

BLACK CONSCIOUSNESS PHILOSOPHY AND THE POLITICS OF ANTIBLACK CULTURE

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ABSTRACT

The essay aimed at appraising the socio-political and developmental contents and values of the Steve Biko's Black Consciousness Philosophy (BCP). It is a course for achieving a humanized African communality of ideological and pragmatic relevance and then engendering vibrant *Politics of Responsibility*. It demands that such consciousness of development should be through the sustainability of African Cultural Identities (ACIs), based on the principles of solidarity and sincerity of purpose as against the factors of conditioned greed and avarice that have been engineering and sustaining *Culture of War* in Africa. The pragmatic sense of *Culture of War* has been an enduring developmental consciousness conditioned in the colonized minds of Africans by the *Whiteness of History*, a consciousness of the supremacy of white culture over the black culture. Hence, this essay is aimed at reawakening the Black's strengths and mentalities towards their communitarian development on truth and trust, especially for the decolonization of African minds through effectual embraces of ACIs as against some sustained consciousness of *Whiteness of History*- the Politics of Antiracial Culture (PAC) by some "antiracial black" leaders and administrators. This essay concluded that, as a remedy to egoistic-particularistic development of imperialistic and consumerist interests and values duly presented by *Whiteness of History* that is occasioned by *Culture of War*, and on the needs of achieving *Culture of Peace* through the sustainability of ACIs which the Africans are contemporarily losing through diplomatic PAC.

Keywords: BCP, *Blackness of History*, Politics of Antiracial Culture (PAC), *Culture of War*, African Cultural Identities (ACIs), *Politics of Responsibility*, *Whiteness of History*

INTRODUCTION

Beyond the social-political influences, academic discourses and ethno-cultural biases for racial interests and affiliations should constantly occasioned African development in the midst of global diplomatic values and ideologies. With which, we remembered the political, cultural and development convictions of Steve Biko on the indispensable valuing of African Cultural Identities (ACIs) through Black Consciousness Philosophy (BCP). He was a politically recognized personality, even beyond the shores of Negro-civilization. Biko's ideological convictions were greatly influential based on the identity of African Blackness. He was a well-known South African socio-political campaigner and as a human right activist had become a literary gift, especially for the regeneration of developmental trust and finesse in advancing African Blackness. With BCP, Biko had shown a great deal for African developmental concerns through decolonized reformation

of the African minds. With the consciousness to sustain the need of ACIs that promote *Culture of Peace* in Africa, Biko did not wrote on and advocated for what he really and only liked, but that which he was wholly convinced of, which is, the liberation of Africa and Africans. He was logically and culturally bred African, who longed for the sustainability of ACIs based on the values of trust and truth, being expressed in right conscience and freedom.

Hence, for Biko, the cultural cosmology of black consciousness of development remains an “ethics of otherness” for the Africans (Cf, Biko 1978: 34). With the *Blackness of History*, Biko and other African socio-political thinkers and ideologists recognized that the courses of societal development are the progressive unfolding acts of the inner potentialities of a given reality. To develop is to bring out to light existential and epistemic functions of what was enveloped, folded, or hidden. As it implies to the Africans, development is the integration of the various natural, physical, acquired and humane, of a people towards the full working out permanently and cumulatively of their being as persons of their community and their real productivity (see, Iroegbu 1994: 81; Iroegbu & Izibili 2004: 100; Abudu and Izibili 2018: 290). Such consciousness is about the reawakening of the Black racial strengths and mentalities towards the factors of trust and truth that promote their integral communitarianism, and then politically engenders the values of ACIs in the world of ideological values. This will be seem to be possible through the decolonization of African minds and the disorientation of the undue effectuality of *Whiteness of History* in African society- that is, unguided sensibility of “Politics of Antiblack Culture” (PAC) (See, Sithole 2016: 12). This resides in their blackness as a cultural and personalistic identity of values, morals, togetherness and communality.

Such elements of the Politics of Antiblack Culture are antithetical to African communitarianism is purely developmental meditation on the lived-experiences occasioned by colonialization, subjugation, and slavery (See, Oladipo 2006: 60; Olukoshi 2014: 10; Okoro 2017: 280). Like Steve Biko’s decolonial meditation of black consciousness, we also recall the socio-political relevance of the philosophies of Julius Nyerere’s *Ujamaa* (a philosophy that was predicated on the abolition of colonial English language and the adoption of Swahili as the basis of nationalism in Tanzania), Sekou Toure’s *Communaucratique*, Leopold Senghor’s *Negritude* (on the indispensability of the *Blackness of History* amongst other continental and racial histories); Kenneth Kaunda’s *African Humanism* and Kwame Nkrumah’s *Consciencism*. They were good referenced reformers who have seen their needs for the decolonization of the African minds in order to engender the values of ACIs (See, Falaiye 2012: 13; Isanbor 2016: 88). These identities remain useful tools for rallying around the Africans with common ontologico-cultural faith and reasoning to fight against a common enemy of sustainable African development, who believed that the Africans are lesser humans and they cannot be responsible in managing their continental or regional affairs in achieving *Culture of Peace*, especially political engineering, reformation and sustainability.

The summation of these ACIs indicates that the ideas of development are seated on the wholeness of human cultural existentiality. This is on the consideration of indispensable composition of the body and the spirit or the soul that defined the individual cosmological coloration as a person and as a member of a racial and cultural community (see, Iroegbu 1994: 82; Iroegbu & Izibili 2004: 102; Abudu & Izibili 2018: 291). Biko’s conception of *Blackness of History* remains a reminder to the values of ACIs to fight PAC, and then, the sustainability of BCP in restoring *Culture of Peace* as against *Culture of War*, being occasioned by the *Whiteness of History* in African continent. With this consciousness of the human wholeness, the African community needs to be schooled religiously and culturally on the indispensability of *Culture of Peace* with due respect to

other racial order. Why? If by African religious and cultural practices, the African community can be or may be very elusive to the values of the *Culture of Peace*, especially on their own development, without the manipulation of the *Whiteness of History*.

WHITENESS OF HISTORY AND THE INCREASING CONSCIOUSNESS FOR THE CULTURE OF WAR IN AFRICA

As a process of change and development, BCP is to serve as a counterpoint of self-awareness and self-awakening of the ontologized Africanness, a mentality of trust and truth beyond the effects of racial coloration. This is by presenting something different, something somehow alien to the west, which will serve as the special characteristic for the African existence, identity and personality especially as distinguished from other racial colorations and affiliations (See, Oladipo 2006: 61; Olukoshi 2014: 11; Okoro 2017: 281). The philosophy of *Negritude* (Blackness) with the contemporary morphology as BCP is an effort to counter the pride and the psychological domination of the western culture, where Africans have been struggling to be freed from the *Whiteness of History* and the imposing neo-colonialism. Existentially, the sensibility of PAC has been represented in the forms of political and diplomatic structures for the denial of black existential freedom and in some intercontinental economic slavery.

With the colonized consciousness still running in the minds of disguised decolonized Africans, especially the antiblack black leaders, the black world has been besieged and weighed down with effects of poverty, insecurity, shortage of food, especially Angola, Chad, Equatorial Guinea, Democratic Republic of Congo and Nigeria, been occasioned by warranted by callousness, insensitivity and indifference of the people (see, Anagwo 2020: 29; Ehusani 1991: 21, Ikhuonobe 2017: 50). Then, the blacks need to recognize the existential relevance in changing their situations. The situations based the thrusts of ethical principles for common survival depends on the realization of *Culture of Peace* than *Culture of War*. For peace, properly so called, is by far more than mere absence of war and violence. Often there are no war and violence, but there is no peace. It is about the culture of winning in war and then winning for peace. It is about the culture that is against the propagations and operations of mere raw power, naked fear strategy, unbridled subjugate egoism and crass militarism inherent in diplomatic relations of power-drunk nations (Cf, Ujomu & Olatunji 2015: 43; Ogbujah 2020: 128). With these factors of conflict-driven development, the African persons have increasingly put themselves in danger and constantly live in fears and trembling for uncertainty of wars presenting to them by the products and employment of science and technology at the present and especially in the future in the hands of *Whiteness of History*..

With social intercourse of African persons and their politics, ethics and culture, the Africans have not being able to separate the evident functionalities of Western religion, politics, culture and economy inherent in contemporary African existence (Cf, Oladipo 2006: 62; Olukoshi 2014: 12; Okoro 2017: 283). But, for Biko, African's *Culture of War* is racially self-engineered and self-inflicted into African consciousness by the *Whiteness of History*, a culture of self-deceit on the need of self-hatred of the Africans by the Africans as blacks, with little or no worth to manage their own affairs and resources. That is, PAC built in the minds of the same Africans, the misguided and self-conceited African leaders, Biko recognized this shortfall of developmental ideology by *Whiteness of History* as against the blackness of civilization, depicts the existentiality of "Mark of

Bad Faith” of ACIs, owing to the racial built mentality of inferiority complex and then the sustainability of the political covens of destruction and subjugation, that is, the *Culture of War*.

As globally imposing, this *Whiteness of History* is what Kez Ugbor-Gabriel refers to “Whiteness Racialized Identity” which has been developmentally and contemporarily imposing its misguided or deceptive values and relevance on the “World Affairs” as “Global Reformulation of Hegemonic Whiteness.” It has become a global ideological trait of values, even in industry, politics and morality. It presents itself as “Normative Cultural Power” that promote hegemonic values of *Culture of War* by the corporative productive and recognition of “Super Powers”: the membership that is determinable with the acquisition and possession of Nuclear Weapons and Powers. Such membership creates the industrialized demarcation of regional or national spaces of values through economic subjugations and controls of World Commonwealth (where, the African wealth as a global commonwealth, and the African common problems as only and solely Africans. Where, Western values and cultures as global ones to be commonly embraced by all; and Western wealth as only Western, not common or global but imperialistic and patriotically particular).

According to Biko’s BCP, as within the sensibility of PAC, the theatre of operation of the economic and political imposing *Whiteness of History* situates the colonizing the African minds. It is a siege of Hatred of their values and ideologies of development- a racial coloration of interests. For Ugbor-Gabriel, “Whiteness is a uniquely racialized and racializing identity and cultural power expression constituted in dominance, normality and privilege” (Ugbor-Gabriel 2013: 373). It shows the courage of supremacy even in the pools of self-limitations and egoism that are besieged by selfishness and greed, been presented to human race through globalization. Hence, “the global generalization of Whiteness as a unique form of cultural-ideological dominance underlies, ranks with, and has been integral to the major historical articulations, modes and means of transnational power exertion” (Ugbor-Gabriel 2013: 373). This raciality of Western interests and values, through the ideological-hegemonic projects or imperialistic diplomatic politics, is mainly to reform the so-called the under-developed nations, without transforming or superseding, both the unequal white-racialized world only in African world.

By imposing Western values through global morphology of development and civilization, the “Normative Cultural Power” recognizes its culture only as a measure to determine the fate of other nations (see, Iroegbu 1994: 81; Iroegbu & Izibili 2004: 100; Abudu & Izibili 2018: 292). By so going, the *Whiteness of History* regards the Black cultural groupings as nations that cannot govern themselves as sovereign political and constituted entities. It gives no due regards to African existential imports of originality or ontological functionality of racial relevance, that is, the *Blackness of History* (See, Oladipo 2006: 64; Olukoshi 2014: 14; Okoro 2017: 284). It is a political raciality or imperialistic rascality of whitewash-tomb supremacy of political and economic fraternity that has been contemporarily sustained by the culture of globalism based on a shared consumerist and imperialistic values. It is a fraternity breeding the continuous consciousness for *Culture of War* in Africa. It is a strong deceptive orgasm and fraternity of values that glory in imperialistic conditioning of economic affairs and the subjugation of other ontological recognitions, developmentally and diplomatically, through the culture of anti-racial *Politics of Responsibility*. It is a consciousness of political egoism based on racial complexity of *Whiteness of History*.

Due to long influences of PAC, life in contemporary Africa has been a contradiction of the traditional African authentic living that is originally defined by the sense of communitarian

sincerity and harmony for shared happy ending. The contemporary Africa does not or has not been reflecting the communitarian idea of human dignity in practice, due to the influences of the subjugated and imperialistic, even suppressive materialism and consumerism as a foundational model of global development, occasioned in the minds of some self-conceited decolonized African leaders. With such debased consciousness of development, ACIs have been sacrificed on the altars of socio-political greed, corruption, avarices, bad governance and moral secularism. The Africans are practically returning to the Hobbean ‘state of nature’ where life is short, nasty and brutish, as for example, Xenophobic attacks in South Africa, *Boko Haram* Insurgence, banditry and indiscriminate kidnapping in Nigeria, are becoming common identities that are defining our contemporary histories. In all, insecurity in Africa is now “the New Normal”, people no longer feel safe anywhere due to the fear of terrorism. We still have high rate of unemployment, non-payment of salaries and neglect of pensions occasioned by poor management of human and natural resources. Then; where all these factors of fears and conflicts are strongly evident in our society, there can be the possibility of the *Culture of Peace*, rather, the *Culture of War*. This will remain if the blacks refuse to the forces of ACIs and be responsible for our actions, especially as leaders who have been the promoters of PAC in the ships of decolonized “antiblack blacks” motivated by the *Whiteness of History*. The blacks are to be responsible for the current situation the African continent finds itself as an entity.

EXISTENTIALITY OF THE *BLACKNESS OF HISTORY*: RECOGNISING THE ONTOLOGICAL FUNCTIONALITY OF CULTURE

With such concern for the decolonization of the African minds, we develop the mindset to remind ourselves the values of the *Blackness of History* which has been ontologically associated with ACIs. They are known to be black in the existential representation and cosmological appearance. The *Blackness of History* as a sustained socio-cultural doctrine of *Negritude* (Blackness) is the whole complex of civilized values, cultural, economic, social and political which characterize the black peoples or precisely the negro-African world. All these values are essentially formed by intuitive reason, which expresses itself emotionally through that self surrendered to fate of existence based on the values of hope for better future, rather than cultural and racial dismay and absurdity. It is beyond the influences of myths and folklores. It is above all primordial rhythms that synchronized the personalities of cosmological constellations. This defined ACIs through their quest for unity, trust and justice. Existentially, the culture of anti-blackness has been represented in the forms of political and diplomatic structures for the denial of existential freedom associated by the Blacks.

With this consciousness, Biko recognizes that ACIs are to be situated within the sociological and communitarian valuing of African culture and development. As understandably put, BCP, as a remedy to particularistic development that does not consider the personalistic development in accordance with its cultural heritages and identity, as a basis of history along the values of lived experiences occasioned by slavery and colonization (Iroegbu 1994; Iroegbu & Izibili 2004; Abudu & Izibili 2018). Without such consciousness, there will be loss of history even the midst of histories, as the loss of a history is a history itself. It takes a rational civilization to keep the values of history in the minds in order the change of values of the future.

BCP emphasizes the developmental relevance of the blackness of African purposefulness as an indispensable identity of social and political engineering of the Blacks themselves in the midst of other racial groupings, based on the values of human life, rights and dignity. The Africans are very sure and sincere with their skin coloration. The coloration is about cultural identity of values not merely appearance. For culture is a covering all that is formed intentionally and purposely by humans, as product of same progeny, as a subject of lived experiences who have been changing their surrounding reality- that is the world and themselves as a community according to their own concepts and plans. As basically recognised, culture and its practices remain the process for the transformation of nature that leaves on it a sign that is essentially human. Culture remains a way of life and living that embraces everything of which the human person is at once the centre, the subject and the object. It includes all his or her capabilities, both as an individual and as one who lives in society (Cf, Njoku 2008: 16; Isanbor 2016: 85; Isanbor 2017: 65).. For culture humanises persons, manners and institutions. The Africans are black, even when all of them are not really black in appearance. They are black ontologically in their values of life and living. This consciousness necessarily and indispensably defines their existentiality and sociality. With such consciousness, they are readily and ontologically sure of their personality and identity as Africans. This is on the fact that the Blacks have the abilities to think and develop themselves, not to be colonized and subjected by the *Whiteness of History*.

Against the *Blackness of History* which defines ACIs, PAC as a blind freedom guaranteed by the *Whiteness of History* continually and invariably promotes individualist, monistic and reductionist consciousness of development, and these mentalities remain antithetical to the African thought system form the hallmarks of Western metaphysical system of a truthful deception of wills and interests. The resultant effect of this metaphysical system put the development of the African society on the dangerous path such as the promotion of corruption, avarices and greed in the minds of African leaders. The developmental impulses inherent in BCP as an ethical logic of self-liberation and self-emancipation promote African personality and identity beyond the influences of colonized culture of greed, avarice and corruption. Biko was logically existential in analyzing African's struggles for independence, especially the South Africans. Where, he believed; according to the phenomenological consequentialism of *Blackness of History*, that if there is a Logic of *Whiteness of History*, there is also the Logic of *Blackness of History*, indispensably, undoubtedly and ontologically.

Hence, the existential scandal of neo-colonial developmental consciousness caused by Anti-black racist culture projected BCP as an incisive logic of change in an anti-black African society. This anti-racist culture owes that the existence that denies the black subject existence is also denied by BCP. It clearly means that there will be no obedience in the existential condition of subjection, but fierce opposition. This is the opposition that is also epistemic in practice in which the black subjects are now educated about their worth and sense of self and they are reinvigorated by the philosophy of being, life and hope, always to better the lots of the imperialistic culture which fashioned the contents and values of such education (Sithole, p. 168). This self-conceited and selfish, and probably misguided *Politics of Responsibility*, presupposed to sustained incisive racist community, and to be promoted by the neo-colonial African leaders. It is to project and sustain social ignorance of common human liberation of minds. For Biko, such consciousness remains detrimental to the growth of the Black community which existence should not be dependable on the whiteness of personality and history.

ENGENDERING BCP AND DISORIENTING ANTIBLACK DEVELOPMENTAL POLITICS

For Biko, there are enduring marks of black faith, especially the presence of the “antiblack blacks’ in African political landscape. The thought of BCP existentially explicates the failure of the liberation actions of the blacks as “the Mask of Bad Faith”. It is a philosophy of freedom being exercised as a complimentary hinge for the protection of human rights and dignity, especially for the Blacks, not as subjection of their interests. This was the condition of the South Africans at as when BCP is directed to champion socio-political re-engineering of the African minds towards their development. The contrary, which has been common to them as a result of colonization, “is to be in bad faith. Understandably, “bad faith incapacitates the will to freedom and blind any form of political imagination” (Sithole, p. 81). With the difficulties associated the cultural and political explanations of the bad faith of African blackness amongst the communalities of colors in the world, Biko exulted the normalization of the ontological sense of self-belongingness of the Africans which defines the characterization of every continental personality, considering the Freedom Charter as a philosophical catalyst of such demarcations of histories and civilization of racial values and endings. This symbolizes Biko’s subjectivity for the dominance of BCP, especially to the South Africans. He further recognizes the manipulation of law associated with the Racist State created by the Whites against the Blacks, that the Blacks were caught in the webs and ideas of servitude by the arbitrary law created by the Whites with fears and prejudice as racist infrastructures of South Africa especially, which has been contemporarily extended to some others African nations, on the illogicality of language in the administration of such law in violence, beyond the propaganda of apartheid but PAC of governance and relevance..

This is about the recognition of common African humanness which indispensably ends in death. For death does not end the African personhood. The humanness of the Blacks presupposes indispensably existentiality of death in their minds, lives beyond death. For the commonness of African life and death presupposes that the values of “oneness, harmony, mutuality, and interdependence are central to most African culture’s conception of existence because everything that is exists as a being with others. Life in the world is so interlinked that to upset one aspect of it is to begin to put an end to the whole of it” (Uwenze 2021: 1). With such conceptual ruggedness of the African person, the developmental meditations on BCP will remain a phenomenology of gift for the socio-political reawakening and restructuring of the African minds for the sustainability of ACIs. Thereby, it projects that BCP is a good faith that readily exposed what apartheid and the logic of whiteness has had in black soil (see, Sithole, p. 83). BCP is about the rejection of colonial ideologies and laws that subjugate the Blacks; and making such subjections remain as masks in the faces of the Blacks.

Biko’s pragmatic conceptualization of BCP is to develop the consciousness of the *Politics of Responsibility* through African culturally-oriented ideologies of development. For the “*Politics of Responsibility* for responsibility itself rests on the principle that the current existential conditions should be radically changed and there should be no compromise” (Sithole, p. 37). For the sake of the *Culture of Peace*, such politics of development must be holistic and sustainable in considering the .application of BCP. But, in recent times, it has been greatly observed that elements of ACIs have been absent in proper human socialization and civilization, even in both personal and communal circles (See, Oladipo 2006: 65; Olukoshi 2014: 15; Okoro 2017: 285). We are restating

what are dehumanizing Africans politically and economically rather than promoting them. In our times, we are neglecting human communal oneness and togetherness, the common cords of the *Culture of Peace*. In truth, we are currently resorting to fate in trying to sustain ACIs in the midst of poverty, starvation and forced migration, due to the culture of greed, corruption and selfishness we are creating ourselves as Africans.

CONCLUSION

The values of authentic African living necessarily presuppose the pragmatic and ontological considerations of ACIs through the sense of communal and accommodative development. This presupposes the values of integral humanism can be translated into the social conception of *Politics of Responsibility* to be reasonably situated and possibly meaningful only within one's actions and valued choices. This shows the overlaying and overlapping global natures of development, a sense of an indispensable dependence of all nations, especially for common survival (Cf, Njoku 2008: 20; Isanbor 2016: 90; Isanbor 2017: 70). These overlapping layers have been as a result of human's quests for advancement through one's innovations, ingenuities, freedom and intelligence, and such are to engineer one's happy earthly habitations and socialization, not limited to the ingenuity of a continental political sense of values.

In BCP, the sensibility of ACIs posits that, the Africans are 'to be responsible politically' so as to understand and manage our enduring years of common identity and personality with defines our communal otherness of living as against the *Culture of War* in African political and economic landscapes. This is to be humanized by the virtuously compromising with others in sustaining our common humanness and sense of solidarity. "It means that responsibility has to be carried out in full and its outcomes cannot be fruitful if it is compromised" (Sithole, p. 37) with the deceptions of *Whiteness of History*. Hence, with Biko's BCP, the Africans should direct the world of development and values to have some sense of humanized conscientious by contributing meaningfully and reasonably to the sustained consciousness of relevance for global symbiotic living, which will be dependent on the totality of our solidarity in truth and trust

Therefore, if the general convictions of this argument against the developmental influences of *Whiteness of History* in Africa are correct, then, it should not be difficult to answer the questions of what should be the African commitment on the values of *Blackness of History* through the *Politics of Responsibility*, that is, the knowledge of ACIs, as the sensibility of PAC that is breeding *Culture of War* in Africa. With positive and humanized commitments, the Africans should be ready to avoid the wars that can be avoided and the face the wars that cannot be avoided, that is, the wars of economic development that will be are sustainable and that can be reliable, based on their cultural and ethical ideologies and values. The Africans should not fight what they are, but they should reasonably and politically embrace what they are. To be what they are all moments at all times by believing that they can manage themselves and their resources without undue references to their limitations and weaknesses, as there is no culture or people without limitations and weaknesses. Such commitment to Africa should be about the loves for African hopes and aspirations, to be genuinely so, would have to be Africentric; and to place Africans at the centre of their minds in fashioning vibrant, sustainable and humanized ideologies and implementable policies of development.

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