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Again, I am with Matolino on this point. Yet, I believe that to make this point is not yet to put forward an argument against those who may subscribe to the notion of community as a substructure for articulating personhood. I have already tried to indicate how the Afro-communitarians can excuse themselves from the first by insisting that one could claim that personhood is defined in reference to the community without committing to the view that the community is a metaphysical entity.<sup>13</sup>

As regards the latter, a little more can be said in favour of traditional communitarians. And it is simply that in many cases what those who wish to limit any talk of community defining persons usually point to as constitutive of personhood implicates a communitarian view even at the level of metaphysics. For instance, when Matolino shows preference for such entity as the *sunsum* in the metaphysical make-up of the person, he unwittingly ignores his own submission that the said *sunsum* derives from the father of the one who possesses it (2014: p. 180), as the Akans believe (Wiredu 1980: p. 47), thereby locating the individual person, even at this level of metaphysical analysis, in a network of relationship. Elsewhere, Wiredu is explicit. ‘Through the possession of an *okra*, *mogya* and *sunsum*,’ he writes, ‘a person is situated in a network of kinship relations’ (1996:p. 158). The same is true in the Yoruba account, as Gbadegesin points out, that possession of the *ori*, one of the constitutive element of personhood, adds a communal and ‘normative dimension’ to personhood (1991: p. 58). All these implicate communitarian considerations even at the level of metaphysics of personhood.

Thus, to say that Limited Communitarianism does better than its rivals in completely eliminating communitarian talk about personhood at the level of metaphysics is to identify person-constituting features that are purely non-communal in their character. But Limited Communitarianism has not yet done this to the extent that it goes with metaphysical features of personhood, as with the Akan and Yoruba that necessarily locate individual persons in a network of relationships with others or as *natural* members of a clan or ethnic group—i.e. community.

The challenge is acute for Limited Communitarianism since it is formulated as a very general theory, that is, it is non-committal about the specific constituents of personhood. Matolino prefers to leave open the candidate features for person-constitution to whatever particular ethnic groups believe to be the metaphysical constituents of personhood (2014: p. 166). This liberalism does not quite distinguish it, however, and

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<sup>13</sup> See, for instance, Masolo (2009) for further discussion on one way of characterising the communal nature of personhood that is not committed to making community into a thing.

invites problems of its own. As shown, to the extent that the Akan metaphysical feature *sunsum*, for instance, is characterised in communal terms, Limited Communitarianism's admission of this constituent of personhood inherits this commitment and implicates it in the communitarian game even at the level of metaphysics. This is bad, of course, because clearly Matolino does not want to play this game, even if his Limited Communitarianism in its present form now unfortunately does allow it.

Another reason why this very general nature of the account does not augur well is that Matolino had promised right at the start 'to build a new conception of person that is not beset with simplistic incoherencies, contradictions and category mistakes' (2014: p. xv). In the end, however, what we have is not a new conception at all. It is simply a reference to the Akan, Yoruba and other culture-specific accounts of personhood. And to this reference is added a statement on the primacy thesis in favour of the individual. Until more details are provided, it is hard to see how this is a new concept of personhood. Limited Communitarianism, it seems to me, must identify, as a start, ontological constitutive elements of personhood that do not bear communal features for it to be sufficiently distinguished from what is already available in the literature.

A crucial point of difference between Matolino's Limited Communitarianism and its rivals is that while the latter variously claim that the community takes precedence over the individual, Matolino holds that the individual takes precedence. The corollary of course is that individual rights take precedence over duties. This also implies for him that the metaphysical approach to personhood carries more weight vis-à-vis the communitarian approach (2014: p. 176). All this is good. But Matolino still needs to work out in what non-trivial sense his account of personhood is then supposed to be communitarian.

The challenge becomes pressing once it is seen that his view appears to be more at home in the liberal, or shall we say individualist, tradition as what is claimed here, and the metaphysical and normative status Matolino assigns to community in relation to the individual is very much consistent with many liberal theorists' stance on the matter. To put it differently, if personhood is, unlike the conceptions Matolino rejects, to be characterised independently of community, and there is a secondary normative status for community in his scheme, perhaps, then, the choice of describing it as a form of communitarianism is misleading. Why cling to the communitarian designation in spite of the obvious liberal commitments about the status of the individual and the secondary normative place of community?

My suspicion is that Matolino's desire to hold on to this communitarian description, even if only in name, relates to a point he sought to rebut--the idea that what is authentically African must in some way be communitarian. Is Matolino's communitarian identification a way of showing his view to retain something authentically African, in spite of his legitimate protest that what is authentically African need not be communitarian? If it is, then, it does not help very much his alternative position with its very strong liberal ties and it undercuts whatever force his argument to the contrary (in Chapter Three of the book) may have had. As it is now, where one perhaps would have celebrated Matolino's position as another triumph for liberalism within African scholarship, as it is without a doubt an

attempt to chart a path significantly different to the other communitarian views, Matolino regrettably stops short of identifying with this tradition, and prefers that his alternative remain an appendage merely to the grand communitarian project.



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