**Question 1: the relationship between the individual and the community in African World view**

Outline:

1.0 introduction

2.0 Menkiti’s idea of a person as “an empowering community

3.0 the idea of “constitual nature” in African Community  
4.0 the western view of person and the African view of person

5.0 Menkiti’s notion of minimal and maximal

6.0 the western view of community and the African view of community

7.0 personhood in African Worldview

8.0 personhood related to age and death

9.0 Gyeke’s idea of commutarianism and rejection of Menkiti’s “exagerated communitarianism”

10.0 Evaluation and conclusion

**1.0 introduction**

Menkiti in his article “personhood and community in African thought”, argues that in traditional African thought, the community takes precedence over the individual. Personhood, in his view, is not an inherent quality but is achieved through a process of incorporation into the community.

In the African community, the individual persons exists because there is a community. Menkiti uses Mbiti's dictum, "I am because we are," as a foundation to support this communitarian perspective. This gives a sense or notion of ‘communalism’, a type of relationship where citizens live together in love, share things together, care for each other. This is in direct contrast with the western method of individualism where common goals are downplayed over individual goals.

In the following sections, we would discuss more on these

**2.0 Menkiti’s idea of a person as “an empowering community**Menkiti's concept of an "empowering community" refers to the idea that an individual's personhood is defined and nurtured by their community. In this sense, the community plays an active role in shaping, guiding, and enabling individuals to develop into full persons.

For Menkiti, the "empowering" aspect lies in how the community provides the moral framework, cultural values, and social structures that help individuals grow, fulfill their roles, and achieve personhood. A person is not just born but is made through participation in communal life. The community, therefore, is not just a passive background but an active, empowering force that ensures the flourishing of its members as complete persons.

**3.0 the idea of “constitual nature” in African Community**In the context of Menkiti's philosophy, the "constitutive nature" refers to the idea that the community is fundamental in forming or constituting an individual's personhood. This means that a person is not seen as an isolated entity but as someone whose identity, values, and sense of self are deeply shaped by and dependent on their community. The constitutive nature of the community highlights its role as the foundation or essence of what it means to be a person, emphasizing that an individual's personhood is built through relationships, cultural norms, and communal engagement.

**4.0 the western view of person and the African view of person**

The Western perspective generally emphasizes individual autonomy, rights, and self-definition, focusing on the inherent qualities of rationality and will to define personhood.

In contrast, the African view, particularly as articulated by Menkiti, frames personhood in the context of communal relationships, a person is defined through their membership and roles within the community. This relationship underscores valuing social responsibilities and collective identity over individualism.

The Western view of personhood is often minimal and individualistic, while the African view is maximal and relational.

**5.0 Menkiti’s notion of minimal and maximal**

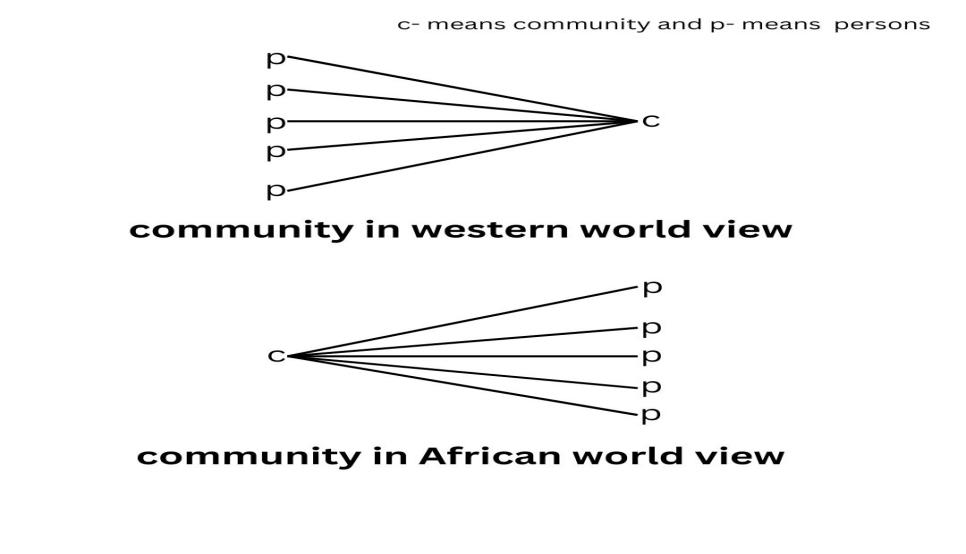
Minimal Personhood : This term describes the Western view of personhood, where an individual is considered a person simply because they possess certain inherent qualities, such as rationality or will. In this view, personhood is seen as a minimal, often individualistic condition, focusing on the individual as a self-contained entity with inherent rights. The person is recognized as a person from birth due to these inherent qualities, regardless of social context.

Maximal Personhood: This refers to the African view, where personhood is not automatically given but is achieved through one's integration into the community. It emphasizes the relational aspect of personhood, meaning that an individual is defined through their interactions, roles, and responsibilities within the social and communal framework. Personhood is maximal when an individual is fully realized through participation in and contribution to the community, embodying communal values and ethics.

**6.0 the western view of community and the African view of community**

Menkiti also distinguished between the African world view of a community and the western world view of the community. For the westerners, community is made up of different individual persons. Therefore, without these individuals, the community would not exist.

The story is totally different in the African view of the community. The Africans sees personhood as flowing from the community. This is to say that individual persons exist because there is a community and without the community, the individuals will not exist. We can see this in the diagram below



**7.0 personhood in African Worldview**

Menkiti argues that in traditional African thought, personhood is not an inherent quality of an individual but is conferred by the community through a process he terms "incorporation." This process involves various social and ritual transformations that an individual must undergo to be recognized as a full person within their community.

Also, The phrase "he has become a person," as articulated by Oghala Mmadu, indicates that the individual has undergone the necessary rites of incorporation and has been accepted by the community as a person.

Furthermore, Menkiti uses the term "it" to describe individuals who have not yet achieved personhood, such as infants. This designation reflects a state of depersonalization, where the individual is seen as lacking the moral and social attributes necessary for personhood.

**8.0 personhood related to age and death**

As has been stated, personhood being an acquired status, is achieved through a process of "incorporation."

At birth, the individual is referred to as an "it," indicating a lack of moral agency and social recognition. The infant is dependent on the community for survival and socialization. The youthful stage is marked by significant rites of passage, such as initiation ceremonies, which are crucial for the transition to personhood. The adult stage solidifies their status as full persons, as they are now seen as capable of making moral choices and contributing to the community's well-being. In old age, individuals are often revered for their wisdom and experience.

The process of incorporation does not end with death; instead, it transforms. The deceased are honored through rituals and remembrance. Over time, as memories of the deceased fade and the community's connection to them diminishes, the individual may be referred to again as an "it.

**9.0 Gyeke’s idea of commutarianism and rejection of Menkiti’s “exagerated communitarianism”**

Kwame Gyekye’s notion of communitarianism, as presented in the document, is a moderate or restricted form of communitarianism. He acknowledges the significance of communal values in African societies but argues that personhood is not fully defined by the community. Instead, he proposes that while the community plays an important role in nurturing individuals, personhood also involves attributes such as rationality, moral autonomy, and self-assertion, which are inherent to individuals and not merely conferred by the community.

Gyekye critiques Ifeanyi Menkiti’s view, which he describes as “exaggerated communitarianism.” According to Gyekye, Menkiti holds an unrestricted or radical form of communitarianism, where the community is seen as fully defining personhood. Menkiti argues that personhood is attained progressively through participation in communal life and the fulfillment of social roles and responsibilities. In contrast, Gyekye contends that personhood is partly defined by the community but also includes intrinsic individual qualities.

For Gyegke,individuals possess a rational will and capacity for self-determination, enabling them to critically evaluate and revise communal values and practices. He argues that moral capacities, such as judgment and moral choices, are inherent to individuals and should not overshadow individual autonomy.

**10.0 Evaluation and conclusion**

The relationship between the individual and the community in African World view can be seen in Menkiti’s Article. The critique of Ifeanyi Menkiti's idea of person and community focuses on his assertion that personhood is derived from community and that the community takes precedence over the individual. It contrasts this view with Western conceptions of personhood that prioritize individual rights. Mentiki’s idea also stressed the role of incorporation in determining the personhood of an individual

**Question 2: Decolonizing effect of contemporary African Health Care System**

Outline

1.0 introduction

2.0 The meaning of health care system

3.0 Traditional African Health care system

4.0 Decolonizing the health care System

5.0 Some medicinal plants used in treatment of diseases

6.0 Evaluation and conclusion

**1.0 introduction**

The African healthcare system is facing a crucial moment due to the legacy of colonialism, which has marginalized traditional African medicine. This marginalization has resulted in a healthcare system that prioritizes imported medical practices and pharmaceuticals over indigenous knowledge, creating barriers to access for many Africans. Decolonizing the healthcare system involves a comprehensive reevaluation of health practices, policies, and education to integrate traditional medicine with modern approaches.

This process aims to empower local communities, restore cultural identity, and enhance healthcare delivery effectiveness by recognizing the value of indigenous knowledge systems. The decolonization effort aims to create a more inclusive, accessible, and culturally relevant healthcare framework that meets the needs of all Africans. As the continent faces unprecedented health challenges, the need for a robust and adaptable healthcare system is urgent. Here, some questions are relevant: How did African ancestors survive without Western medicine? How can traditional medicine be revitalized to meet contemporary healthcare needs in Africa?

**2.0 The meaning of primary health care**

Primary health care (PHC) is a comprehensive, accessible, community-based healthcare system that aims to meet most of an individual's health needs throughout their life. Primary Health Care (PHC) is a crucial aspect of global health coverage, promoting universal health coverage and preventing disease. It emerged as a response to global health inequalities and has been endorsed by the World Health Organization (WHO) for over 40 years. PHC is essential for achieving declining premature mortality, rising longevity, and promoting healthy lifestyles. It is anchored on practical, scientifically sound, and socially acceptable methods and technology, making it accessible to all individuals and families in the community. PHC contributes to public health improvements and is the key to building a strong health care system that ensures effectiveness, efficiency, and health equity. Key attributes of PHC include access/first-contact care, ongoing care, comprehensiveness and coordination of care, family-centeredness, community orientation, and cultural competence.

**3.0 Traditional African Health care system**

The Traditional African Health Care has been in existence long before the invention of western drugs in Africa, and practically how Africans survived at those periods. It is a comprehensive approach to health and healing that has been practiced across Africa for centuries. It is based on indigenous knowledge, holistic practices, and community involvement. Traditional healers, also known as herbalists, diviners, or spiritual healers, play a central role in the healthcare system.

However, traditional African medicine has faced challenges, such as marginalization due to Western medical practices and the need to integrate traditional and modern healthcare systems. Also it has a problem with accessibility. The number of Africans that have access to them are much greater. Hence, WHO proposed that Africans should improve on their research and development to make health care affordable to Africans.

**4.0 Decolonizing the health care System**

The decolonizing effort of Primary Health Care (PHC) in contemporary Africa is crucial for ensuring access to affordable and effective healthcare. Traditional medicine, which includes knowledge and practices used in diagnosing, preventing, or eliminating physical, mental, or social diseases, is essential for quality living and longevity. African ancestors used plant, animal, and mineral materials for healing purposes, leading to the discovery of aspirin. Traditional medical practitioners are recognized by their communities as competent to provide healthcare using various methods.

However, the West is indirectly exploiting Africa through the production of fake or substandard drugs. African leaders are at the forefront of patronage of Western medicine and healthcare systems. Diseases and misfortune in Africa are often spiritual experiences that require a religious approach. Traditional African healthcare must be given a new facelift by African leaders and advocates to meet PHC needs.

Understanding the physical structure and constituents of the human body and the chemical components of plants and animals is crucial for curative purposes. The metaphysical dimension of mind-affecting matter should be incorporated into Western medicine, as well as taking placebos seriously.

Traditional African worldviews often view certain activities as taboos, leading to harmful lifestyles. Western interpretations of freedom have influenced harmful lifestyles. African traditional medicine aims to restore harmony between the sick and their universe.

**5.0 Some medicinal plants used in treatment of diseases**

African medicinal plants and herbs have proven effective in treating common diseases in Africa. Acanthaceae is used for syphilis, cough, emetic, and vaginal discharge, while Apocynaceae is used for abdominal pain, ulcers, and gonorrhea. Bombacaceae leaves, fruits, pulp, and bark are used for fever, antimicrobial, kidney, and bladder infections. Combretaceae leaves are used for jaundice, Euphorbiaceae leaves for insomnia, Hypeciaceae for piles and trypanosomiasis, Fabaceae leaves for gonorrhea and hernia, and Liliaceae tubers and leaves for gonorrhea, head lice, and antpyr. Acacia senegal, Aloe ferox Mill, Artemisia, Aspalathus linearis, Cretela asiatica, Catharanthus roseus, Cyclopia genistoides, Harpogophtum procumbens, Momordica charantia Linn, and Pelargonium sidoides are also used for various ailments.

**6.0 Evaluation and conclusion**

Emeka Isife in his article, emphasizes the importance of incorporating African philosophy of healthcare into government policies to ensure a balanced healthcare delivery. Despite the Covid-19 pandemic, Africa's weak healthcare system and immune compromised population have allowed for the use of traditional African medicines. Decolonizing the primary health care system from Western control and promoting alternative medicine, such as local herbs and leaves, can help alleviate health needs and reduce wastage in the importation of Western drugs. This approach will empower people and reduce wastage in the healthcare system.

**Question 3: The Reality and Methods of African Science**

Outline:

1.0 Introduction

2.0 Meaning of Science

3.0 The Notion of African Science

4.0 The Notion of Western Science

5.0 The Method of African Science

6.0 The Method of Western Science

7.0 The Correction of African Science

8.0 Evaluation and conclusion

**1.0 Introduction**

The discourse on African science is as fascinating as it is complex, often prompting critical questions about its authenticity, methods, and potential compared to Western science. Questions such as "Does Africa have its own science?" and "What is the method of African science?" frame much of the inquiry. While science has historically been viewed as a universal human endeavor aimed at solving problems and understanding reality, it is undeniable that cultural contexts shape its practice. African science, both traditional and modernized, reflects a blend of empirical observation, mystico-religious beliefs, and practical application. This article explores the notion of African science, its methods, and how it compares with Western science, culminating in a call for greater openness and integration of African science into global scientific discourse.

**2.0 Meaning of Science**

Etymologically, the term "science" derives from the Latin noun "scientia," meaning "knowledge," and the verb "scire," meaning "to know." It refers to systematized knowledge that seeks to understand, explain, and manipulate nature. Science encompasses a wide range of activities, from observation and experimentation to theorization and application. As Aristotle argued, "Science is a body of true statements about a particular subject matter... They must be necessarily and demonstrably true" (qtd. in O’Connor). Despite varying definitions across epochs and cultures, science universally seeks to unravel the mysteries of physical reality for the betterment of human life.

**3.0 The Notion of African Science**

African science, as characterized by G.O. Ozumba, is "the African man’s way of observing, systematizing, testing, and confirming facts of his environment, with the aim of understanding and manipulating nature to his advantage." This definition highlights its methodological elements, such as observation, testing, and practical application. African science can be classified into two categories: traditional and modernized.

Traditional African science is rooted in indigenous practices and knowledge passed down through generations. It is distinct in its integration of empirical observation with metaphysical and religious beliefs. For instance, African healers employ a combination of herbal remedies and spiritual rituals to address health issues. Modernized African science, on the other hand, incorporates Western methodologies and technologies, resulting in a hybrid approach that retains elements of African culture while adopting tools such as microscopes and laboratories.

**4.0 The Notion of Western Science**

Western science, often regarded as the global paradigm, emphasizes objectivity, empirical observation, experimentation, and theorization. It is characterized by public, impersonal, and rigorous methodologies that strive for universal applicability. The methods of Western science evolved from the Aristotelian deductive logic to Francis Bacon’s inductive empiricism and later to the interplay of both. This method prioritizes transparency and falsifiability, as seen in Karl Popper’s assertion that science thrives on "conjectures and refutations." The openness of Western science has fostered its growth and acceptance worldwide.

**5.0 The Method of African Science**

Traditional African science employs a blend of empirical observation and mystico-religious approaches. Observation and experimentation are evident in practices such as traditional medicine, where knowledge of herbs and their properties is gained through experience. Africans have historically demonstrated scientific prowess in areas such as crop rotation, food preservation, and fermentation processes (Umoren).

However, the traditional method often incorporates metaphysical explanations. For example, sickness or misfortune might be attributed not only to natural causes but also to spiritual agents or witchcraft (Minkus). This duality reflects the African worldview of interconnectedness between the physical and spiritual realms, described by Unah as "a world of extraordinary harmony and compatibility among all things."

Modernized African science attempts to reconcile traditional methods with Western practices. While it employs empirical tools and techniques, it often retains cultural elements, such as rituals or invocations, which can limit its acceptance as a purely scientific enterprise.

**6.0 The Method of Western Science**

Western science is methodologically grounded in systematic observation, hypothesis formulation, experimentation, and theorization. These processes are iterative and designed to ensure objectivity and reproducibility. Despite disagreements among philosophers of science about the exact stages, a synthesis emerges: observation, data collection, hypothesis testing, and generalization. This method’s strength lies in its openness to scrutiny and self-correction, enabling the continual refinement of scientific knowledge.

**7.0 The Correction of African Science**

A critical limitation of African science lies in its esoteric nature and resistance to external scrutiny. Many traditional African scientists treat their knowledge as sacred, accessible only to initiates. This personalization and lack of transparency hinder the development of coherent theoretical frameworks and prevent broader scientific validation. For instance, traditional healers often refuse to reveal the processes behind their remedies, citing spiritual mandates or fear of exploitation.

To address this, African science must embrace exotericism, making its methods and discoveries open to investigation and critique. Gyekye argues that the personalization of knowledge leads to stagnation and undermines progress. Incorporating African ethno-sciences into formal education, as seen with herbalism courses at Obafemi Awolowo University, could bridge this gap. Openness would not only validate African scientific contributions but also integrate them into global scientific practices.

**8.0 Evaluation and Conclusion**

African science, though distinct in its methods and cultural underpinnings, shares fundamental goals with Western science: understanding and manipulating nature to solve human problems. Its reliance on mystico-religious elements and personalization of knowledge has limited its global acceptance and progress. However, these challenges are not insurmountable. By adopting principles of transparency, collaboration, and rigorous theorization, African science can grow and contribute meaningfully to global knowledge.

As Feyerabend suggests, science thrives in a free society that values diverse approaches. African science’s unique blend of empirical and metaphysical methods offers a rich perspective that can complement Western paradigms. To achieve this, African scientists must shed esotericism, embrace open inquiry, and integrate their practices into formal research and education. This transformation will ensure that African science is not merely a relic of tradition but a dynamic and evolving contributor to the global scientific enterprise.