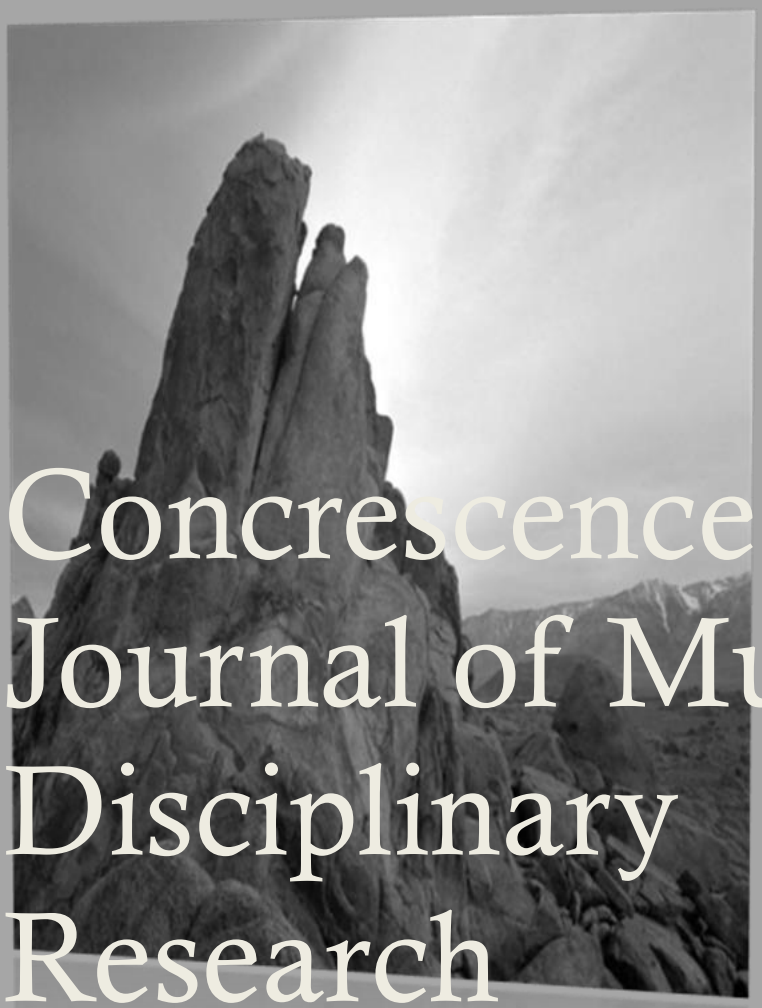

Concrescence Journal of Multi-Disciplinary Research

Volume 2, Number 1, 2025, ISSN: 1595-9287

DOI: https://doi.org/10.68251/cjmr.v2i1.4

Concrescence Journal of Multi-Disciplinary Research
Vol. 2, No. 1, 2025, ISSN: 1595-9287

A Reconstruction of Kwame Gyekye's Moderate Communitarianism

Kehinde Olorunwa Amosu, Ph.D
Lagos State University
Faculty of Arts
Department of Philosophy
Philoepc72@gmail.com
Kehinde.amosu@lasu.edu.ng

Abstract

The fundamental issues that prompted the postulations of Kwame Gyekye's moderate communitarianism are a result of the persistent tension between the individual's agitation for the assertion of his rights and expression of his interests on the one hand and the community's demand for conformity to its values and authority on the other. In the course of finding ways to address the inherent tensions in the relationship between the individual and community, which were not adequately addressed by various theories of individualism and communitarianism in their extreme forms. Kwame Gyekye proposes Moderate Communitarianism as a theory for balancing the extremist and absolutist positions held in the various theories before it. However, this paper finds Kwame Gyekye's theory inadequate for balancing the conflict between the individual and the community. Though it argues for equal moral balancing of individual rights and the common good. He was unable to follow the logic of his position to the end. It is against this backdrop that this paper aims to reconstruct Kwame Gyekye's moderate communitarianism using cultural dialectics as a framework for resolving the conflict of interests and responsibility respectively. The paper adopts conceptual and critical analysis as a method of approaching the issues raised in the work. This reconstruction is significant for affirming the possibility of harmony and peaceful coexistence among people with or without similar cultural orientations and also for evaluating the problems arising in the course of individuals' quest for liberty and its expressions.

Keywords: Communitarianism, cultural dialectics, individualism, Kwame Gyekye, moderate communitarianism.

Introduction

Kwame Gyekye was a distinguished African philosopher who sought a middle ground for the extreme positions of individualism (libertarianism) and communitarianism about individual differentiation and the community's demand for conformity to its values. Gyekye exposes a theoretical explanation and moral balancing of the original communalistic worldviews manifested in traditional African societies as basically communal, and the upholding of individual rights and self-differentiation is regarded as a Western orientation.

Gyekye argues for equally and morally balancing the agitation of individual demand to be different and the community's claims to superiority.

This paper examines Gyekye's moderate communitarianism as a response to the excesses of these theories, the extent to which the moderate communitarianism is able to balance the two extreme positions and the dilemma created by this balancing which originally set out to emphasize the recognition of individual rights within the claims of the self and the collective. As a critique, we further point out some inadequacies of Gyekye's moderate communitarianism. These inadequacies eventually lead to a spurious dilemma and, as such, are unable to do that which he sets out to achieve because he did not follow the logic of his argument to the end. To resolve the dilemma his logic creates, we undertake a reconstructionist approach to complement and assist Gyekye achieve his original aim of balancing the two extremist and absolutist positions. He postulated moderate communitarianism to this effect, while we adopt cultural dialectics as a reconstructive tool to resolve the conflicts of interests and responsibility, which moderate communitarianism could not achieve because it ended up prioritising the community over the individual, which can lead to conflict in society.

An Overview of Kwame Gyekye's Moderate Communitarianism

Moderate communitarianism explains the untouchable community of radical communitarianism and challenges the community priority thesis. In his book Tradition and Modernity: A Philosophical Reflection of an African Experience, Gyekye critically inquire into the idea of the most suitable relationship that should exist between the individual and the community. He proposed the idea of moderate communitarianism to address the issues involved in the individual community relationship. In his moderate communitarianism theory, Gyekye objected to some of the traditional African styles, thus limiting the radical version, even though both variants approve the sanctity and inevitability of community membership in view of their rejection of a contractarian account of the community.

Notwithstanding, Gyekye rules against the African communitarian thesis, which gives credence to the dependence of the individual on the community and the primacy of the community's interests over individual liberty. The priority of cultural community in which human beings find himself which expresses the 'I' in Akan proverbs such as —when a human being descends from heaven, he/she descends into human society and a person is not a palm tree that he should be self- sufficient (Gyekye, 1997: 38). Gyekye is not convinced with this arrangement. To him, it does not capture thoroughly the relationship between the individual and the community because it tends to take away the moral autonomy of the person, making the being and the existence of the individual absolutely dependent on the values, objectives, activities, ends, practices and endorsements of the community.

Gyekye argues that the communal primacy thesis strays in advancing a theory in which the community is taken as prior to the individual. The communitarian primacy thesis over-emphasize the community over individual expressions because it gives an exaggerated conception of the community wherein the community is seen as always overriding individual rights. The community in this regard does not recognize the individuality of the individual and the rights that naturally belong to a human person in so far as a person is essentially autonomous (Gyekye, 1997: 39). This view portrays radical and unrestricted communitarianism which is strongly defended by Mbiti (1969) Wiredu (1970); and later Menkiti (1984).

Gyekye emphasizes that radical communitarianism is a view which has been overstated, it is a view which one finds difficult to support because it has not fully recognize the status and relevance of individual rights (1997; 38). For the fact that radical communitarianism supports the supremacy of community's interests over the rights of the individual, Gyekye proposed another variant of communitarianism which takes into cognizance the inevitability of individual rights in a community's setting, it does not jeopardize the right that legitimately belongs to the individual and the community values which must be conformed with. Gyekye refers to this as moderate communitarianism.

So, moderate communitarianism is a theory whose aim is to balance the excessive emphasis on the primacy of the community's values and ethos over individual rights and interests. It sets out to find a dynamic balance between the individual and the community. It is a critical response to radical communitarianism. Though, it does not endorse the individual as metaphysically prior to the community, rather, it is the individual and the overestimation of the relevance and role of the community in its conception of a robust human society to the extent of perpetually undermining the individual and her intrinsic worth that forms the point of diversion between radical communitarianism and moderate communitarianism. Gyekye (1997: 39) argues that the ontological derivativeness of the community can not be upheld since this would mean that the communal belongings are merely contingent and optional.

As a moral and political theory, moderate communitarianism is a dualistic principle which is grounded on two fundamental norms: the common good and dignity. The former grounds man's duty to secure the well-being of all, while the latter emphasizes the idea of rights and captures the basic moral respects due to individuals as such (Donelly, 2002). The dynamic interplay between human duties to promote the common good and the recognition of individual rights, it is argued, will take the shape of an adjusted communitarianism which emphasizes the common good without jettisoning rights. Hence, moderate communitarianism is a project which finds a dynamic balance between the demands for compliance with the community's authority and conformity to its ethos and the liberal regime of rights by including individual rights in African political thinking, especially in the light of the demands of modernization and modernity in the contemporary world.

Now, the question is: to what extent can Gyekye's theory of moderate communitarianism, which emphasizes the equal moral balancing of the claims and agitation of the individual to express his rights without being trumped and the demands for conformity by the community for its values and authority, achieve this laudable objective? To respond to this question, it is important to examine the notion of personhood in moderate communitarianism.

Gyekye's expression of equal moral status to both the individual and the community is duly demonstrated in his notion of personhood. Gyekye argues that a person is made up of two basic metaphysical entities (i.e. individual and communal). Besides being a communal being by nature, the human person is also by nature other things as well, by other things, he means such essential attributes as rationality, capacity for virtue, evaluation of moral judgments and capacity for making choices (Gyekye, 1997: 47). It is not the community that creates these attributes, rather it only discovers and nurture them. These attributes exist independently of the cultural community in which the individual is only partly construed by the community (Gyekye, 1997: 59).

Gyekye's recognition and identification of the individual and communal features as basic to the constitution of man is a distinctive feature of moderate communitarianism. This feature establishes the relation of metaphysical equalities rather than priority between the two entities. Thus, the equality thesis in Gyekye's notion of personhood can be explained in two ways:

One, it is the frank claim that the individual and the community are equally basic. The effect of this is a refutation of any sort of acidities relation between them, each existing separately from the other. As such, they are not conditionally constrained. So altering the intrinsic properties of one cannot have any corresponding effect on the other. The problem, however, is that a superficial relation between them runs in asymmetric directions, hence, the argument that the collective depends on the individual and the individual also depends on the collective is vital to the relationship. This position defends the different priority thesis supported by both ideas of the relation. Though, this is not new to the literature, for instance, Dzobo's efforts to restate Mbiti's popular communal priority thesis because we are therefore I am brought about the unconventional conjunction 'I am because we are, and since I am, therefore we are'(Dzobo, 1992, 132).

The challenge with this merger is that it joins two mutually exclusive thesis. One insists that the community is prior, the other vehemently disagrees with it. Thus, the connection of the two cannot automatically produce any plausible substitute, instead, it either presupposes that neither is basic. Though this would not help Gyekye's proposition, since he needs basic entities or values for his moral and political philosophy, respectively or perhaps, the connection is simply misguiding. Another sense in which these claims can be made clear is by disclosing that the argument in the connection is obviously inadequate for the validity test.

Two: Gyekye's inclusion of natural tendencies different from those articulated by the metaphysics of personhood proclaimed in what he refers to as radical communitarianism preempts his presupposed case for equally recognizing and accepting individual rights, since he affirms, rights belongs primarily and irreducibly to the individual (Gyekye, 1997: 62).

Ultimately, Gyekye's position is that the moral equality between the individual and the community is the most suitable approach to characterizing the relationship because it has more significant bases for articulating a moral-political philosophy in which individual rights and collective well-being are equally recognized and accommodated. Gyekye argues that guided by the assumption about the dual features of the self. It should be possible to deflate any serious tension between the self and the community (Gyekye, 1997: 76)

In this regard, if the position about the possible deflation of any serious tension between the self and the community is true, then there seems to be no need for further conflict. Therefore, Gyekye's equality thesis over the priority thesis cannot be tenable for two reasons.

First, it seems to misunderstand the original dilemma, since he presents the initial position as a dilemma of the failure to equally recognize individuality and community respectively. Gyekye's position presents the original dilemma as a neglect of individuality. This is principally a misconception. The second reason is related to the presupposition one thinks would be necessary for Gyekye's theory to continue to work out. Since Gyekye himself

projects an argument which explicitly denies that, there cannot be fundamental conflict(s) between the individual and the community. This is quite doubtful on both theoretical and practical grounds.

Deconstructing Kwame Gyekye's Moderate Communitarianism

On the Individual-Community debate, Gyekye's response presents a misplacement of the origin of the dilemma. His response is clearly set out in Moderate Communitarianism underpinnings.

The intrinsic worth and dignity of the individual human person and recognizing individuality and individual responsibility stipulated in his argument that human society is not absolutely communal and not individualistic (Gyekye, 1997: 40). Although this was never in contention, and obviously no side of the debate will antagonize this fact. Each part can only infer that their claims to either individuality or communality are merely inferred and not basic.

Notably, also, Menkiti's argument, in which he unambiguously argues for the ontological priority of the community, does not oppose the fact that these are features of human society that can be adequately characterized as individualistic. His position is that priority is given to the Collective and individual features, whatever these may be, are regarded as secondary (Gyekye, 1984:180). Thus, a theory that merely demands the recognition of individuality in the communitarian project loses the focus of the debate. To engage in this as a concern, Gyekye hastily infer that the actual intention was about the failure to recognize individuality or as he supposedly think that it is not about recognition, but rather, about the recognition of both. Gyekye therefore affirms the equal recognition of both individuality and communality, which in consideration of his theory, he hopes would lead us beyond the mere individual-community priority divide.

To support his view, Gyekye argues that equality has some credibility above priority. To him, it is a better paradigm for resolving the individual-community tension (Gyekye, 1997:76). But, the enigma in the original source of the dilemma is a self-imposed dilemma brought about by assigning equal weight to the demands of individuality and community. This is clearly stated at the beginning of his discussion as;

> The problem arises because we believe, on one hand, that the individual human being has autonomy, freedom, dignity, and 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 community and all that it makes available for the individual's potential and for living a life that is most worthwhile (Gyekye, 1997:35).

Gyekye's argument here is that, because we do not accept the fundamentality of individual autonomy and freedom as we do in the fundamentality of the community, we are confronted with the issue of explaining how the two units are related since the claims they make on us clearly specify different interests. However, if the original contention was a function of equally recognizing the claims of individuality and community, how can an ideology which allows equal recognition of both, by evolving from differentiating which one is basic, take us from the existing dilemma? If we arrive at a compromise by reason of accepting that these two conceptual structures can be given equal recognition, how could

we anticipate a theory that manifests the same to effectively articulate what the suitable relationship between individuals and community should be? The response seems to be negative.

Thus, the idea underlying Gyekye's Moderate Communitarianism succeeds only in the recognition and acceptance of individuality and communality, respectively. It only restated the basis for the conflict which has always been the crux of the dilemma. In other words, Gyekye's Moderate Communitarianism only represent the conflict of individual-community relationship, it does not adequately and effectively resolve the dilemma of how the appropriate relationship should be or how to resolve the clash of interest when it arises.

To further pursue the theoretical relevance of Gyekye's Moderate Communitarianism, we have to assume that it is actually possible to equally recognize individuality and community. It would be strange to propose a system of equal recognition if it were possible. Though this possibility implies that for the two units to be equally recognized and congruous, it would show that there are no harsh conflicts between them. This position breaks down Gyekye's argument, yet this is what he needs to affirm in order to validate his theory and to assert the consistency of his work. He noted explicitly in his work that:

> …Communitarianism as conceived and understood in Akan or African philosophy, is a consistent theory, which is not opposed to fundamental interests of the individual. Though Gyekye is not the only one claiming that there is no fundamental conflicts between the community and the individual (Eze, 2010: 134).

Augustine Shutte also claims that there is a fusion between the two. Each individual in the community, he says, sees the community as themselves in character and in reality as one with another self. Thus, there is no room for separation between the individual and the community (Shutte, 2001: 27). This assertion conforms to Gyekye's idea that there is no basic conflict between the individual and the community.

Certainly, Gyekye should not stress this kind of proposition, because it will render his position on the relationship untenable. If there were no conflict in the first place, there would not be any need for a framework for resolving any conflict. But since his theory of moderate communitarianism is propounded as a framework for resolving the conflict, moderate communitarianism could not have begun with a false claim based on the non-existence of fundamental conflict between the individual and the community. Affirming such would - abrogate any rationale for a framework that postulates equal recognition aimed at resolving such conflicts (Gyekye, 1997: 76).

Reiterating the point we made earlier, that there are certainly conflicts sprouting because of the equal recognition of both individuality and communality in Gyekye's theory, which succeeds in restating the conflict by proposing equal recognition. He could not make a proposition that there are no profound conflicts between the two because it would amount to begging the question.

However, Gyekye's proposition, though intended to demonstrate how conflicts of interest between the individual and the community could be resolved, failed to adequately

demonstrate its purpose. Also, Gyekye was unable to make a salient assumption which is adequate to prove the spuriousness of the conflicts since such conflicts are really in existence. Tuner affirms this position when she argues that what is at stake in this individual- community controversy is a basic clash of style of thoughts, the one liberal and individualist, the other communal and holist (Tuner, 1968: 32). Hence, our point of departure from Gyekye's moderate communitarianism lie in its inability to adequately resolve the conflicts of interests between the individual and the community with his 'equal moral standing' modality. Rather, it re-establishes the conflicts with the logic of his idea, which plough him back to radical communitarianism.

Gyekye's moderate communitarianism has implications which is significant for his theory of the relationship which exists between the individual and the community. This theory and its conception of personhood as a composite of non-derivative individualistic and non-derivative communalistic qualities have many imperatives for his moral and political philosophy. In moderate communitarianism, unlike the restricted one, individual dignity, upon which human rights are taken at once as fundamental, communal, non-derivative good, is equivalent, respectively, to the two main features of personhood. Moral agents are therefore expected to act in a way that simultaneously serves the good of the collective and exhibits respect for individual dignity and rights. The reason for this, according to Gyekye, is that there cannot be an opposition between the two. The dignity or worth of the individual cannot be diminished by his natural membership of the community. The common good cannot and should not expect to result into the willful subversion of individual rights; at both theoretical (conceptual) and practical levels, communitarianism cannot set its face against individual rights (Gyekye, 1997, pp. 63-64). The common good and rights, Gyekye declares, are two basic fundamental value systems.

Gyekye's moderate communitarianism adequately explains how its equality thesis resolves the conflicts of interests between the individual and community, since it ultimately slides into radical communitarianism when conflicts arise, affirms that Gyekye's moderate communitarianism does not really place individual rights on a par with the common good as it sets out to do. In a serious demand to adjudicate between the demands of individuality and community, Gyekye's moderate communitarianism would affirm the primacy and superiority of the community over individual rights.

From the above, it is clear the Gyekye's position buckles under the pressure of application, the claims of moderate communitarianism which in principle is equal moral standing for individual and community could not possibly provide any real rationale or guidance on related moral or political conflicts and so the only sense in which its assumptions can be made intelligible involves another thing quite different to the underpinnings of moderate communitarianism.

Cultural Dialectics as a Reconstruction of Gyekye's Moderate Communitarianism

By reconstructing Kwame Gyekye's moderate communitarianism, this study sets out to avoid the implications inherent in the dilemma caused by Gyekye's equality thesis of placing the exclusive positions of the claims to priority and supremacy in the individual-community debate, expressed in his moderate communitarianism theory. In this reconstruction, we are not outrightly rejecting Gyekye's theory, but intend to bring a new understanding to his position in such a way that will allow the elimination of the implication or consequence which can be regarded as 'unintended consequence'. It is so regarded because Gyekye

himself does not envisage *ab initio* that he will fall into the problem he originally analysed, rejected and tried to resolve.

Famakinwa (2010: 12) for instance, contends that Gyekye's moderate communitarianism is in no way different from the radical view which he rejected. To Famakinwa, the radical communitarianism overstated the role and influence of the community in defining the individual and the African communitarian thinking which, if interpreted closely, is largely incompatible with the quest for individual rights. Oyowe (2013:165), criticized Gyekye's moderate communitarianism and contested that Gyekye's account of what the relationship between the individual and the community should be does not succeed because it must make a questionable assumption about the relationship namely, that there are no radical conflicts between individual and community, an assumption, Oyowe feels undercuts the very basis for his analysis of what the relationship should be. This slides him into the extreme one he rejected.

Though, these scholars rejected Gyekye's moderate communitarianism, their positions, one argues, are not different from Gyekye's bias position. For instance, Oyowe rejected the communitarian communal thesis and argues for individualism as a better alternative. He also falls into the same trap as Gyekye, while Gyekye relapses into rigid communitarianism he relapses into individualism which can lead to chaos in conflict situations.

The formulation of the problem Gyekye tried to resolve is a genuine problem because it is a practical issue peculiar to all human societies. However, it was impossible to follow such alternative position as described in Gyekye's moderate communitarianism to arrive at a conclusion different from the communitarian perspective he rejected. The problem of this paper as noted earlier is the relapse to the individual-community conflict caused by Gyekye's moderate communitarianism theory. Gyekye's formulation of the issue though not spurious, the study accepts the formulation but rejects his conclusion, that is, the solution to the problem is not acceptable because of its implications.

The implication has to do with the inconsistency of the approach and the logic for arriving at its conclusion which stray him to accepting the primacy of community's authority over individual rights in conflict situations without adequately explaining the justification for such (Gyekye, 1997: 66). By implication, Gyekye's moderate communitarianism allows for the trampling of individual rights by the community when there is clash of interest because of the communal tendencies of African societies that gives supremacy to the collective and community over individual aspirations.

Now, how can we avoid the implication in Gyekye's theory since the logic of his equal moral standing leads to his conclusion? We are not rejecting the formulation of the problem but we are reconstructing the conclusion of his approach as well as the method underlynig the perspective of reaching the conclusion. This study deviates from following Gyekye's faulty approach, which leads to the implication of his conclusion.

This research therefore provides cultural dialectics as a reconstruction of Kwame Gyekye's moderate communitarianism. Cultural dialectics offers a different approach and method of resolving the conflicts of individual-community relationship. Cultural dialectics also differs from all the approaches before it because it allows for the accommodation of both elements of rights and responsibility. This is achievable by its reconstructive

framework of plural reality cultural dialectics, which emphasises plural reality, which is a philosophical notion that emphasizes that reality is dual in nature and is contrasted with monism, which holds that reality is one. This pluriform reality promotes dual entities and maintains that reality is in two. It explains the plurality of concepts such as day and night, good and bad, mind and body, birth and death etc.

Further, it must be noted that the aim of this reconstruction is not to destroy Gyekye's theory but to help it stand the test of time.

In reconstructing Gyekye's conception, we affirm firmly that the individual and the community ought not to be seen in opposition and issues between them should not be seen in contradictions. If an issue is said to be for the benefit of the individual then collectively it becomes a benefit to the community. Similarly, if an issue is said to be for the benefit of the community, then it should be for the benefit of individuals within the community. But we should be fair to ask the questions; must the individual conform to the wishes of the community, or must individuals be left to act as freely as they wish to act? In examining these questions we need to be careful to avoid the slippery slope that made Gyekye conclude in favour of the community.

Through complementarity, we maintain that the individual and the community are collaborative parts of human existential reality. The individual cannot exist without the community just as there would be nothing called a community if there are no individuals. The community must be seen as a continuation or rather a consummation of the being of individuals. The extent of freedom of both the individual and the community must be brought to reasonable limits. This is where Oluwole's assertion that reality is of one binary element, whose existence is inseparable and functions are interdependent. In other words, the individual and the community are inseparable, and the functions of each are interdependent. Social life and its cultural configuration are to be grasped as always-already incorporating a trans-subjective aspect that is irreducible to inter- subjective contexts.

Thus, rather than seek support for one against the other, or elevate one over the other, conscious efforts should be made to take whatever issue away from the realm of contention and look for fair ways of handling the issue. The differing manifestations need to be described and explained, and be part of an overarching theory of the entity/phenomenon as noted by Reich (2018), but not all occur in the same spatial, temporal, or situational contexts. The individual occurs (exists) in the community, and the community takes its identity and its being from individuals in it and their varied activities. This is what moderation should imply. When bathed in the waters of dialectics, and complementarity, moderate communitarianism can then (within the spirit of moderation) posit that, when there is a conflict between the individual's interests and the community's values, both parties should remember that they complement each other and a third option of what will be beneficial to both should be fervently sought.

Cultural Dialectics and Conflict Resolution

Cultural dialectics in this paper is an approach to addressing conflicts of interest between individuals, groups and community. Cultural dialectics view emphasizes the goal of creating harmony between individuals, groups, and the society at large. Cultural dialectics is seen as a form of collaborative conflict management mechanism and a process of constructing novel ways of being and relating through the integration of opposites. As a result of several

challenges in human societies such as poverty, terrorism, natural disasters and immigration among others, more than ever before, pushed humans to find themselves exposed to diverse others, whose beliefs, norms, practical values collide with foundational assumptions, about the nature of the self and the world in which humans live. The question now is how does any individual person or group position himself in the context of radical difference in culture, self and personhood?

There are different ways of approaching this issue of radical diversity. A typical approach here is to think of conflicts from the universalizing standpoint of self-interest, power and superiority.

Self-interest is often attached to a universalizing sense of morality in which one group's beliefs and values are experienced as morally superior. When the interests of this group are threatened by another group, they are regarded as opposing force whose beliefs and values are experienced as strange, inhuman or morally inferior. In cases like these, conflict always reduce to power struggle between opposing positions and values a zero-sum conflict in which one group wins and the other loses.

Cultural dialectical approach is an alternative and workable approach founded on the dual complementary framework of pluralism and debate. While other approaches proceeds from the standpoint of dominance, rights and moral superiority, cultural dialectics is based on the respect for the plurality of competing conceptions of the good. Within cultural dialectics, no single cultural or moral position can claim primacy. Cultural dialectics embraces the idea of dialogue among competing individual, social and cultural community. Conflicts are denounced through appreciation of individual and group uniqueness and differentiation and rational discourse rather than the assertion of right and authority (power).

Also, rather than preserving sharp boundaries between and among individuals and cultural groups, cultural dialectics seeks ways to establish dialogue between groups to foster greater cohesion. Cultural dialectics embraces the ideals of connectedness and engagement between and among communities and individuals instead of thinking of social and cultural groups as monolithic and bounded entities. Cultural dialectics views culture as moving and mixing that is capable of transformation through engagement. Cultural dialectics holds out the possibility of emerging new ways of being in the world through the integration and synthesis of differences. It also presents the opportunity to create novel avenues of relating hybrid communities and other ways of coordinating their differences.

Conclusion

This work focused on cultural dialectics as a reconstructive tool for the shortcomings of Gyekye's moderate communitarianism, which leads to a dilemma and serious implication for addressing the individual-community conflicts. The implications are identified as:

One: that Gyekye misconceives the sources of the individual-community dilemma.

Two: that the assumption, he must make for his logic to get going is questionable on theoretical and practical grounds.

Three: that any moral political theory based on Gyekye's moderate communitarianism logic for resolving moral and political issues will be inadequate to do so.

Four: if the theory were to succeed, it would need substantial modification to the original principle.

Based on these implications, this paper reconstructs the conclusion of Gyekye's moderate communitarianism, establishing a radical understanding and integration of the dynamic elements of reality in human societies rather than the 'exclusive' and 'absolutist' positions in Gyekye's view and other theories on individual-community relationship. Also, cultural dialectics emphasizes that, though, cultural traditions, norms and values are different for different groups and ethnic groups, the question of how far an individual can go in upholding his values, even when they contradict the laws of the community can clearly be resolved by exposing individual and community to embrace the principle of the interconnectedness of enlightened freedom and shared value system of harmony and peaceful coexistence as inevitable. It is also important to note that positioning of one's interests and attitudes alongside other people's understanding is necessary for dialogue, to develop a common basis of agreement, a comfortable social order and harmony.

References

Donnelly, J. (2007). "The Relative Universality of Human Rights." *Human Rights Quarterly* 29(2)

Dzobo, N. K. (1992) The Image of Man in Africa. In Wiredu, K. and Gyekye K. (eds.). *Person and Community: Ghanaian Philosophical Studies*. Washington DC: Council for Research in Values and Philosophy.

Eze, O. M. (2008) "What is African Communitarianism? Against Consensus as a Regulative Ideal." *South African Journal of Philosophy*, 27(4).

Famanikwa, J. (2010). How moderate is Kwame Gyekye's moderate communitarianism? *Thought and Practice: A Journal of the Philosophical Association of Kenya* 2.

Gyekye, K. (2003) Person and Community in African Thought. In Coetzee, P. H. & Roux, A. P. J. (eds.). *The African Philosophy Reader*. New York: Routledge.

Gyekye, K. (1997) *Tradition and Modernity*: Philosophical Reflections on the African Experience. New York: Oxford University Press.

Mbiti, J. S.(1969) *African religions and philosophy*. New York: Praeger Publishers.

Menkiti, 1. A. (2006) On the Normative Conception of a Person. In Wiredu, K. (ed.). *A companion to African Philosophy*. Malden: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.

Oyowe, O.A. (2013). Individual and community in contemporary African moral-political philosophy. *Philosophia Africana*, 15(2).

Oyowe, O. A. (2013a) "Personhood and Social Power in African Thought." *AlterNation*.

Shutte, A. (2001) *Ubuntu: An Ethic for the New South Africa*. Cape Town: Cluster Publications.