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THE SOCIOPOLITICAL IMPERATIVES OF KWAME NKRUMAH'S PHILOSOPHICAL CONSCIENCISM: AN ECLECTIC PHILOSOPHY

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Abstract

The concept of modernity is characterized by force and voluntary recognition of the multi-culturality of human-existence, and Nkrumah extols the virtue of this intercultural dialogue of many collaborative efforts that characterize the principles of modernity in Africa, to formulate his philosophical consciencism. He models a new African consciousness in the characteristics of the expectations of modernity in Africa. Nkrumah as one of the foremost post colonial leaders in Africa, explores the ideal of the political blueprint of African government in the marriage of triads of cultures within the panoply of indigenous African tradition, Euro-Judeo-Christian tradition and Islamic tradition in Africa as a model or paradigm of cultures that suites the governance of the post colonial African states. It is a kind of hybridization of cultural identities that will bring the workability of government in Africa. The findings of the study therefore, corroborate the thesis that the political independence of the post colonial African states without eclectic triads or dual of cultural identities will result in conflict of interest. Consciencism therefore, is a philosophy and ideology for decolonization with particular reference to the African revolution in spite of its numerous set-backs with the North Atlantic Slave Trade, colonialism, and neo-colonialism in Africa. More so, on the nature philosophical consciencism, Nkrumah advocates the synergies between the concept of materialism and idealism. He bridges the hiatus of differences between them as separate school of thought within the trajectory of positive complimentarity. In human society, the individual has the character of both idealistic and materialistic tendencies in which they relates to the concept of the phenomenal world of reality. So, it is in this case, that the streaks characters of idealism and materialism do not exist in equipoise, they correlates in conflict of difference in which one streak predominates the other.

Keywords: **Philosophical Consciencism, Materialism, Idealism, Eclecticism, Cultural Ideology.**

Introduction

On the exposition of African civilization (i.e. post colonial period) in twentieth century, a number of forces combined to produce a revolution in many Africans' conception of the universe. The emergence of new African states has led to the complete repudiation of traditional belief systems in some cases and to a sharp modification of them in others. There is an intense conflict of social change dynamics of cultural history, like all others, must be brought into the linear spectrum of time, in which it must constantly renovate itself. Nkrumah, as a foremost figure of the African post colonial leaders, identifies some forms of three elements of traditions that are bewelding the Africa conceptions of modernity. Africa, in the

historical imagination has meant many things to different people. For the post colonial elites, it has been the site of hope, pain, trauma and ultimately restoration of the African past glory through the electical marriage of new cultural traditions in Africa. Thus, it is in this conjecture, that Nkrumah designed a new model of the African sociopolitical consciousness, as a new conscience of the African political thought into the avalanche of the African personality, in the modern age of human existentialism.

Literarily, it is under this trajectory that Nkrumah extols the virtue of African real identity to converge the classes of traditions in the new post colonial African states. Thus, under this spell, he found that the question of African identity is multidimensional, and it is significantly an ontological question. In this respect, "it is basically a question about the nature of a subject" (B. Garret, 1998:3). "Identity is an individuating element of being; it accounts for separateness of a being" (Olu-Owolabi & Ekanola, 2013:144).

Relating to this Nkrumah sees the concept of African identity from the summation of those charactetistics whereby we are different from others, perhaps, a different nature from the pre-colonial African states to the expectation to modernity. He observes it from a common ground of a new African state that is different from the old. It is the sphere of the community or the social level that indicates the common ground that unifies subjects with other subjects of the same people in the political community of post colonial African states.

This view has led to the change that according to Nkrumah, Africans must unite all their sociopolitical and cultural differences, the African indigenous tradition, the Europe-Judeo-Christian tradition and the Arabic-Islamic traditional culture in Africa. All these traditions should come together as a political community.
Wiredu (1980:154) corroborated this by saying:

> We are not only seeking modes of political and social organization best suited to the requirements of rapid development, but also engaged in re-appraising, changing and adapting our traditional culture under specialty of a foreign influence that came to us first in the form of colonialism (Wiredu, 1980:154).

Quintessentially, as a result of the North Atlantic slave trade and colonialism, many things have happened in Africa and these things are changing the political landscape of the African post colonial states. This is at the instance of modernity in Africa and the cultural matrix of the existing relations has been destroyed with the influence of modernity in Africa. Modernity with its re-organization of institutions and social condition of states, destroys the African ontology. It is in consonance with this, that Nkrumah adopted the eclectic philosophical consciencism to build a new model of Africa State that will stand to be ideological with the strands of modernity in Africa. This relates to the justification of triad of ethno-cultural identities in Africa that will shield for the protection of purity and stability in the new post colonial states. Knowledge is not static, but it is dynamic in cultural revolutions, and their point of departure is dialectical. Knowledge is dialectically related to reality and that they are always in dialectical movement. Truth is dialectical continually changing and as elusive as it is real. As Nkrumah rationalizes it, this is reflective and actively re-directive existence of human beings in relation to a continually changing and relational world. Africa must unite and move forward in all spheres of human development, because, the concept of time in

Africa is not limited to the past, it also has its own extension to the present and future. The past in relations to the Nkrumah's philosophical consciencism is in fact, very anarchronistic, and need to remodel along the global contents of modernity, which is purely based on the heteronometivity of culture of pluralism in Africa.

Nkrumah's Consciencism: an Eclectic Philosophy

Eclecticism is an analytic principle of philosophy. It is an epistemic framework of analysis, combining different segmented opposing paradigm with the intension of a harmoniously mutual existentialism. It is the idea that people should create things that are responsible for the good of the environment in which they live, they create a new culture through the principle of philosophical eclectism, if the society is not socially arranged. Thus, under this trajectory, they create resources that would benefit every member of the society. Hence, this understanding of the dimensions of social change is to enable them stand to the test of modernity with the structure of different fragmented society. It is on a related note, regarding this that Nkrumah is trying to galvanize the post colonial experience, modernity and globalization into a new set of Africa paradigm. He critically opposed to the standard of the old pre colonial African state, as that could not be matched with the existing culture of modernity. Modernity, so far, proves to constitute complex problems of profound attitudinal and cultural platform of transformations. In doing this, a creative cross-cultural paradigm of a socio-political order in the formation of a new modern state in Africa.

From epistemological considerations, Njoku opines that a philosophical eclectism is not dependable on a particular method or a unified system of thought. According to him, "the process of not following one or a particular style or set of ideas in philosophical inquiry choosing from or using a wide variety of doctrines or theories in course of analyzing or interpreting realities or phenomena" (Njoku, 2014:63).

By implication, this ecletism epistemology as enunciated by Njoku expresses the preview of Nkrumah's ecletic philosophy of consciencism. This is because it entails the integration of different cultural traditions in Africa.

In what remains, I argue that the philosophical eclectism in Nkruma's view, presupposes the principle of Externalization", "Objectivation", "Internalization", "Institutional Roles", Deinstitutionalization" and "Plausibility". It is a kind of social arrangement that require to create resources that would benefit every member in the political society.

It is a kind of political paradigm for mutual harmonious existentialism. It implies blending of different cultural identities of value system, with the intension of promoting genuine socio-political and economic development within the paradigm of eclecticism and dialectical process. It is a kind of consensus of ideas within the essential elements of its values that are compatible in forming a new structural model of ideology. It promotes humanism in the sense of mutual harmony on the concept of common good in the political community. It has been critically laminated with the acceptance of multiculturalism as a formal way of modernity. It is under this consideration that Rousseau invigorated the idea of philosophical eclecticism by highlighting that equality is a fair compromise between varying contracting groups. "if no party has any threat advantage over any other, and if principles are not arbitrarily tailored to

favour any particular group, then equally one person, one vote – seems to be the favoured result" (Bowie and Simon, 1986:123).

The underlying principle of this theory, in the opinion of Rousseau is to reconcile the contradictory ideas which are not compatibly united into a well constructed state with all inclusive ideology. Considering this, is an affirmation that there is philosophical eclecticism in Kwame Nkrumah's consciencism, which is an amalgamation of different cultural traditions in African post colonial states.

Nkrumah's Philosophical Consciencism:
A Quest for Identity in Expectations of Modernity in Africa

Kwame Nkrumah was one of the foremost African nationalist that proposed for a new political and economic order in postcolonial Africa. His contribution to the material and non-material development of the African states knows no bounds, to the point that he became the symbol of the African freedom and unity. Nkrumah, quintessentially, has contributed immensely to the formation of Pan Africanist Movement and in the concept of Africanism which led to the formation of the concept of African Personality, the freedom of the oppressed people of Africa all over the world, and not just the African independence. Nkrumah tirelessly worked for Africa and its principled advancement to the state of forming a regional government for the post colonial African state. In reaction to his understanding of the social and material conditions of African during his time, Nkrumah developed and espoused certain ideas and theories that he thought would accelerate the full development of his African state of Ghana.

Interestingly, with many of these theories of thought, he wrote the philosophical consciencism to use it to form a new Ghanaian national identity. "It is the map in intellectual terms of disposition of forces which will enable African society to digest the Western and Islamic, and the Euro-Christian elements in Africa, and develop them in such a way that they fit into the African personality" (Nkrumah, 1980:79). Literarily, on the sphere of African personality, he asserts that "the African personality is itself defined by the cluster of humanist principles which underlies the Traditional African Society" (Nkruma, 1980:79). Consciencism is an epistemological content of African philosophy of humanism in the general idea of Ubuntu dialogic ethic of political community. It relates to the idea of collaboration, inclusiveness, collectivity and reciprocity. It is the need to unite Africa through an ideology which is essentially Africa. Thus, "Consciencism as Africanism reflect a philosophy which is African in content" (Benson, 1965:6).

At the time of the development of consciencism, at the post colonial period, the African states have three dominant sociopolitical ideologies of identity. The traditional indigenous identity, the Islamic-Arabic identity and Euro-Christian identity, Nkrumah's philosophical consciencism is therefore seen as a synthesis of the three arms of ideologies in Africa. It is a kind of a philosophical unity blend out of the best features of existing three African ideologies. It is a dialectical representation out of the three strands in post colonial African States.

Thus, in consonance with this, Nkrumah creates a particular theoretical-philosophical inconsistency in his theory by attempting to bridge the hiatus (gab) between two fundamentally opposing view of philosophy. In consciencism, Nkrumah's affirmation of the fundamental philosophical materialistic character of his philosophical consciencism and his

subsequent declaration of the essentially non-atheistic nature of the same philosophy is, in the final analysis, an attempt to reconcile the two theoretically polarized schools of philosophy, idealism and materialism. Considerably, it is in this light that Kozharov commented on the natural and historic struggle of the two opposing philosophical school of thought. Corroborating this, he asserts that "the history of philosophic thought in its profound essence has been above all, a history of the struggle between the two fundamental philosophical trends – materialism and idealism" (Kozharov, 1972:59).

More so, George Novack (1965) has given more clarity to this, he asserts that materialism and idealism do not exhaust the field of philosophy, but they dominate it. They reciprocally determine not only the main course of their development but the real positions of the school oscillating between them. They provide the guiding lines of philosophical analysis and not to lost in oblivion.

Given that philosophical consciencism is based upon matter (materialsm), Nkrumah argues and seeks to reconcile these two opposing world views. He says that in this form:

> "The assertions… I put forward as philosophical consciencism are … two field first, there is the assertion of the absolute and independent existence of matter, second, there is the assertion of the capacity of matter for spontaneous self-motion. To the extent of these two initial assertion, philosophical consciencism is deeply materialistic" (Nkrumah, 1980:79)

He upholds this to be based on materialism, but also demonstrates his disdain for idealism as a tool to understand reality. According to him, "idealism favours oligarchy; materialism favours an egalitalianism" (Nkrumah, 1980:79). He also declares that both are not in juxtaposition, but occurs in expression of reality. The unity and fundamental identity of nature suggests the unity and fundamental identity of man is society.

He is of the thinking that, by reason of the connection of idealism with an oligarcy and of materialism with an egalitarianism, opposition of idealism and materialism in the same society is paralled by the opposition of conservative and progressive forces on a social level.

Finally, in his philosophical consciencism, he tried to contrapose the gap between materialism and idealism by ensuring that matter is only effective transformation of nature. So, it is in this trajectory that consciencism is seen as a revolutionary materialist philosophy in its concept, and dialectical in its method. Consequently, it is in this light that consciencism goes on to be a philosophy based on the principles that include the following:

i. Matter is the sources of all knowledge
ii. The mind has its distinctive existence irrespective of its matter based product.
iii. There is always point of dualism between matter and spirit.

Thus, given in this order, the basis of philosophical consciencism therefore, deals with the principle of a categorical conversion from the either ways, that is from the concept of the mind to the object of matter, or from the thought of something to something that it represents in the real world of reality. The body and mind do exist, but they differs and thus, from different

things. They are in fact one and the same thing. They call matter the primary thing because, while we can arrange matter to produce mind, we cannot produce matter by an arrangement of minds.

The categories of mind and matter do exist but the one (mind) can be converted into the other (matter). The suggestion of practical dualism of matter while at the same time is understood to be monist, is the very essence of the philosophical consciencism. It is although, deeply rooted in materialism is not necessarily atheistic because it updates the conscience of being and nothingness.

Conclusion

Conclusively, in a quest for a critical understanding of African identity in the expectation of modernity, Nkrumah extols the virtue of a categorical conversion between materialism and idealism and between the categories of different cultural ideological traditions in Africa and an epistemological model of authentic existence of modernity in Africa. These invariably are conjectures of his postulations of the philosophical cosnciencism in the expectations of modernity in Africa.

A consequence of it is crises of identity for Africa and Africans. The thought of African independence and post colonial leadership capital, provide in the search for solutions to this crisis of identity. In the light of this proposition, this paper uses the phenomenological method of philosophical consciencism to calibrate the authentic structure of Africa post colonial states into formidable arms of nationhoods in Africa. Africa can still possess and establish its identity positively, in spite of its numerous setbacks with the concept of North Atlantic Slave trades and colonialism in African continent. More so, modernity with its re-organization and social conditions of states brought in a new structure of governance in Africa. It elevates the status of leadership capital into the integration of new system and structures of governance in Africa. The approach calls for a critical understanding of the true essence of African states at the post colonial period and synthesize all it elements of structures into a formidable statehood with the existence of modernity.

In fact, that is how to resolve the growing number of malcontents of modernity in Africa. Nkrumah at this juncture, feels the renegotiation of link between the cultural traditional ideologies of history into a united whole. There must be renegotiation of cultural styles, so as to remove the illusions of modernity, and to unify subjects with other subjects. Nkrumah believes in the assemblies of the community of persons with whom we claim affinity, and by the nature of this affinity, we regard as one with us. Thus, it is as such, that similarity and difference are they defining elements of our identity in Africa. The different cultural identity cannot be a true essence of our division, opposition and contradictions and as that we are all Africans, we must forge ahead to live in the context of community of being.

Consistently, Mall expresses the same position:

> Culture in complementary polarity to nature stands for all sorts of performance, achievements, and products of the human mind… philosophy is undoubtedly born in particular cultures and thus is local in character, but is not exhausted in any one of its manifold local manifestations… (Mall, 2000:4).

This is based on the notion of cultural identities that the idea of the Nkrumah's philosophical consciencism as a socio-political pattern is the matrix of logic of a consensus. The dialogic of cultural ideologies in the expectations of modernity in Africa. For this, Nkrumah calls for a new multidimensional African States phenomenon in the expectations for modernity, must be formed from concatenation of various factors: the biological, the social, the religious must be in unison of nationhood in post colonial African states.

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