

A Comparative Discourse on the Doctrine of Moderation in Three Philosophical Traditions

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Abstract

Man is a social being whose own very being is informed by the existence of the other being. In other words, man realizes his place in the universe in relation to the other. The other in nature includes man's fellow human beings and other things around him. Due to a limited available resources provided by nature, man is seen always in perpetual state of competition for survival among other beings. Hobbes and other social contractarians describe this as the state of nature which existed before the formation of modern society. What characterized this natural state was the availability of absolute freedom which made conflict inevitable. In man's effort to institute order amid collision of unfettered freedom and interests, perhaps, saw the invention of some socio-ethical constructs-one of which is the need to strike a balance in human moral conduct and avoid excesses as well as deficiencies. This is otherwise known as moderation. In the light of this, the paper examines the doctrine of moderation in three different civilizations (Western, Eastern and African) to see how it is effectuated in their moral precepts. The aim of this inter-cultural discourse is to reinvoke a global philosophy to guide human conducts. It defends a moderate insight suitable for effective personhood, particularly in a contemporary world order where excessive or inadequate actions seem to be costing self and the human society great fortune. In identifying the doctrine of moderation in these three civilizations, the study realizes an inter-cultural guide to human conducts, which has a global import and which all human societies should tap into in the search for a solid ethical bricks with which to erect human conducts and attain moral equilibrium. The methodology suitable in this form of research is hermeneutical interpretation of concepts and their meanings in the three traditions.

Keywords: Ethical Equilibrium, Moderation, Global Philosophy, Human Being

Introduction

No other time has the doctrine of moderation become more demanding than this very era. Not only because we live in an era when men, sometimes, flagrantly throw caution into the wind, but also because this era has witnessed humankind, sometimes, opt for restraints and aloofness in occasions where action and precision beg for attention. Worst still, we live in an era when man's absolute freedom tend to promise nothing other than mutually assured destruction (mad). Therefore, it is not an overstatement to say that human collective existence is today sitting on a keg of gunpowder. This is informed by the fact that immoderacy appears to be a more accepted norm in today's human mode of existence. By immoderacy, we mean one that is not only seen in human utterances, lifestyles and conducts, but also in the exercise of freedom and will. The attendant consequences of these have engendered vices such as extremism, intolerance, loss of lives and properties, indecency in conduct and appearance, and what have you.

It is on this exigency that this study finds the concept of moderation as a useful tool in calling for a balance among human excesses. In approaching this theme, we intend to engage in inter-racial assessment of it. Thus, we shall investigate into the Western, Eastern and African cultures, first, to see how each of these cultures approaches the need to maintain a balance in its philosophies. Secondly, to show the error in the hitherto belief that comparative philosophy only limits to Western and Eastern traditions (the Orient versus the Occident). On the contrary, our study shows that there are moral instructions/concepts domiciled in Igbo-African thought as seen through their myths, proverbs and wise sayings. Although it may not exactly be identical in meaning with its Western equivalence, it serves exactly the same purpose in terms of urging one to engage in those moral virtues that engender equilibrium and eschew those that bring disequilibrium in the society. Our aim in this analysis is to advance a new philosophy of action in a contemporary changing world, which is intercultural and which should also serve as a global standard of measuring moral conducts so as to instill peace and tolerance among individuals and nations of the world.

Moderation

The concept moderation has an esteemed Greek origin. It is said to be an inscription on the temple of Apollo at Delphi *Meden Agan*, which means *Nothing in Excess*. Plato is also believed to have said that we should pursue and practice moderation. It is a middle way of eliminating extremes. Moderation is a principle which preaches the need to strike a balance and avoid excess or deficiencies in all that we do. As such, it has developed to cut across all spheres of human engagement. Be it in human conduct, emotions, inventions, appearances and calories, the need for moderation is often harped on. For instance, the unrestrained hedonists may think that throwing away caution and seeking happiness by maximizing pleasure and minimizing pains at all cost while on earth is all that counts. But that thought not follow that pleasurable pursuit at all cost would be all that human life represents (Barcalow, 1994, p.76). On the contrary, Barcalow opines that life of moderation ought to be a good life devoted to health and peace of mind. He prefers peace of mind to the life of uncontrolled flamboyancy. For Epicurus, in making choice of what we eat, we should do that bearing in "the health of the body and the soul's freedom from disturbance, since this is the aim of the life of blessedness" (Epicurus, 1940, p.31). In the light of the foregoing, we can see a connection and identity between the concept of moderation and the doctrine of middle way (mean). It is for this reason that the discussion on moderation is used interchangeably with the doctrine of the mean or middle way.

Moderation in Western Thought

The concept of moderation can be found in Aristotle's Moral Philosophy. His moral doctrine is concerned with the molding of character. He sought to raise statesmen who will in turn raise further statesmen. It is all geared towards the attainment of the highest virtue. For society to experience harmony, he believes there has to be the emergence of good men to run it. Thus, Aristotle's ethics is anchored on the pursuit of virtues. He believes that human moral dispositions are formed by habit, that is, by engaging in corresponding activities. To that end, he writes: "it is incumbent on us to control the character of our activities, since on the quality of these depends the quality of our dispositions" (Aristotle, 1996:34).

Accordingly, the essence of investigating moral virtues for him is of practical relevance, that is, to make us behave good. And to act in conformity with this right principle, he says, there is a formula. In other words, for man to behave according to the right virtue, he must act according to *mean*. Since he believes that virtuous character is a product of habitual engagement; it is necessary to know which particular act we need practice. The answer to this is embedded in his ethics of conduct. For him, we should act in accordance with what he calls the mean (which is often referred to as the golden mean)" (Holmes, 1993, pp.69-70). The mean is a moderate and balanced action.

To this end, moral virtue is a mean in-between two vices. Mean is the difference between excess and deficiency. To him excess and deficiency destroy perfection, whereas adherence to mean preserves it. Virtue is a mean state, and on the other hand, excess and deficiency are designators of evil (Aristotle, 1996, pp. 40-41). Aristotle, according to Omoregbe, frowns at extremes as vices, instead, advocates "the middle path, the *via media*, the golden mean as the path of virtue". (Omogegbe, 2004, p.50). Whenever, one is confronted with a situation in which one must take practical decisions, one should start by distinguishing two extremes and a mean that lies in-between them. In whatever one does, Aristotle says this same formula ought to be applied. Moderation as is found in the West extends to issues such as healthcare; that is, between starvation and gluttony. For instance, the deficiency in eating (starvation/hunger) leads to lots of diseases and deaths. And on the other hand, the extreme of eating results to gluttony and causes all kinds of health hazard resulting from overindulgence in food or substances which our body does not need. Thus, on this, Holmes writes: "if you eat too much, that is an extreme (an excess), whereas if you eat too little, that is the other extreme (deficiency). If you eat just the right amount, that is the mean" (Holmes, 1993, p.74) and that is what the body needs for nourishment and vitality. Reinforcing this view, Pollan cautions that while not yielding to starvation, we should eat not too much, and not too little. He further warns that:

Overeating promotes cell division, and promotes it most dramatically in cancer cells, cutting back on calories slows cell division. It also stifles

the production of free radicals, curbs inflammation, and reduces the risk of most of the Western diseases (Pollan, 2008, p. 184).

Furthermore, Aristotle makes some clarification between some specific nature of virtues. Hence, he talks about relative virtue on one hand and objective virtue on the other hand. He says:

By the mean of thing I denote a point equally distant from either extreme, which is one and the same for everybody; by the mean relative to us, that amount which is neither too much nor too little, and this is not one and the same for everybody (Aristotle, 1996, p.40).

To illustrate this, he further writes: let us take 10 to be many and 2 few; then one takes the mean with respect to the thing. If one takes 6; since $6-2=10-6$, and this is the mean according to arithmetical proportion (ibid). However, when discussing about relative mean, this formula cannot be appropriate. This is because relative mean is relative to us. Suppose, Aristotle says, that 10 pounds of food is large ration for anybody and 2 pounds a small one: it does not follow that a trainer will prescribe 6 pounds, for perhaps even this will be a large ration, or a small one, for the particular athlete who is to receive it; it is a small ration for a millo, but a large one for a man just beginning to go in for athletics (ibid). Therefore, Aristotle reasons that an expert in certain area will make effort to avoid extremes and defect, and opt for the mean. This mean is that which is not of thing but relative to us. The point which he tried to emphasize here is that each case of consideration determines its merit and what should constitute the mean. In other words, while the audacity of mean is imperative, it cannot be the same in all cases as parameter for measurement may vary.

Accordingly, Aristotle categorizes human actions/emotions along the line of their deficiency and excesses. Either in feeling or action, he says that the mean inbetween the extremes in each situation should be the appropriate choice. Subsequently, he discusses *Courage* as a moral virtue using two feelings of fear and confidence. Fear for instance, has an excessive disposition which is a depreciation in confidence, and which results to cowardice. On the other hand, confidence also has an excessive disposition which is rashness. In other words, the mean between fear and confidence is courage. If you exceed in confidence, you are rash and if you exceed in fear, and deficient in confidence, you are coward. When it comes to the issue of pleasure and pain, the mean of them is moderation. That is, striking a balance. The excess of which is profligacy or recklessly extravagant.

In synopsis, Aristotle's doctrine of the mean (which captures the western conception of moderation) simply states that there are three dispositions, among these three dispositions are two vices. One is the excess, the other is deficiency and one virtue. The virtue is the mean, the middle way. Moderation in Aristotle's sense is when one observes the mean in each given situation of choice.

Moderation: The Eastern Conception

To understand Eastern philosophy in general, Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism readily come to mind as dominant strands of thought which symbolize the Eastern thought. Put differently, to extract the theme of moderation from the Eastern thought, the aforementioned systems are veritable tools. Among these strands of thought, Confucianism seems to be more prominent in ancient China (Unah, 1996, p.155). In ancient China, children were first tutored in the four books which consisted of *the Confucian analects*, *the book of Mencius*, *the Great Learning* and *the Doctrine of the mean*. Accordingly, the same way the Bible or Quran is hallowed in the Christian or Islamic society, so also are these books hallowed in ancient Chinese society. It is particularly the content of the book on doctrine of the mean as enshrined in those systems that this section of the study shall consider.

For the Eastern thought, in order to strike a balance in human conduct, actions are to be first personalized before externalizing them. That is, before contemplating any action, Confucius teaches that first and foremost, one should ask oneself will it be pleasant if done to me. Thus, the mean for him is the right attitude to knowing *Ming*, and to be happy. For that reason, to moderate human conduct Confucius warns that:

What you do not like done to yourself, do not do to others. Serve your father as you would require your son to serve you. Serve your ruler as you would require your subordinate to serve you. Serve your elder brother as you would require your younger brother to serve you... set the example in behaving to your friends as you would require them to behave to you (ibid, p,168).

For Confucius, the superman acts in accordance with the mean, while the mean man acts contrary to the course of the mean. Because the superman has cultivated this mentality, he often ensures he maintains the mean. "Perfect is the virtue which is according to the mean! Rare have they long been among the people, who could practice it" (Confucius, blackmask.com). For him, men claim they are wise, yet you find them been caught in the web of confusion every now and then- not knowing what to do. "Men say, we are wise, but happening to choose the course of mean, they are not able to keep it for a round month" (ibid). Further illuminated by Omeregbe, Confucius: rejects extremes, contending:

That to go too far is as bad as to fall short. When he was asked whether we should love everyone who hates us he replied in the negative, saying, that we should rather be just to such a person. According to him, we should return justice for hatred and benevolence for love. And when he was told about somebody who always waited to think thrice before acting, he said that was too much, that twice was enough (Omeregbe, 2004, p.49).

Concepts which play prominent role throughout the Confucius doctrine of the mean include: *Tian*, *Hsing* and *Dao*-representing; human nature, centrality/equilibrium and harmony. The objective of the Confucius mean doctrine lies on how a person can become a sage by ensuring equilibrium and synergy which are the characteristics of the *Dao* and of the human nature (*Tian*).

In the same vein, it could be said that the principle of the middle way/moderation was applied by Buddha in his early teachings. In his first teachings, he spoke on the need to avoid two extremes that is, "overindulgence in sensuality and self-torture" (Tufen Yan, 2008, p.208). In fact, Buddhism by itself is said to be these two extremes stated above and between other opposites. Buddha talks about four motives on which one's action should not come from, to include: impulse (*Chanda*), hatred (*dosa*), fear (*bha*) and delusion (*moha*). The person acting from these motives he says, is doomed to ruin. Accordingly, he advocates for self-restraint as against uncontrolled impulse. Hatred he says achieves nothing of advantage whatsoever, instead, a person that dabbles into any of the afore-listed is playing with death (Saddhatissa, 1987, p.113). Thus, he advises one to conquer anger with non-anger, evil with good, avarice with generosity and lying with truth (ibid, p.114).

In essence, the middle way is the overall principle of Buddhist ethics, while the eight fold is the means of attaining the middle way. When we talk about the eightfold path, we mean those eightfold acceptable principles which Buddha sanctions as the golden. They include: *right views, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness and right meditation*. Thus, avoiding the extremes is the middle way (Jifen Yan, 2008, p.208). Enlightenment for Buddha is attained when we reach this state of mind. Therefore, as it is with Confucius, so the mean is to Buddha and likewise to the Taoists who reject extremes and maintain that "to hold and fill a cup to extreme is not as good as to stop in time" (Omeregbe, 2004, P.50). In these three systems which have been used to represent the Eastern thought, moderation is conceived as a mean between two extremes, hence, the right choice of action. The aim of this concept in the teaching is to achieve harmony between the self and others, and between the self and the non-self, all of which would lead to harmonious existence and human flourishing.

The Notion of Moderation in Igbo-African Worldview

Igbo moral philosophy in general, takes its underlying strength and justification from the context of Igbo worldview. The Igbo worldview, just like it obtains in several other African societies, is

anchored on the theory of forces. It is believed that reality is spiritual and hierarchical too. At the apex of these forces is Chukwu, the Supreme Being. He alone possesses the creative and sustenance powers. Inbetween *Chukwu* the Supreme Being and *Ihe*-things, the lowest of these forces, there are the deities-*Umu-agbara*, or *alusi*, *Ndi-ichie* (the ancestors regarded as pure spirit), then, there is *madu* (man).

Man, occupies a very strategic position among this theory of forces in that he stands as the locus-custodian to all the beings. Therefore:

Since, man occupies a strategic position in the order of beings, in their ontological hierarchy; he is at once the locus of law and order and of the norms of social harmony. In the African moral outlook, infringing a taboo causes an ontological disequilibrium of social harmony (Unah, 1999, p.30).

Arising from such conception of reality, the Igbomoral philosophy is geared towards those actions which will engender social harmony, tolerance, peace and tranquility among individuals, individuals and the society, and individuals and the gods. Social dimension, that is, communal consideration takes a more prominent position in the Igbo ethical values, although each flows from the other. If there is individual to individual harmony, it leads to societal harmony. When there is harmony in the society, it increases the flow of vital force and ontological equilibrium.

Whenever an individual commits an act of serious wrong doing, the perfect harmony between the physical, social and religious dimensions of life and which constitutes the ontological locus of man's conscience is overshadowed by the impact which his act will have on the existential harmony of the group (ibid).

Therefore, to ensure that there is order in the relationship between man and his fellow man, and between man and nature, the Igbo evolves ethical code called *Omenala*. *Omenala* is an ethical code of the Igbo people just like the Confucius Analecte although not expressly written. It is the check and stabilizing force which emphasizes the do and don't among the Igbo community. According to Nwala; *Omenala* is the embodiment of traditional wisdom, coded and supported with sanctions. Its authority is invoked from time to time in order to maintain a social balance, whose violation is regarded as an abomination and an offence against the gods and the community (Nwala, 2010, p.12). Any actions such as witchcraft, stealing, falsehood, murder, et cetera, that diminishes the continuous flow of life forces is said to be a taboo (*aru*), a crack in the ethical code (*Omenala*) of the land. Therefore, to ensure the avoidance of morally depraved actions, or to ensure that man avoids extremes in conduct, the Igbo evolves moral or wise constructs which charges one to uphold those actions which are morally ideal and abhor those which disequilibrium the social balance..

Accordingly, proverbs, idioms and myths are carriers of those ethical constructs which are meant to strike a mean between two extreme as embedded in *Omenala* (tradition/culture) and expressed in *Ononoke* or *ruo n'oke* (moderation) as we shall later see in the course of this discussion. Proverb is so esteemed among the Igbos to the extent that when a speaker runs short of a word, he recovers it in a proverb. When a speech becomes so lengthy and time consuming, it is summarized in a proverb. Aristotle agrees that proverb is a remnant from old philosophy, preserved amid countless destruction by reason of its brevity and fitness for use" (Momoh, 2000, p.350). Proverb is a stock in trade in Igbo philosophy, and it is used to convey moral lessons, it warns and advises.

In other words, if you want to understand the emphasis on moderation in man's conduct within the Igbo society, readily at hand to consult is the proverbs. Proverbs play vital roles in speech, language, transmission of knowledge and preservation of traditional and moral values among the Igbo people. So much so that an Igbo does not begin nor end a speech without anchoring it on a deep rooted value-laden proverbs. Achebe in this regard, was right to have described proverbs as oil with which words are eaten *ilu bu manu ndi Igbo ji eri okwu* (Achebe, 1959, p.147). Among these proverbs are ones that are rich in metaphysics, epistemology, logic and ethics. Among the ones which deal on morals are those which are designate to ensure moderation tolerance, healthy competition and balance in human conduct. These constructs are very vital and effective because they are inscribed in the conscience of

the individual. “For Achebe, proverbs in Igbo-land serve two important ends. Then enable the speaker to give universal status to a special and particular incident and they are used to soften the harshness of words and make them more palatable” (ibid).

The second role of proverbs as pointed out in the quotation above implies the presence of moderation contained in proverbs. It softens the harshness of words and makes them more palatable. To understand the Igbo emphases on moderation, let us evaluate some of their sayings which carry along a strong ethical import. But before we embark on that, it is important we first, try to capture the Igbo translation of the term moderation. Although not exactly in the order of its western notion. As a matter of fact, African scholars like Momoh believes that why we encounter some difficulties talking African philosophy is because we often make mistake of measuring it in the light of the Western paradigm. Hence, he argues that this ought not be so because no two philosophies are ever identical in all spheres, although we may find different principles expressing similar issues. To this end, the reader here is advised not to try interpreting our notion of Igbo concept of moderation using the Aristotelian viewing lense.

The term moderation in Igbo, means *Ononoke oriru n’oke* or *imeru ihe n’oke*. Translating this into English language, it will read like: to strike a balance in conduct, to attain middle way in action is an ideality. *Ononoke*, that which lies in between the boundary line of action. It is both a noun and a doing word. On the other hand, the extreme of *imeru ihe n’oke* is *imeghara ihe n’oke jorọ njọ*. (It is bad to stretch action/things to the extreme). That informs an Igbo proverb which says: *nwata bulu chi ya uzo ogba gbuo onwe ya n’oso*. This simply says that if a child claims to run faster than his god, he is definitely going to be exhausted in shortest time. The moral import in this saying is that of the need for patience in place of overzealousness. It also teaches restraint, taking one step at a time. In other words, *ruo n’oke kwesiri ekwesi* (the middle way is an ideal). Another term for moderation is *Ikpa aka*. It simply means not to be deficient nor be outrageous. Deficiency in Igbo means *erughi* (that which falls short). On the other hand, extreme means *mgwucha* (overblown). *Enye ndi ebea enye ndi ebea* assign to Peter the same proportion as with Paul. *Imeghara ihe oke na ime zuho ihe ruo oke joro njoro* excesses and deficiencies are bad moral actions.

In order to warn one against engaging in actions that are socially inimical and avoid chaos, the Western and Eastern golden rule principles say that in choosing how to treat others, it must first be internalized. For instance, the Western golden rule principle has it that one should do unto others what one would have others do to oneself. For the West and the East, such ethical doctrine instills caution in trying to do that which is socially evil. In the same way, for the Igbos, the same thing is expressed with saying that “*mkpuru onye kuru ka o ga aghota*”, meaning that whatever one sows, such shall one reap with equal proportion. In the interrogative way, the Igbos say: *Ihe ahu imere onye ozo imegiya oga adigi nma*, that which you do to the other, when served to you, would you be pleased? An Ibibio proverb succinctly captures it thus: *He who sows yam must harvest yam; he who sows cassava must harvest cassava; no man sows cocoyam and harvests cassava; if this happens, it is either that the Gods are annoyed or there is a civil strife in heaven*. In its Western equivalence, it would read that in every action, there is equal an opposite reaction. When the Igbo make such expression, it instills restraint against any moral conduct which is capable of causing disequilibrium in the social norm. It also cautions against excesses. Just like Karma in the Eastern thought, Igbo-Africa believe that morally depraved actions have their proportionate consequences not only in this life but also in the life after. To this end, Nwala writes that there are values and moral principles which uphold and emphasize the authority of the community among the Igbo people. These values are stressed as ideal for social harmony. These principles include:

- Respect for seniority
- Unity and solidarity of the people of the community
- Justice
- Peace, order and harmony
- Truth, innocence, honesty and transparency
- Co-operation and being one’s brother’s keeper.

- Hospitality (Nwala, 2010, p.205).

These are what the community regards as ideal. For instance, on the need for justice, an Igbo proverb would ask: *what joy does a dead man derives from the news that his murderer is in sack-cloth and mourning?* On the contrary, what will gladden his heart is justice. Again, on the need for transparency when trusted with public property, another saying captures it thus: *whistle continuously when you are pounding food for a blind man or else he will feel that you are eating all his yam.* Then, on the need for the relevance of community and co-operation among one another, the Igbos would remind an individual that: *an animal rubs its aching flank against a tree, a man asks his kinsman to scratch him.* Aside from the above listed communal virtues, there are also individual ideals which an individual ought to demonstrate, although individual virtues still subject to the communal values. In this regard, it is expected that a man must demonstrate such values as:

- Intelligence, wisdom, craftiness and wit.
- Courage, bravery, physical and moral strength
- Industriousness, perseverance and being focused
- Truth, transparency and honesty
- Humility and obedience
- Patience (ibid, p.206).

However, it must be observed that just as these virtues both at the communal level and at the individual level are emphasized so also do they have their extremes in forms of vices which the Igbo condemn in strong terms. When we talk about extreme here, it means those actions whose effects diminish humanity, society and the vital forces. They come in form of prohibitions, improper conducts and are grouped under taboos (*aru* and *nso ala*). Such actions include but not limited to: murder, patricide, incest, disrespect to seniority, adultery, witchcraft, stealing, arson, falsehood, *etcetera*. Some of these taboos when committed, require rigorous spiritual sanctions to cleanse one of it if not, it may spell doom for the individual offender. It is on this very ground that the Igbos caution against adults doing those things that are socially ill and antithetical because the younger ones may be keenly watching and emulating. Thus, on one hand, a proverb says: *when a mother goat is chewing yam its young ones watch its mouth.* And on another hand, *those who fetch insect infested woods, invite the lizard for a party in the compound* (every action is equal an opposite reaction).

Therefore, looking at these three philosophical traditions; the Western, Eastern and African, it becomes to point out their areas of intersection. Put differently, these three traditions have the same aim and objective in their conceptions of moderation. The primary objective as it has been observed is for social harmony, tolerance, tranquility and existential equilibrium.

Evaluation of the Points of Congruence in the Three Traditions

In essence, what this essay has continued harped on in its analysis of moderation, is not to prove the exact similarity between the Western or Eastern notion of moderation with that of African. Rather, given the Western aim in the concept of moderation, the paper has tried to show that in the African code of conducts, there are moral elements which achieve the same aim which Confucius or Aristotle intended in his ethics. Rightly observed by Momoh, “Consequently, the question of African philosophy being different or similar to that of the West is irrelevant (Momoh, 2000, p.360). As a matter of fact, two philosophies from different traditions need not be identical before achieving the same purpose. The primary purpose of any ethical doctrine is to mould conduct, uphold socially uplifting ideals and eschew its diminishing opposites. Notwithstanding this observation therefore, the discussion of the doctrine of the mean in Aristotle and in the Eastern philosophies all tilt towards the social dimension which that of the Igbo-African equally sets out to achieve. For instance, Aristotle in classifying degrees of the good, writes that although the good is the same for the individual, however, the good for the society or state is the greater kind of good. Thus he avers:

Therefore, the good of man must be the end of the science of politics.
For even though it be the case that the good is the same for the individual and for the state, never the less, the good of the state is

manifestly a greater and more perfect good, both to attain and to preserve (Aristotle, 1996, p.4).

Thus, in Aristotle's treatment of the moral ideal virtues, securing the good of one man is noble. Ensuring that of collective humanity is nobler. He is more interested in producing good citizens geared towards societal harmony. He equally talks about actions and emotions that are by their nature inherently bad and inimical to collective existence.

For instance, malice, shamelessness, envy, and of actions, adultery, theft, murder. All these and similar actions and feelings are blamed as being bad in themselves; it is not the excess or deficiency of them that we blame. It is impossible therefore ever to go right in regard to them—one must always be wrong; nor does right or wrong in their case depend on the circumstances, for instance, whether one commits adultery with the right woman, at the right time, and in the right manner, the mere commission of any of them is wrong (ibid, p.44).

For the Eastern philosophy, everyone has a duty to the society, and this duty is demonstrated by loving others. Although moral oughtness begins with oneself, its ultimate aim is for the discharge of duty to the society (Unah, 1996, p.166). In general, Asian thought emphasizes the spirit of non-self. In *the Confucius Seventeen article Constitution*, it reads:

Harmony is to be valued and to turn away from that which is private and set our focus toward that which is public—this is the path of a minister. With such connotations as serve (sabarau) or wait upon a person (haberu), “Samura” another word for bushi, falls, into this ideology of turning away from the private and directing oneself to the public. In this area the individual self has no place (Ives, 2009, p.176).

Again, one other important doctrine which appears to be constant in each of the afore-considered philosophies is the need for one to first internalize actions before externalizing it. This is anchored on the principle of the golden rule, that is, one should always use oneself as the measuring parameter of any intended action. If it is good for one, then the same can be done to the other. The Igbo-African people also enjoin one to always ask oneself this question at the event of meting out certain treatment against another: that which I am about to do to another, should same be done to me, would it please me?

As was earlier observed, the basis for Igbo ethics is for the sustenance of the social and spiritual equilibrium. It is a popular belief that being of the community is prior and supreme over that of individual wills. No matter how great a man may be, it is believed that such a man can never win a judgment against his clan (the community). Hence, the popular saying that *the clan is like a lizard: if it loses its tail, it soon grows another*. When an individual's right and that of his community clash, the individual's right gives way for that of the community. The reason why the Igbo emphasize on moral ideality is to uphold the communal force. It is believed that an individual's bad behaviour can bring or cause disintegration on the communal force which upholds the community. Nwala, again, writes:

Traditional morality is not only a communally-enjoined system of individual responsibilities, the community as a whole is held responsible for the conduct of each individual member. A community can be made to suffer because of the bad conduct of any one of its member; therefore, it is the responsibility of the whole community to control the conduct of its one member (Nwala, 2010, p.204).

This of course tallies with the argument in this study that in Igbo philosophy, moderate and balancing kind of conducts are emphasized with a view to striking a balance between the individual actions and the community's sustaining force (Ekei, 2003, p.57). Just like it is seen in the Western and in the Eastern doctrines, the purpose of ensuring a moderate action in African philosophy is geared towards communal living and tolerance in the midst of diversities.

Conclusion

Haven established an area of convergence among the three philosophies in terms of objectives, that is, the need to foster social harmony and peaceful co-existence, it further reinforces the thinking of the paper on the need for continuous emphasis on moderation as a new global ethical order in building morals, in canvassing against extremism and passivity. It is the belief of this research exercise that should the doctrine of moderation be internalized in global moral codes as seen in the afore-discussed philosophical traditions, it will engender a new world order where both the kite can perch and the eagle can perch too, without each hurting another. This latter view is the undertone of Igbo-African proverb often employed to emphasize tolerance and deemphasize unhealthy competition/rivalry. Therefore, should this orientation be the new currency of trade in global search for order, it is our position that the palpable disequilibrium and nihilistic worldview which characterize state versus state and individual versus individual relationship in the world today will perhaps turn a new leaf. In this order, the paper further calls on the world powers and those who decide the affairs of the world to as a matter of urgency, begin to harness the benefits of this principle for the maintenance of global peace. When excesses are curbed in the face of action, we shall begin to have a world where the mean of action becomes the generally accepted right conduct.

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