties, such as land, comes in. As the child matures and is affected by decisions taken in his or her community, he or she has the right to participate in political matters that affect his or her well-being. To support the assertion that rights are not alien to the African communitarian ethos, in his book *Destruction of Black Civilization: Great Issues of a Race From: 4500 BC to 2000 AD,* Chancellor Williams outlines the fundamental rights of African people.[282] According to him, every member of the family had:

1) The right to equal protection of the law.
2) The right to a home.
3) The right to land sufficient for earning livelihood for oneself and family.
4) The right to aid in times of trouble.
5) The right to petition for redress of grievances.
6) The right to criticize and condemn any acts by the authorities or proposed new laws (Opposition groups, in some areas called "The Youngman", were recognized by law).
7) The right to reject the community's final decision on any matter and to withdraw from the community unmolested-the right of rebellion and withdrawal.
8) The right to a fair trial. There must be no punishment greater than the offence, or fines beyond the ability to pay. This latter is determined by income and status of the individual and his family.
9) The right to indemnity for injuries or loss caused by others.

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[282] By 'African people,' Chancellor Williams implies indigenous Africans on the African continent with shared cultural values.

10) The right to family or community care in cases of sickness or accidents.

11) The right to special aid from the Chief in circumstances beyond a family's ability.

12) The right to a general education covering morals and good manners, family rights and responsibilities, kinship groups and social organization, neighbourhoods and boundaries, farming and marketing, rapid mental calculation, and family, clan, tribal and state histories.

13) The right to apprentice training for a useful vocation.

14) The right to an inheritance as defined by custom.

15) The right to develop one's ability and exercise any developed skills.

16) The right to protect one's family and kinsmen, even by violent means if such becomes necessary and can be justified.

17) The right to the protection of moral law in respect to wife and children-a right which not even the king can violate.

18) The right of a man, even a slave, to rise to occupy the highest positions in the state if he has the requisite ability and character.

19) The right to protection and treatment as a guest in enemy territory once one is within the gates of the enemy's village, town or city.

20) And the right to an equal share in all benefits from common community undertakings if one has contributed to the fullest extent of his ability, no matter who or how many were able to contribute more.[283]

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[283] Chancellor Williams, *Destruction of Black Civilization: Great Issues of a Race From: 4500 BC to 2000 AD*, Chicago: Third World Press, 1987, pp.174-175.

The above is instructive because it indicates that even as far back as the 5th-century, when Europe's feet had not touched the African soil, individual rights were accommodated in the African communitarian ethos. Therefore, Gyekye's recognition of rights in his MC does not make his argument very convincing since the rights he recognises have always been an intrinsic part of IAC. If this is granted, then Gyekye's recognition of rights does not make him different from IAC which he tags as radical.

Again, quite apart from the fact that IAC recognises and respects innate or natural rights just like Gyekye does, John Famakinwa shares the view that IAC, which he also calls radical communitarianism,[284] can be compatible with rights or liberties in certain instances.[285] The reason is that radical communitarianism, according to Famakinwa, places a high value on love and mutual friendship and the commitment to these two values in a way implies "the acceptance of the primacy of liberty."[286] What is more is that liberty could actually be accepted by a communitarian community as the common good.

Suppose spying on individuals' private lives could provide information about plans of terrorism, IAC would suspend individuals' rights to privacy for the sake of securing the lives of members of the community at large. Gyekye's

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[284] Famakinwa also calls IAC as RC because to him IAC gives rights a secondary consideration. Famakinwa expected that rights in IAC be given primary consideration like the western liberals do-where individual rights are seen as superior and autonomous to the community. See, John Famakinwa, "How Moderate is Kwame Gyekye's Moderate Communitarianism?" pp.67-77.

[285] John Famakinwa, "Revisiting Kwame Gyekye's Critique of Normative Cultural Relativism," *Thought and Practice* 4, 1 (2012), pp.25-41.

[286] John Famakinwa, "Revisiting Kwame Gyekye's Critique of Normative Cultural Relativism," p.30.

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MC will do the same. The scenario cited by Ansah and Mensah of a victim of a fatal accident being rushed to the hospital is a good example. On the way to the hospital, there is a roadblock where security personnel are searching for every individual who wishes to cross the checkpoint. This search will reduce the rate of criminal activities in a community, thus ensuring the security of the whole community. It is assumed offhandedly that IAC will insist on searching the patient being rushed to the hospital since the theory is known to consider the community morally superior to the individual. However, this may not necessarily be the case.

In this circumstance, the individual's right to life, which includes the right not to be delayed from getting to the hospital in time to be saved, will be preferred over the security of the whole community, which is ensuring that all road users are searched. The scenario just offered shows that contrary to Gyekye's claim, IAC does not reject rights. Famakinwa adds that though IAC treats rights as a secondary matter, IAC recognises the individual's right to life.[287]

Furthermore, Famakinwa argues that radical communitarianism's compatibility with rights rests on the high-value radical communitarians place on love, mutual friendship and understanding. Communitarians highly regard these values because these values result in the common good. A community regulated by love and mutual understanding is peaceful, safe, and harmonious.

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[287] Ibid, p.10.

Communitarians believe that when individual members of the community love and understand each other, selfish behaviour would be reduced since members will have concern for the well-being of each other. On that note, Benezet Bujo, a theologian, observes that "acting in solidarity for the construction of the community allows himself [Benezet Bujo] to be brought to completion by this same community so that he can become a person truly."[288] In like manner, David Lutz notes: "the ethics of a true community does not ask persons to sacrifice their good to promote the good of others, instead to recognise that they can attain their own true good only by promoting the good of others."[289]

In his article *Radicals versus Moderates: A Critique of Gyekye's Moderate Communitarianism*, Bernard Matolino's endeavours to demonstrate that "moderate communitarianism is not only inconsistent but not sufficiently different from radical communitarianism."[290] Matolino demonstrates this inconsistency of MC by citing two assertions made by Gyekye. The first, according to Matolino, is that-

> With all this said, however, it must be granted that
> moderate communitarianism cannot be expected to
> be obsessed with rights. The reason, which is not far
> to seek, derives from the logic of the communitarian
> theory itself: it assumes a great concern for values,
> for the good of the wider society as such. The

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[288] Bénézet Bujo, *Foundations of An African Ethic: Beyond the Universal Claims of Western Morality*, New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 2001, p.88.

[289] David Lutz, "African Ubuntu Philosophy and Global Management," *Journal of Business Ethics* 84, 3 (2009), p.316.

[290] Bernard Matolino, "Radicals versus moderates: A critique of Gyekye's moderate communitarianism," *South African journal of philosophy* 28, 2 (2009), pp. 160-170.

> communitarian society, perhaps like any other type
> of human society, deeply cherishes the social values
> of peace, harmony, stability, solidarity, and mutual
> reciprocities and sympathies.[291]

The second is that-

> Individual rights, the exercise of which is meaningful
> only within the context of human society, must,
> therefore, be matched with social responsibilities. In
> the absence of the display of sensitivity to such
> responsibilities, the community will have to take the
> steps necessary to maintain its integrity and stability.
> The steps are likely to involve abridging individual
> rights, which, thus, will be regarded by the moderate
> communitarian as not absolute, though important. [292]

With regards to the first quotation, Matolino observes that it makes Gyekye's argument appear inconsistent.[293] On the one hand, Gyekye wants an account that takes rights seriously; on the other hand, he does not expect moral agents to be obsessed with rights. Matolino further notes that if MC is obsessed about socio-communal values then it is the same as radical communitarianism. With regards to the second quotation, Matolino is taken aback by the assertion that rights may be abridged if they undermine the communal good. Matolino adds that the very possibility of rights being superseded by the common good, under certain circumstances, renders Gyekye as a radical communitarian.

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[291] Kwame Gyekye, *Tradition and Modernity*, p.65.
[292] Ibid, p.65.
[293] Bernard Matolino, "Radicals versus Moderates,"pp.160-170.

However, Matolino maintains that IAC, which Gyekye accuses of being a radical, does not necessarily reject rights per se, but simply gives them a secondary status which is relative to the duties and responsibilities of individuals to others. In short, Matolino's criticism can be summarised in this fashion:

> If MC does not regard rights as moral properties that we ought to be obsessed about; and if MC treats them as trump-able by our social duties to promote the common good, then it is not sufficiently different from radical communitarianism, which it seeks to reject and to serve as a viable alternative.[294]

Although Matolino is reasonable in his observation that Gyekye's MC is not different from IAC because they both treat rights the same, he is not correct in his thinking that IAC is radical. For instance, Matolino's conclusion is that there is no discernible difference between IAC and Gyekye's MC with regards to rights and as such, both are instances of radical forms of communitarianism. The success of the criticisms from Gyekye (1997), Matolino (2009), Famanikwa (2010) and Oyowe (2014) and Ansah and Mensah (2018) that IAC is radical depends crucially on how IAC has conceptualised personhood. The aforementioned scholars are ultimately saying that IAC is radical[295] but is it really true that IAC is radical? The following sub-section of

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[294] Motsamai Molefe, "A Defence of Moderate Communitarianism: A Place of Rights in African Moral-Political Thought, *Phronimon* 18, 1 (2017), p.191.

[295] Kwame Gyekye, *Tradition and Modernity*; Bernard Matolino, "Radicals versus Moderates", pp.160-170; John, Famakinwa. "How Moderate is Kwame Gyekye's Moderate Communitarianism," pp.67-77; Anthony Oyowe, "Strange Bedfellows," pp.1-22; Richard Ansah and Modestha Mensah, "Gyekye's Moderate Communitarianism," pp.62-87.

this chapter addresses this issue and concludes that contrary to the position of other works that have examined Gyekye's MC and IAC, IAC is not radical.

Contesting Gyekye's Claim and Scholars who Think IAC is Radical

It is not convincing that IAC, as described by Menkiti, amounts to anything radical. For instance, Wiredu tells us that there is nothing radical about IAC and he adds that Gyekye's criticism of IAC articulated by Menkiti is false.[296] Although Wiredu is on point in saying that IAC is not radical, he does not make it his sole project to demonstrate this claim by philosophically analysing IAC to disprove the charges levied against it. Wiredu limited his justification to the fact that individual rights are recognized even in the most communitarian society.[297] Wiredu argues that in any culture, one will find concepts that appraise human action but this does not imply the culture is radical communitarian in nature. Motsamai Molefe also indicated that the fact that rights are treated as secondary in IAC does not make IAC radical.

According to Molefe, one can only say that IAC is radical supposing we already have an account of what is to count as a moderate position. The criterion at hand does not warrant Gyekye to interpret the priority of duties over rights in IAC as radical. I agree with Molefe in the sense that I see capitalist society as exploitative because a society predates it that was communal-which did not exploit individuals per historical materialism.[298] But supposing capitalism has

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[296] Michael Eze and Thaddeus Metz, "Emergent Issues in African Philosophy: A Dialogue with Kwasi Wiredu," *Philosophia Africana* 17, 2 (2015), p.74.
[297] Ibid, p.74.
[298] Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, "The Communist Manifesto, 1848," Trans. Samuel Moore, London: Penguin, 1967.

existed throughout the developmental stages, contrary to what was articulated by Karl Marx, it will be difficult to see a capitalist society as exploitative because that is what has existed throughout human existence.

Molefe also adds that ". . . when rights come into contact with the Afro-communitarian axiological orientation, they will be affected."[299] What Molefe implies is that the afro-communitarian scheme undermines individual rights. I find this to be incorrect. Hence, the novelty of this thesis resides in the fact that it engages in the task of analyzing the inaccuracy of the claim that IAC is radical. The essence of engaging in this enterprise is to, firstly, correct certain misconceptions about IAC and secondly, to deconstruct certain terms associated with IAC.

First and foremost, IAC holds that without ethical maturity, one cannot attain personhood. It follows that one can actually fail at the attainment of personhood.[300] In this vein, Menkiti avers:

> In light of the above observations I think it would be accurate to say that whereas western conceptions of man go for what might be described as a minimal definition of the person-whoever has soul, or rationality, or will, or memory, is seen as entitled to the description 'person'-the African view reaches instead for what might be described as a maximal definition of the person. As far as African societies are concerned, personhood is something at which individuals could fail, at which they could be

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[299] Motsamai Molefe, "A Defence of Moderate Communitarianism,"p.184.
[300] Ifeanyi Menkiti, "Person and Community in African Traditional Thought," pp.171-181.

competent or ineffective, better or worse. Hence, the African emphasized the rituals of incorporation and the overarching necessity of learning the social rules by which the community lives, so that what was initially biologically given can come to attain social self-hood, i.e. become a person with all the inbuilt excellencies implied by the term.[301]

The western notion of a person is said to be minimalist because it focuses on some internal individual features such as rationality. An African view of personhood, on the other hand, goes beyond these internal features and focuses on how one treats or uses his or her humanity in a moral context. This, Menkiti identified, as 'maximalist.' For this reason, regarding the Zulu of South Africa, Augustine Shutte maintains that "I only become fully human to the extent that I am included in relationships with others."[302] What emerges here clearly is that personhood is constituted largely by focusing on relating well with others. It is bringing together the aspects of nature and means of acquiring personhood that "we come to conclude that the notion of personhood implies a moral theory that requires a moral agent to perfect himself in the context of relating positively with others."[303] With this understanding of IAC in relation to personhood, it is not clear how this idea threatens the dignity and rights of individuals as Gyekye and Molefe want to suggest.

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[301] Ibid, p.173.
[302] Augustine Shutte, *Ubuntu: An Ethic for A New South Africa*, Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 2001. p.24.
[303] Motsamai Molefe, "Revisiting the Menkiti-Gyekye Debate: Who Is a Radical Communitarian?" *Theoria* 63, 149 (2016), p. 46.

In the first instance, this notion of personhood offers an intriguing (or, another) way for agents to respect their own and others' dignity. One is expected to recognise one's dignity and that of others by improving the quality of his or her humanity, and that of the others.[304] So, I take seriously the idea that I must perfect myself because I realize that I am a being of dignity.[305] I must relate positively with others because they are also bearers of similar dignity.[306] The idea of self-perfection is, therefore, grounded on the fact that a human being understands himself or herself as a being of superlative value. Thus, a failure to develop myself morally is to treat myself other than what I deserve as a moral patient. A failure to relate with others positively, according to Molefe, has doubly damaging effects.[307]

On the one hand, it damages an individual's prospects of attaining his or her personhood; and it also harms the next human being's valuable nature and dignity. At this juncture, it is reasonable to suggest that a close analysis of IAC demonstrates that there is no legitimacy in the claim that IAC undermines rights. What is sound is that IAC emphasizes the duties of individuals while other cultural spaces like those of the west function on rights. This does not mean that IAC does not recognise rights, but rather what it means is that duties are given priority over individual rights for the general good of each member in the society. In other words, if one were to use the language employed by

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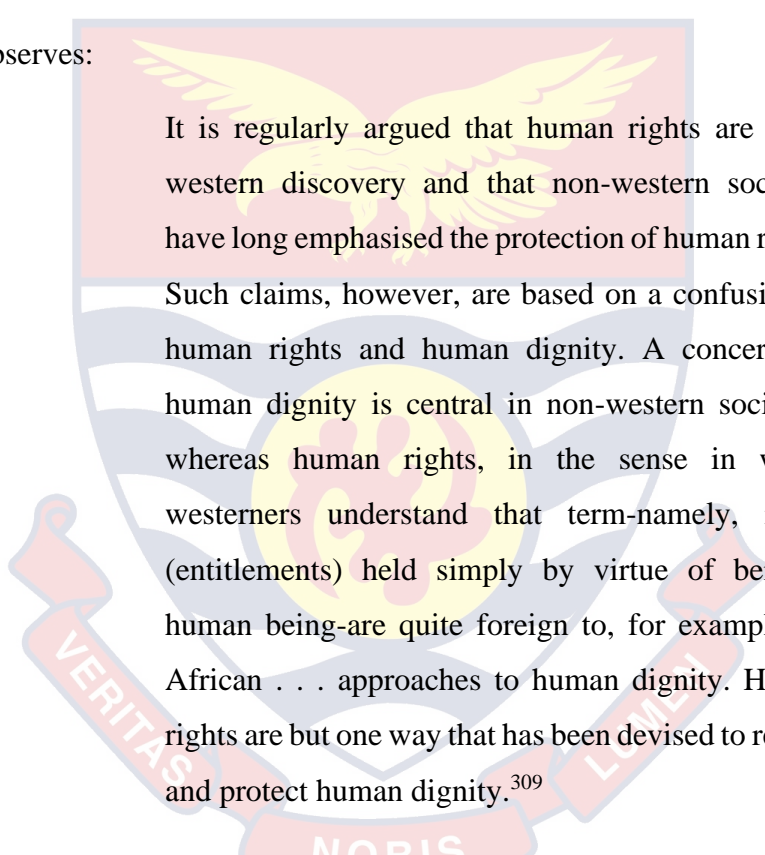[304] Mogobe Ramose, *African Philosophy through Ubuntu*.
[305] Kwasi Wiredu, "An Oral Philosophy of Personhood: Comments on Philosophy and Orality,"pp.8-18.
[306] Ibid, p.8-18.
[307] Motsamai Molefe, "Revisiting the Menkiti-Gyekye Debate," p.47.

Ronald Dworkin to describe IAC, it would be phrased in terms of "duties trumping rights."[308]

There is no basis to say that IAC is radical. It is crucial to recognize and appreciate the fact that IAC does not negate or reject rights in any way. IAC considers individuals to play vital roles. Hence, it is inappropriate to register that IAC has no place for individual rights. The dynamics in IAC find support in one of the most influential rights scholars, Jack Donnelly, who observes:

> It is regularly argued that human rights are not a western discovery and that non-western societies have long emphasised the protection of human rights. Such claims, however, are based on a confusion of human rights and human dignity. A concern for human dignity is central in non-western societies; whereas human rights, in the sense in which westerners understand that term-namely, rights (entitlements) held simply by virtue of being a human being-are quite foreign to, for example. . . African . . . approaches to human dignity. Human rights are but one way that has been devised to realize and protect human dignity.[309]

In the same article, he avers: "Recognition of human rights simply was not the way of traditional Africa, with obvious and important consequences for

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[308] Ronald Dworkin, *Taking Rights Seriously*, London: Duckworth, 1977.
[309] Jack Donnelly, "Human Rights and Human Dignity: An Analytic Critique of Non-Western Conceptions of Human Rights," *American Political Science Review* 76, 2 (l982), p. 303.

political practice."[310] Here, Donnelly observes that the idea of "rights as entitlements" as generally thought to be a human feature is typically western. He observes that rights are foreign to African societies; but instead, non-western societies like Africa have tended to focus on the idea of dignity and appealed to this notion to protect or help individuals to realise their true humanity. In non-western societies like indigenous Africa, human dignity was protected by reciprocal duties that were engendered by social relationships emphasised by a communitarian polity.[311]

Donnelly was right when he echoed that human dignity is central to African society. However, it was not accurate for him to say that human right is foreign to the African continent. For instance, as Oyowe indicates earlier, it is a matter of emphasis. The fact that African societies emphasize human dignity does not necessarily mean that they have no recognition for human rights. Like Menkiti argues, IAC gives rights a 'secondary consideration' not a 'no consideration.' There are elements of individuality in the most communalistic society, hence, Donnelly's assertion that African societies have no regard for human rights is not apt.

However, I see Donnelly's support to IAC by saying that IAC is not off the radar for placing primacy on duties as a means to protect human dignity. Thus, given that IAC recognises rights as secondary and nowhere rejects them, there is no reasonable basis for the claim that IAC is radical. If there is nothing

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[310] Ibid, p.303.
[311] Kwasi Wiredu, "Social Philosophy in Postcolonial Africa,"pp.332-339.

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radical about IAC, how did Gyekye, Oyowe, Matolino, Famakinwa, Ansah and Mensah among others conclude that IAC is radical? Gyekye is addressing a straw-man fallacy since he has misinterpreted IAC to easily refute the real argument of IAC.[312] There is no substance in Gyekye's criticism that IAC is radical.

Gyekye writes that RC "fails to recognise the individuality of the individual and the rights that naturally belong to a human person insofar as a person is essentially autonomous."[313] Meanwhile, it is clear that IAC recognises rights, so it is perplexing that Gyekye registers a view that IAC is radical even though it is obvious that rights are 'secondary' and 'not absent' in IAC. Therefore it is reasonable, to suggest that an account that accords rights a secondary status, in its axiological scale, should in all fair-mindedness be described as 'impartial communitarianism' in its commitment to rights, but not radical since it gives recognition to both the community and individual interest.

Gyekye uses a eurocentric lens in analysing IAC. It is the reason why he expects IAC to treat rights like the westerners do. Ironically, he could not even prioritize individual rights over the community; not to talk of, giving them equal moral standing in his MC. It is noticeable that he treats rights just as IAC does. The logic is that, if Gyekye made rights to triumph over duties in his MC, then he ceases to be a communitarian; instead, I see the opposite. What this implies

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[312] The real argument of IAC is that though it gives supremacy to the community over the individual that does not imply that the individual right is not recognized. In fact, Menkiti had it right when he said that rights are given secondary consideration with regards to IAC.
[313] Kwame Gyekye, *Tradition and Modernity*, p.39.

is that upon all Gyekye's criticisms against IAC, he is still committed to its communitarian thesis, that is, the supremacy of the community over the individual.

However, there is a problem with Menkiti's description of IAC especially when he argued that one could fail in the pursuit of personhood yet he Menkiti refuses to say what happens to a person who fails at the attainment of personhood.[314] This, I think, is the lacuna that Gyekye should have addressed. At this point, the rest of this chapter shall discuss this matter in a bid to resolve it. In doing this, the Akan community shall be used as a case study.[315] The reason being that the Akan constitutes about 45% of the population of Ghana, making it the largest ethnic group.

For the Akan, the human being (animated) is a tripartite being with three inseparable components, one biological (material) and two immaterial. This concept of the human person finds expression in the Akan belief that the human person is formed from three elements, namely, *mogya* (blood) which is from the mother, *ntoro* (spirit) from the father, and *okra* (soul) from God.[316]

The okra is an indestructible part of God given to man by God when he is about to be born, and with a destiny (*nkrabea*), which returns to God when the person

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[314] Nowhere in Menkiti's articles did he write on what happens to a person who fails to attain personhood. See, Ifeanyi Menkiti, "Person and Community in African Traditional Thought,"pp.171-181: Ifeanyi Menkiti, "On the Normative Conception of a Person,"pp.324-331.

[315] The Akan comprises the following 11 subgroups: the Brong, Guan, Asante, Akyem, Kwahu, Akwamu, Akuapem, Fante, Ahanta, Sefwi, and the Nzema. See, Adu Boahen, *Ghana: Evolution and Change in The Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, Addison-Wesley Longman Limited, 1975.

[316] Kofi Busia, "The Ashanti" in D. Forde (Ed.) *African Worlds: Studies in Cosmological and Social Values of African Peoples*, London: Oxford University Press, 1954, pp.196- 197.

dies. This definition of the Akan concept of "okra" finds support in Kwame Gyekye specifically when he avers:

> The okra is considered to be that which constitutes the very inner self of the individual, the principle of life of that individual, and the embodiment and transmitter of his destiny. It is thought to be a spark of God (Onyame) in man. It is thus divine and has an ante-mundane existence with God. The okra, therefore, might be considered as the equivalent of the concept of soul in other metaphysical systems. A father transmits the sumsum to his child. This is what is thought to mould the child's individual personality and character.[317]

Although this is the basic definition of the Akan concept of okra, as R. Wright correctly observes, "the conception of okra as the life principle in a person, his vital force, the source of his energy, is linked closely with another concept, namely Honhom."[318] Honhom means 'breath.' It is derived from the Akan verb, 'home' which means 'to breathe.' According to Gyekye, the okra is that which 'causes' the breathing. Thus, the honhom is the tangible manifestation or evidence of the okra. The honhom's departure from the body evinces the soul's departure from the body to enjoy post-mundane existence with Onyame (God). The okra is undying.[319]

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[317] Kwame Gyekye, "The Akan Concept of a Person," in R. A. Wright (Ed.) *African Philosophy: An Introduction,* 3rd Edition, Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1984, p. 201.
[318] Ibid, p.201.
[319] Kofi Busia, "The Ashanti," pp.196- 197.

According to Kofi A. Busia, the *ntoro* determines an individual's sunsum or ego. The Akan father is therefore responsible for his child's moral behaviour. It is believed that the father transmits his *ntoro* through his semen during sexual intercourse. The Akan word for semen is *ho*.[320] This word is translated as being, self or personality. It is believed that the *ntoro* mingles with the blood transmitted by the mother to bring about a child's conception.

From the above, I, therefore, conclude that a human being (animated) is both a material and immaterial entity, considering the elements that a human being is made up of. However, it is imperative to note that the African concept of being (animated) is distinct from the western concept of being (animated) which is often associated with "Cartesian dualism" proposed by the French philosopher, Rene Descartes.[321] Cartesian dualism avers that being (animated) is made of two separate components; that is, a material component which is the body, and an immaterial component which is the soul or mind or spirit. It adds that though both entities -body (material) and spirit or mind or soul (immaterial)- are substances that can exist on their own, however, they both influence each other.

For example, hearing bad news like the death of a spouse, which is a mental process, can cause the hearer to cry which is a physical process. Also, fire touching the skin which is a physical process causes a mental effect which

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[320] Emmanuel Asante, *Toward an African Christian Theology of the Kingdom Of God: The Kingship Of Onyame*, Mellen: Mellen University Press, 1995, p.78

[321] Kwame Gyekye, "The Akan Concept of a Person," *International Philosophical Quarterly* 18, 3 (1978), pp.277-287.

is pain. That is to say, with Cartesian dualism, the body influences the mind or soul and the mind also influences the body. Regarding the place or junction or point where the body interacts with the mind, Rene Descartes thinks that the pineal gland in the head is the site of interaction of body and mind or soul.[322]

If the pineal gland is physical, which it is, does it mean the material component (body) is superior to the immaterial component (mind or soul or spirit)? Or does it mean that the immaterial component of being is not a substance and therefore cannot exist on its own? These are some unresolved critiques levelled against Cartesian dualism. Meanwhile, the Akan belief that human being is made up of inseparable material (mogya and honam) and immaterial (sumsum, okra and ntoro) entities have interestingly been problematical for African philosophers such as Kwame Nkrumah who details his concerns in one of his most comprehensive books of philosophy called *Consciencism*.[323]

The problem with the Akan belief that human being is made up of both material and immaterial can be summarized as: if the Akans believe that the Okra is from God, at what point in time does the Okra enter the body to give it life? Thus, the Akan belief of both material and immaterial is as problematic as that of Cartesian dualism. How does Nkrumah disentangle the Akan belief of both material and immaterial from these problems? How does he reconcile the

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[322] Harold Morowitz, "The Mind-Body Problem and the Second Law of Thermodynamics," *Biology and Philosophy* 2, 3 (1987), p. 271.
[323] Kwame Nkrumah, *Consciencism: The Philosophy and Ideology for Decolonization and Development,* First Edition, London: Panaf Books, 1964.

belief in both material and the immaterial without encountering problems? To do this, Nkrumah proposes what he calls *Consciencism.* He describes *Consciencism* as:

> The map in intellectual terms of the disposition of forces which will enable African society to digest the western and the Islamic and the Euro-Christian elements in Africa, and develop them in such a way that they fit into the African personality . . . [It is a] philosophical standpoint which, taking its start from the present content of the African conscience, indicates the way in which progress is forged out of the conflict in the conscience.[324]

Nkrumah further argues that matter is independent, self-caused and self-moved, and can give rise to other categories such as spirit and consciousness.[325] Nkrumah's point of departure from Marxist materialism is that matter can give rise to something entirely different such as spirit. In this process, old set-properties are dropped and new ones are acquired.[326] Nkrumah adds that *Consciencism* though deeply rooted in materialism, is not necessarily atheistic.[327] This led Nkrumah to describe the ontology in his *Consciencism* as "non-atheistic materialism."[328] Boadi argues that though *Consciencism* is deeply grounded in materialism, it accommodates immaterial entities such as spirit. It is based on this reason that Nkrumah asserts that he is "a non-denominational

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[324] Ibid, p.79.
[325] Ibid, p.19.
[326] Ibid, p.25.
[327] Ibid, p.84.
[328] Cited from Kwasi Boadi, "The Ontology of Kwame Nkrumah's Consciencism and the Democratic Theory and Practice in Africa: A Diopian Perspective," *Journal of Black Studies* 30, 4 (2000), p. 476.

Christian and a Marxist socialist and I have found no contradiction between the two."[329]

The import of Nkrumah's argument is that reality, which is matter, is only one; however, this entity can manifest itself both non-physically and physically. This means human being is primarily material and therefore gives rise to immaterial entities such as *sumsum, okra* and *ntoro*. This is consistent with the Akan belief that there is a causal relationship between the material part, *honam* and the immaterial part-*okra, sumsum and ntoro*-where the material part can influence the immaterial part and the immaterial can also influence the material.

The Akan believe in monism. That is being or person is one entity but can manifest itself in both material and immaterial form. In this regard, Molefi Kete Asante asserts that "we [Africans] do not . . . make absolute distinction between mind [soul] and matter [body], form and substance, ourselves and the world . . . Neither materiality nor spirituality is illusory."[330] Though I agree with Asante, it would be appropriate for him to replace 'spirituality' in his sentence with "immateriality" because the opposite of material is immaterial, not spirit. For spirit is the highest form of matter.

The belief in both the material and immaterial forms the bases for the belief in reincarnation, rebirth, healing, and necromancy among the Akans. In affirmation of this, Gyekye writes as follows: "the belief in psycho-physical

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[329] Kwame Nkrumah, *Ghana: The Autobiography of Kwame Nkrumah*. New York: International Publishers, 1971, p.12.
[330] Molefi Kete Asante, *Afrocentricity*, Trenton: Africa World, 1988, p. 81.

causal interaction is the whole basis of [non-physical] or physical healing"[331] among the Akan communities. It is the physical behaviour of the person that gives an idea of the condition of the soul. This can be deduced from Nkrumah's philosophy of *Consciencism* whose ontology is non-atheistic materialism, a position which holds that matter is the same, its different manifestation only brought about the dialectical process of categorical conversion.[332]

According to materialism, reality is material and we get to know this through our senses. The epistemology that grounds materialism is empiricism, which holds the view that something is only real when human beings perceive it. It, therefore, follows that things that cannot be perceived with the human senses are not real. This problematic assertion baffled Albert Einstein[333] enough for him to have questioned out loud: "Does the moon only exist when you are looking at it?"[334] On this note, 21st-century Quantum Physics rejects such empiricist notion of reality altogether because man's senses cease to perceive at the subatomic level but that does not imply that those subatomic elements, though we cannot perceive them, do not exist.

Quantum Physics submits that matter is capable of spontaneous emission of particles and waves. This is an affirmation of Nkrumah's ontology that matter

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[331] Kwame Gyekye, "The Akan Concept of a Person," p.273.

[332] Kwasi Boadi, "The Ontology of Kwame Nkrumah's Consciencism and the Democratic Theory and Practice in Africa: A Diopian Perspective," p. 479.

[333] Albert Einstein was a physicist who developed the special and general theories of relativity and won the Nobel Prize for Physics in 1921. He was born March 14, 1879 and died April 18, 1955. He is known to be one of the greatest scientists to have walked upon the surface of the earth. See, Alice Calaprice and Trevor Lipscombe, *Albert Einstein: A Biography*, California: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2005.

[334] Francis David Peat, *Einstein's Moon: Bell's Theorem and The Curious Quest for Quantum Reality*, Contemporary books, 1990, pp.1-3.

is one but can manifest itself in other forms. Material and immaterial are real, but material takes primacy over immaterial.[335] In this vein, Asante affirms that "increasingly the west will be turned back to the original ideas of Africa."[336] The most potent of such ideas according to Boadi is "the monistic thesis of matter, the source of Africa's ethical egalitarianism."[337] What is noticed is that Nkrumah's *Consciencism* is an authentic Afrocentric framework that provides a logical base for Africans' belief of both the material and immaterial.

Relating the ontology in Nkrumah's *Consciencism* to the question, what is human being composed of? The response will be: material (body) and immaterial (spirit or mind or soul) where the immaterial is dependent on the material to exist. In other words, the immaterial is the highest form of matter. The condition of the spirit depends on the condition of the body. On this note, Gyekye avers that among the Akan, there are certain diseases such as leprosy that are believed to be caused by bad or evil spirits. Also, certain behaviours such as drunkenness are believed to be caused by evil spirits. Hence, a person's failure to possess the needed moral maturity to guarantee his or her personhood can be attributed to the victim's spirit coming into contact with a bad spirit.

Given this, Wiredu remarks that among the Akan, a person who fails to attain personhood is not considered as 'Onipa' or 'a person.' However, when people begin to think that you are no longer 'Onipa', they will suspect that there

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[335] Kwame Nkrumah, *Consciencism*.
[336] Molefi Kete Asante, *Afrocentricity*, p.81.
[337] Kwasi Boadi, "The Ontology of Kwame Nkrumah's Consciencism and the Democratic Theory and Practice in Africa," p.24. It must be mentioned that egalitarianism is a generic term for communitarianism.

is some evil spirit which is in contact with your sumsum (spirit) and thus preventing you from displaying moral maturity.[338] 'Not a person' is when an individual goes contrary to the ethos (moral values) of the community. Supposing an individual starts drinking alcohol excessively, and some people try to advise him or her to stop because it is dangerous, but the individual continues and eventually becomes a complete drunkard or alcoholic, the people may cease to criticise and try to help. This is designed to help the victim to recover and enable him or her regain personhood.

Nkrumah's *Consciencism* opines that the spirit or mind or soul are a manifestation of matter. On the other hand, the behaviour of drunkenness is believed to have been caused by an evil spirit (a form of matter); therefore, it follows that unless the body (material) is healed, the spirit (immaterial) will not respond to the treatment. This explains why Kofi Busia maintains that cleanliness of the spirit is a cardinal traditional practice among the Akan. He adds that a patient "was made to stand on a broom while being treated, it was to symbolize this cleansing."[339]

Just as the broom sweeps the filth away from the home and keeps it clean, so is the broom (matter) which a patient is made to stand on, believed to sweep the evil spirit (a form of matter), from the spirit to keep the body clean. This process of healing is also a process of assisting individuals to regain or attain personhood among the Akans. The removal of the evil spirit which has

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[338] Michael Eze, and Thaddeus Metz, "Emergent Issues in African Philosophy: A Dialogue with Kwasi Wiredu," pp.73-87.
[339] Kofi Busia, *The Challenge of Africa*, New York: Praeger, 1962, p. 19.

contaminated the "sumsum" is the activity of diviners or herbalists (*adunsifo*). In short, the belief in the psycho-physical relationship between material and immaterial parts of the human being is the bases upon which a person who has failed in the attainment of personhood is assisted by the community to attain or regain personhood. This is the solution to the problem of an individual who fails at the attainment of personhood in IAC.

Conclusion

Is Gyekye able to eliminate the so-called radical communitarian claims from IAC? The answer is no. For instance, Gyekye maintains that both the community and the individual ought to be given equal recognition, however, he chooses the community over the individual in cases of conflicts between the individual and the community's interests. This is strange if not confusing because he also appropriates the main thesis of IAC, which is the supremacy of the community over the individual, in his MC. It was clear from this chapter that the point of divergence between IAC and Gyekye's MC is that, while Gyekye's MC is inclined to and concerned with the western ontology of personhood, where a person is any being that has rationality, IAC is concerned with the axiology of personhood, where a person is not just one with biological features but one that could display moral maturity.

One of the point of convergence between IAC and Gyekye's MC is that they both treat right as a secondary matter; yet, Gyekye wants us to believe that IAC is radical, but his MC as not radical. It has become clear in this chapter that the appropriate name for IAC, if there is any other name to call it, is "impartial

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communitarianism" because it takes into consideration both the rights of the individual and the community interest, albeit in ways that restrict both right and interest. Finally, it has been explained in this chapter that among the Akan, as seen in the illustrative case, the belief in 'non-atheistic materialism" is the bases upon which individuals who have failed to attain personhood within the context of IAC are assisted to regain or attain personhood.

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CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

IAC-A HOLISTIC PHENOMENON OF HOW THE COMMUNITY

OUGHT TO RELATE WITH THE INDIVIDUAL

Introduction

The study focused on Gyekye's Moderate Communitarianism (MC). Gyekye identifies Indigenous African Communitarianism (IAC) as radical because according to him, the concept of personhood in IAC prevents it from recognising individual rights. However, as the discussion in the previous chapters reveals, IAC is a holistic phenomenon in the sense that, it accommodates both the interest of the community as well as individual rights. Hence, not only is Gyekye incorrect to call IAC radical but also he fails to recognise how the concept of personhood and its connection with individual rights plays out in IAC.

The Argument against Gyekye's MC at a Glance

At this juncture, I recap the main points and subject matter of the preceding chapters. In Chapter One, reasons were given as to why Gyekye's views on communitarianism (MC) were chosen for interrogation in this thesis. The main contention was that contrary to Gyekye's position, IAC is not radical and that he, Gyekye, misconstrued IAC.

In Chapter Two, literature on communitarianism in general and Gyekye's MC, in particular, was reviewed. In doing this, the gap and problems with the views of scholars were exposed. This exercise was productive because

it helped to situate the study within the existing literature. For instance, through the literature reviewed, it was noticed that the debate on communitarianism versus liberalism has shifted to communitarians themselves where Gyekye categorises them as moderate and radical communitarians.

In Chapter Three, I considered the views of IAC defenders, particularly those of Ifeanyi Menkiti. For instance, Menkiti indicated that to be identified as a person in Africa is not just about possessing human qualities such as rationality and the ability to make choices but also one needs to exhibit moral maturity before one can be considered as a person. This automatically implies that one could fail at the attainment of personhood since not every individual can exhibit moral maturity. Menkiti added that it is the community that confers personhood on an individual and not the individual himself or herself.

However, it was clear that Gyekye disagreed with Menkiti's view on IAC. To Gyekye, IAC excessively celebrates the community over the individual. This is because according to Gyekye, IAC fails to appreciate certain qualities such as rationality and talents that naturally belong to the individual. On this note, Gyekye writes that IAC whittles down the individual's rights and interests.[340] Gyekye concluded that IAC is radical.

Gyekye, therefore, proposed a brand of communitarianism which he called Moderate Communitarianism. By proposing an alternative of IAC which is MC, Gyekye affirms that IAC exists. Gyekye argued that both the community

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[340] Kwame Gyekye, *Tradition and Modernity: Philosophical Reflections on the African Experience*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997.

and the individual are important hence his MC will give equal moral standing to both the individual and community interest. Oddly, however, his newly proposed theory, MC, does not give equal standing to both the community and the individual. Gyekye's MC avers that the community ought to be superior to the individual. This makes him committed to the IAC thesis.

Chapter Four was the analysis of Gyekye's MC. It drew on the views of scholars like Anthony Oyowe to expose some of the shortcomings of Gyekye's MC. For example, Anthony Oyowe pointed out that Gyekye missed the point by saying that IAC did not recognise human rights because, in the first place, no society is fully communitarian or individualistic; all societies share some elements of communitarianism and individualism. This makes Gyekye's argument that IAC does not recognise individual rights invalid.

The point of divergence between Gyekye's MC and IAC on personhood as it came up in the chapter is that Gyekye's MC is concerned with the "ontology of being" while IAC is concerned with the 'axiology of being'; thus, Gyekye's MC is interested in the composition of a person such as soul, spirit, mind and blood while IAC is interested in the moral maturity that ought to be exhibited by an individual to become a person. It is therefore inappropriate for Gyekye to register that IAC is radical since both concepts-IAC and Gyekye's MC are looking at two different things. However, it was argued that the point of convergence between these two concepts are that they both treated rights equally; that is, giving rights a secondary consideration. This went straight away to establish that Gyekye's attempt to give equal moral standing to both the

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community and the individual was invalid because he ended up prioritizing the community over the individual.

However, empirically speaking, it is difficult to ascribe equal moral standing to both the individual and the community. That is why communitarians and liberals will choose one over the other but not both at the same time. Gyekye's MC turns out to be logically inconsistent with the African ethos, primarily because it looks at rights only from the naturalistic perspective; which holds that everyone is entitled to certain rights for being human.

In his view of communitarianism, Gyekye does not recognise that his perspective of human rights has been shaped by western thought which he tries to insert into the commonly held notion of the indigenous communitarianism of African societies. The sense of community obligation which is paramount to African societies heralds the idea of human dignity which is beyond the demands of human rights. Meanwhile, it must be mentioned that the attraction of Gyekye's MC is that he properly articulates the essence of the self.

Despite the disagreements that this thesis has with Gyekye on IAC, his intellectual contribution to the debate on African communitarianism cannot be dismissed. I think that Gyekye expands the debate about African communitarianism by emphasising the idea that individual talents are that which shape the community. In doing this, Gyekye draws our attention to the symbiotic relationship between the community and the individual where the community influences the individual, and the individual also influences the community.

However, if by *Tradition and Modernity*, which is the title of the book where Gyekye systematically exposes his communitarian ideas, Gyekye implies that Africans can become "modern" if they accept the western conception of human rights then that is misleading. This is because it is observed in this study that the western concept of human rights motivates self-interest which often ignores human dignity and the concern for each other. This is dangerous for the individual and community at large. African social ethos recognizes human rights but its purpose is to ensure human dignity.[341] On that note, Gyekye's MC needs a readjustment since it takes for granted human dignity which is core for human existence.

Other scholars such as John Famakinwa, Bernard Matolino, Anthony Oyowe, and Richard Ansah and Modestha Mensah have critiqued Gyekye on the basis that there is nothing moderate about his version of communitarianism. Their reason is that Gyekye's arguments for moderate communitarianism treat rights as secondary hence Gyekye's MC is as radical as IAC.[342] However, this thesis is different from those done by the critics of Gyekye's MC. This study, by contrast, has discovered that IAC is not radical. This makes the assertion of Gyekye and his critics inapt since they share the view that IAC is radical. Also,

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[341] Josiah Cobbah, "African Values and The Human Rights Debate: An African Perspective," *Human Rights Quarterly*, 9, (1987), pp.303-316.

[342] The aforementioned scholars noticed that Gyekye's MC is not moderate at all. In fact, according to them, Gyekye's MC is as radical as IAC since it fails to secure the primacy of rights. See, John Famakinwa, "How Moderate is Kwame Gyekye's Moderate Communitarianism? *Thought and Practice* 2, 2 (2010), pp.65-77; Bernard Matolino, Radicals versus Moderates: A Critique of Gyekye's Moderate Communitarianism," *South African Journal of Philosophy* 28, 2 (2009), pp.160-170; Richard Ansah and Modestha Mensah, "Gyekye's Moderate Communitarianism: A Case of Radical Communitarianism in Disguise," *UJAH: Unizik Journal of Arts and Humanities* 19, 2 (2018), pp.62-87.

the distinctiveness of this thesis resides in the fact that it gives ideas that fill the gap created by Menkiti in his description of IAC; that is, he is unable to state what the community does for an individual who fails to attain personhood. In contrast, this work has also argued what happens to an individual who fails to attain personhood.

This work has captured that an individual fails to attain personhood because his or her spirit has gotten into contact with a bad spirit. Therefore, ritual processes are the medium through which evil or bad spirit is cleansed from the victims' spirit. As mentioned to illustrate the point, one way of doing this by the Akan is by making the victim stand on a broom as the cleansing goes on. The significance of standing on the broom, as Kofi Busia argued, is to sweep the bad or evil spirit away from the victims' spirit. It has been noted in this thesis that the belief in non-atheistic materialism[343] which is the ontology in Nkrumah's *Consciencism* provides a philosophical base for why an individual is made to stand on a broom during the cleansing process.

Conclusion

Which way should contemporary Africa take in the human search for human rights? A more solid foundation for modern human rights should be built on the conception of humans in society, which is the goal of IAC, rather than the Lockean (western) abstraction of natural rights. It is true that human rights from the western perspective, which thrives on individualism, contributes to the

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[343] Non-atheistic materialism is a philosophical position which holds that matter is capable of producing immaterial entities.

relevance of individuals in a society. However, contemporary Africa should be aware that participation in the practice of rights enmeshes individuals in a network of social relationships and social structures. The autonomy of action that rights warrant and protect is autonomy within the network, which is the community. African indigenous societies are fundamentally built on IAC and therefore emphasize group-ness, sameness, and the community rather than the survival of the fittest.

The primary aim of indigenous African societies is to secure the survival of the community made up of individuals. Indeed, indigenous African societies can secure the life of its members by emphasizing cooperation, interdependence and collective responsibility. The ethos of IAC is not grounded on self-interest but in social learning and collective survival. Unbridled individualism should not be the way for contemporary African societies. Rhoda Howard argues that the epistemic worldview of Africa, which indicates that the reality of the community takes precedence over the individual will be seen as abuse if one is trying too hard to make westerners out of Africans.[344] As for African scholars who have mastered the litany of the western human rights and seek to apply the same to the African continent all in the name of modernisation, I will only refer them to the words of Wade   Nobles who has written that when an idea is not

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[344] Rhoda Howard, "Evaluating Human Rights in Africa: Some Problems of Implicit Comparisons," *Human Rights Quarterly*, 6 (1984), p.13.

interwoven with the culture of the people, its acceptance becomes a difficulty.[345]

Indeed, Nobles could not have put it better.

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[345] Wade Nobles, "The Black Family and Its Children: The Survival of Humaneness," *Black Books Bulletin* 6, 2 (1979), pp. 7-14.

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