

1 African communalism] into a uniformed ‘personality’ whose fundamental principle
 2 or ideology is socialist in nature” (Kwesi, 2017, p. 188), Consciencism—as outlined
 3 by Nkrumah (1970) himself—entailed a far more diverse set of principles that could
 4 combat a hegemony in a society, particularly a colonial one like his very own.
 5 Namely, Consciencism encompasses a syncretic thought paradigm, drawing from
 6 vast fields of philosophy such as: the pre-Socratic Greek philosophers (Thales,
 7 Anaxagoras, and Heraclitus), Aristotelian physics, Marxism, and the pan-
 8 Africanism of Padmore, Garvey, and Du Bois, whilst at the same time being a
 9 *prescriptive* force wherein, “The cardinal ethical principle [...] is to treat each man
 10 as an end in himself and not merely as a means [and that] *from a materialist*
 11 *viewpoint.*” (Nkrumah, 1970, p. 90).

12 If, thereby, Nkrumah’s Consciencism distinguishes itself from, for instance, the
 13 Kantian “Categorical Imperative” by virtue of its foundation resting on
 14 materialism—as opposed to a transcendental, prescriptive entity—it would be
 15 fallacious to assume that Nkrumah himself stops there in his inquiry. Rather, he goes
 16 on to state that Consciencism as a doctrine finds *primacy* in the material world, but
 17 is just as much influenced by the *dialectical change* thereof of this matter as a
 18 manifestation of Being, writing, “Consciencism, by avoiding the assertion of the
 19 sole reality of matter, prepares itself for the painless recognition of the objectivity
 20 of different types of being.” (Nkrumah, 1970, pp. 85 & 86). For Nkrumah (1970),
 21 Being is a multifocal condition not solely related to the material realm of physical
 22 dialectics, but rather exists as different modes that do not reject the influence of the
 23 immaterial realm of ideas, but, arguably, subscribe to their very influence for their
 24 existence: a notion he called *categorical conversion*.

25 Nkrumah’s 1964 text, *Consciencism: Philosophy and Ideology for*
 26 *Decolonization*, has been—and continues to be—considered a seminal text for pan-
 27 African thought. As a matter of fact, it is quite possible that this work—alongside
 28 his economical analytic of *Neo-colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism*—served
 29 a decisive role in instigating the CIA-backed *coup d’etat* of 1966 that removed him
 30 from power. Nevertheless, to stop with a geopolitical analysis of this peculiar,
 31 *borderline* doctrine would be to do a great injustice to its revolutionary nature—
 32 both in theory and praxis. Rather, this essay will argue for the application of the
 33 unique formulations of Being in Nkrumah’s Consciencism as they manifest within
 34 the ever-changing contemporary world dominated by technology where, arguably,
 35 the meaning of what it means to Be is subjected to an unprecedented degree of
 36 jeopardy. The meaning of what it means to Be, and how it differs from Existence is,
 37 however, what deserves to be explored and distinguished through the lenses of
 38 thinkers such as Thales, Anaxagoras, Aristotle, and Heidegger in order for us to be
 39 able to answer the above, first and foremost.

40
 41

1 **To Exist—Metaphysics and ‘What There Is’**

2
3 Since the advent of philosophy, ontological questions concerning Being and
4 Existence have been indubitably posited. The pre-Socratic philosophers—of whom
5 Thales was the progenitor—while largely investigating the metaphysics of matter,
6 nevertheless came to deduce the first naturalistic conception of reality: the
7 fundamental principle (*arche*) from which all matter structuring our reality is made
8 is water (Smith, 1867). Aristotle (n.d.), in his *Metaphysics*, justifies Thales’
9 conception of reality, writing:

10
11 “[Thales got] the notion [of water being the *arche*] perhaps from seeing that the
12 nutriment of all things is moist, and that heat itself is generated from the moist and kept
13 alive by it (and that from which they come to be is a principle of all things). He got his
14 notion from this fact, and from the fact that the seeds of all things have a moist nature,
15 and that water is the origin of the nature of moist things.” (p. 4).

16
17 Interpreting the above, it thus follows that water itself was considered the *causa*
18 *prima* of the world we find ourselves in—namely, that there cannot be any other
19 substance from which the first cause of a thing’s essence can come into being.
20 Nkrumah (1970) himself praised Thales’ metaphysics for the sheer reason that he
21 was the first Western philosopher to dispel the myth of divine, anthropomorphized
22 (or zoomorphized) creation. For, Thales—Nkrumah (1970) considered—was the
23 first naturalist, comparing him to Berkeley’s idealism wherein, “they both seek the
24 origins of the varieties of objects of the world in something which itself forms part
25 of the world.” (p. 12). For Berkeley, these were human ideas and perceptions,
26 whereas for Thales it was water (Nkrumah, 1970). Notwithstanding this, however,
27 Nkrumah (1970) emphasized that the Principle of Sufficient Reason, which outlines
28 that every effect has a cause, ends up contradicting itself when we set out to find out
29 the *cause* of this *causative effect* we call the *arche* of—in Thales’ case—water. If
30 there is such a ‘basic raw material’ out of which cosmogony runs its course, such as
31 water, then its cause must be its very own effect *qua causative effect*; the effect of
32 the *arche* of water must be the cause for its very own effect, which leads to a vicious
33 circle of infinite regress in causality (Nkrumah, 1970).

34 Drawing from this, Nkrumah (1970) further argued that this paradox of cause
35 and effect when it comes to substantial ‘first principles’, such as Thales’ water, leads
36 man to one of two axioms adopted: the theistic/deistic perspective, and the atheistic
37 one. In Nkrumah’s (1970) words:

38
39 “If, that is to say, the cosmic raw material is conceived to have an origin, then one
40 adopts a theist or a deist position. In either case one posits a force transcendent to the
41 cosmic raw material, and which occasions it. One is a theist if one supposes that this
42 transcendent force is nevertheless immanent after some fashion in what there is,
43 continuing to affect it one way or another. If, on the other hand, one holds the force to
44 be strictly transcendental, and excludes it from the world once made, then one is a deist.
45 If, however, the Principle of Sufficient Reason is thought not to apply to what there is,
46 and the world is thereby denied an outside, then one is an atheist. For this purpose,
47 pantheism is but a kind of atheism. It is atheism using theological language.” (p. 14)

1 For Nkrumah (1970), it follows that if we were to apply the Principle of
 2 Sufficient Reason to first principles/causes as substances, we would have to be
 3 transcending the *firstness* of said principles—in that we would be positing another,
 4 ultimate first cause that is an immaterial deity from which this first cause arises. This
 5 echoes in with the Aristotelian notion that there exists an *unmoved mover* as God
 6 who cannot have his own cause, and is, in thus a way, *unmoveable* (Aristotle, n.d.).
 7 Similarly, if we choose to not apply the Principle of Sufficient Reason to substantial
 8 first causes, we are treating them as un-deified *unmoved movers*, and taking an
 9 atheistic standpoint—which, for Nkrumah (1970), is no different to the pantheist
 10 who believes that the universe is, itself, God, for in both cases there is no dichotomy
 11 between ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ the world, or the immanent and the transcendental.

12 In spite of the above, however, attempting to find a ‘Godliness’ in the
 13 substantial universe, much akin to Thales’ own naturalistic monism, runs into
 14 another paradox of its own. Namely, if everything ought to come from water as its
 15 first cause, and water is a substance of the natural world with no supernatural
 16 elements (and thus no ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ dichotomy), is the universe composed
 17 of water finite, or infinite? If water is itself taken to be something capable of being
 18 *finitely* delineated—say, in a glass, or a pot when poured into it—then the first cause
 19 becomes a material cause, which Aristotle (n.d) was himself quick to point out when
 20 critiquing Thales’ philosophy, writing, “From these facts one might think that the
 21 only cause is the so-called material cause.” (p. 3). Namely, the water—in its finite
 22 delineation within the container concerned—divorces itself from an infinitude of
 23 spacetime by being solely in the *here and now* examined. It is, in other words,
 24 positioned as a *thing* in relation to the receptacle—in this case, spacetime—which
 25 ‘contains’ this thing, and delineates it from other things. In this way, spacetime is
 26 seen as something separate from the water that it contains, and delineates from other
 27 things-in-the-world; the opposition between ‘outside’ and ‘inside’ is again
 28 reinstated in the manner elucidated prior, where something is ‘within’ the world (ie.
 29 water), whilst spacetime itself behaves as ‘outside’ this *within-the-worldness* (*In-*
 30 *der-Weltlichkeit*). In such a way, the *thingness* of the finite water is fundamentally
 31 dependent on a Worldhood that is not—in the Heideggerian (1962) sense—
 32 dependent on it and its relations to other things, and other subjects *being-in-the-*
 33 *world* (*In-der-Welt-Sein*), but rather that Worldhood is always-already there before
 34 the *arche qua water*, its very first cause, comes to be. Such is, in this very way, a
 35 paradox, for this finitude would be, moreover, an essence itself of *the* first cause, as
 36 if that which is the progenitor of existing things in the world had a beginning or end
 37 that divorced it from the world it was present in—yet simultaneously comprising—
 38 through coordination (in the *here and now of spacetime*). Consequently, that there
 39 would be a *cause* at the moment of this first cause’s *coming-into-existence* follows,
 40 thus drawing us back to the infinite regress paradox elucidated in the paragraphs
 41 before.

42 On the contrary, should the universe as made from water be infinite, then there
 43 arises the problem whereby this infinitude must be, if we examine it as something
 44 external to us—as a scientific object of inquiry—finite, for we examine it from the
 45 perspective of a subject in the *here and now*. Thus, if we ought to study the universe,
 46 we have to be studying a finite object considered external to the subject which is, in

1 this way, modeled on a certain ‘end’ at the moment the world is studied, and thus
 2 not infinite. Nevertheless, this does not—paradoxically—do away with the question
 3 of infinitude, for, in this way, Nkrumah (1970) draws parallels to how there may
 4 exist an infinitude of negative numbers preceding their ‘end’ at term “0”, quoting
 5 Wittgenstein’s own example: “...minus four, minus three, minus two and minus
 6 one: I’ve done it! I’ve recited the negative numbers!” (p. 16). I would, furthermore,
 7 add to Nkrumah’s own argument with my own by stating that Zeno of Elea had
 8 already uncovered this paradox of ‘finite infinitude’, namely: plurality cannot exist,
 9 for if it exists, everything must be finite and infinite simultaneously (Vlastos &
 10 Graham, 1995). Zeno argued that if an object has mass, say, a mass unit “ x ”, then it
 11 would be permitted to infinitely divide this mass by a constant—for example, “2”
 12 in $(n \div 2)^\infty \mid n = \frac{x}{2^N}, N = \text{natural numbers}$ —and never reach an ultimate,
 13 finite mass (Vlastos & Graham, 1995). Thus, an infinite number of objects within
 14 the set of $\{x \in \mathfrak{R} \mid \forall r \in (\mathfrak{R} \notin x \vee 0 \vee 1), \frac{x}{r}\}$ must exist which comprise the initial
 15 object of finite mass (1st term, $n = \frac{x}{2^1}$) within the aforementioned set, whilst never
 16 reaching annulment (0). How something may be both finite, *qua* 1st term/initial
 17 object, and yet simultaneously infinite, was drawn into a question—and this
 18 question would, arguably, not be answered dialectically in philosophy until Hegel’s
 19 exegesis on the topic of ‘finite infinitude’ (good infinite) versus ‘infinite infinitude’
 20 (spurious infinite)’ in the *Science of Logic*, two millennia later (Hegel, 2010).

21 In addition to the above problem posed by an infinitude of the *arche* in a
 22 universe devoid of the separation between ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ it, one may also
 23 find the argument that: should water as the *arche* be infinite *without* a fall-back on
 24 the Zenonian ‘finite infinitude’, how may we possibly confine it within a particular
 25 container and make it finite by all quantifiable measures (ie. a glass of water with a
 26 length of x cm, a height of y cm, and a width of z cm)? This is, where I would argue,
 27 the Aristotelian theory of the forms comes into play, for a substance is not solely the
 28 *matter* that comprises it (ie. water), or the *form* it takes as its shape (ie. water in the
 29 shape of a glass), but rather *both* in unison and separation as the very definition of a
 30 substance, with Aristotle (n.d.) writing, “It is obvious then, from what has been said,
 31 what sensible substance is and how it exists—one kind of it as matter, another as
 32 form or actuality, while the third kind is that which is composed of these two.” (p.
 33 81). Nkrumah (1970) himself, to corroborate Aristotle in our analysis, drew his own
 34 conclusions from the above paradoxes by stating, “There can, therefore, be no
 35 *material* grounds on which the adjectives, ‘caused’, ‘uncaused’, or ‘finite’,
 36 ‘infinite’, can be descriptively applied to the universe.” (p. 16).

37 It is at this point that Nkrumah (1970) begins to draw up the foundation of his
 38 Consciencism *vis-à-vis* the notion of dialectics as that which bridges contradictions
 39 in the world, primarily those that create the notional dichotomy of ‘inside versus
 40 outside the world’ and a continuity of the world with things therein (in the
 41 Heideggerian sense), where he states that:

42
 43

1 “Beyond mere formal dialectics, however, one significance of the cosmic contrast of
2 the ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ of the world is that it implies an acknowledgment that there
3 is a conversion of a process which commences ‘outside’ the world into the world and
4 its contents [and vice versa].” (p. 17)

5
6 Nkrumah (1970), furthermore, links the above theorem with several aspects of
7 Christianity, such as donations of wealth to be secured in the ‘Heavenly Kingdom’,
8 and St. Augustine’s notion that us men—although dwellers of the corporeal world—
9 always return unto incorporeality, for the essence of men is still divine in nature.
10 This stance of Nkrumah’s (1970) was, in addition to the respective Hegelian and
11 Marxian dialectical idealism and materialism, largely influenced the philosophy of
12 Anaxagoras, who argued that the world is composed of seeds which arrange and
13 rearrange due to motion (*kinesis*) to create the substances we see as things-in-the-
14 world. This *kinesis*, for Anaxagoras, was assumed to be, however, not of this
15 world—and the only thing not belonging to the world: mind/reason (*nous*)
16 (Nkrumah, 1970). On Anaxagoras, Nkrumah (1970) called him—for the very
17 reason of *kinesis* as the only differentiating principle in a world of similitude—the
18 ‘first socialist’, positing a theory of a “responsibility of each [*seed*] for all [*things*],
19 and all for each” (p. 40), writing:

20
21 “He [Anaxagoras] did not affirm a mere identity of basic make-up. He put forward a
22 theory of the participation of any one kind of object in every other kind of object. In
23 his philosophy, nature was more firmly united than in any other philosophy. Whereas
24 in democracy it is sufficient to affirm a mere egalitarianism, in socialism it is necessary
25 to affirm a convertible involvement of each in all. In other words, whereas the monists
26 [Thales, Anaximander] in social terms sought to transform an oligarchic society into a
27 democratic one, Anaxagoras sought to transform a democratic one into a socialist
28 society.” (p. 40)

29
30 There is a further element to this argument when Nkrumah (1970) directly
31 synthesizes Anaxagoras’ *kinesis* with the dialectical interplay of contradictions
32 between the notion of an ‘outside’, incorporeal realm of spirituality, and an ‘inside’,
33 corporeal realm of the world which is solely composed of matter. This synthesis
34 was, arguably, a synthesis itself of the forespoken arguments of metaphysics and
35 cosmogony Nkrumah (1970) tried to reconcile. Namely, where Hegel (2018) labels
36 this self-negating kinetic potential of dialectical movement ‘Force’ (*Kraft*) in his
37 *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Nkrumah (1970) calls it *categorical conversion*. Further
38 supporting his thesis regarding the preeminence of dialectics in *categorical*
39 *conversion*, Nkrumah (1970) draws on Heraclitus’ teaching emphasizing the
40 predominance of *change* and conflict in the world, wherein:

41
42 “Strife[...]this see-saw, this sweltering social environment gave birth in the mind of
43 Heraclitus to the idea that the universe itself is an attunement of forces perpetually in
44 strife. From that moment the idea of a finite history was killed and that of the dialectic
45 of history born.” (p. 40)

46
47 The notion of *categorical conversion* thus lead to a peculiar syncretism,
48 wherein it was accepted that ‘mind’ and ‘matter’ posed two distinct categories of

1 existence in the world, whilst nonetheless bridging the dualistic gap with a form of
 2 metaphysical interactionism that was itself subjected to dialectics (Nkrumah, 1970).
 3 For instance, Nkrumah (1970) gives the rather-well-nuanced example of traditional,
 4 sub-Saharan African societies which resorted to animistic practices prior to the
 5 arrival of the Abrahamic religions on the subcontinent, writing:

6
 7 “The dialectical contradiction between ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ was reduced by making
 8 the visible world continuous with the invisible world. For them heaven was not outside
 9 the world but inside it. These African societies did not accept transcendentalism, and
 10 may indeed be regarded as having attempted to synthesize opposites ‘outside’ and
 11 ‘inside’ by making them continuous, that is, by abolishing them.” (p. 17)

12
 13 In other words, and to give an example of my own, should I fall ill with a
 14 disease, and simultaneously belong to an animistic African tribe with little influence
 15 of the transcendental, Abrahamic notions of God (or Yahweh, Christ, Allah, etc.),
 16 the worldview of that tribe would be that—while I have fallen ill physically, and
 17 while it would be *known* that I have fallen ill due to a physical agent of some sort,
 18 with, say, a hemorrhagic diathesis that is within the corporeal realm—the tribe
 19 would likewise couple my corporeal manifestations of illness with those of an
 20 incorporeal, supernatural entity that resides among us as *being-in-the-world* (*In-der-*
 21 *Welt-Sein*). This example I have drawn from the 2019 TV series *The Hot Zone*,
 22 based on Richard Preston’s 1994 best-seller of the same name, wherein an American
 23 virologist, Carter, sent to Zaïre during the 1976 Ebola virus outbreak in Yambuku
 24 sits with a chief of an Ebola-afflicted tribe (Hart, 2019). The chief tells Carter that
 25 he knows it is a virus which is afflicting his people, but *why* some people, and not
 26 others, are afflicted by the virus is due to supernatural forces (Hart, 2019). A short
 27 while later, the chief—having fallen ill himself—asks Carter to spare his village of
 28 any more infections, and burn the house he is convalescing in, indicating an
 29 awareness that even though supernatural forces of the incorporeal realm may aid in
 30 setting the ease of viral permissivity in a specific target, the transmissibility of the
 31 virus within the corporeal realm was well known by this remote tribe (Hart, 2019).
 32 Thus, the continuity in interplay between the corporeal and incorporeal realms—
 33 while depicted over half a century since Nkrumah’s death on the fictional television
 34 screen—was exemplified yet again.

35 To further support the above argument of *categorical conversion*, the unique
 36 position of faith healers and ‘witchdoctors’—who could, arguably more than
 37 anyone within the semiosphere of the tribal world, effectively serve as a bridge of
 38 continuity between the two realms—should not be forgotten, for amidst the ‘magic’,
 39 there remains also the scientifically-supported use of flavonoids, terpenes, and
 40 alkaloids from medicinal herbs as treatments for illnesses by these faith healers
 41 (White, 2015).

42 43 44 **To Be—Thinghood and Objectness**

45
 46 Whilst Nkrumah’s notion of *categorical conversion* nevertheless deals with the
 47 existence of things in-the-world, one question that has as of yet remained untouched

1 is the distinction between ‘Existence’ and ‘Being’, for metaphysics itself leaves the
 2 two largely undifferentiated. This is precisely where ontology as a field of inquiry
 3 must come to light. Aristotle (1931), in *On the Soul (De Anima)*, deals with the
 4 distinction between Being and Existence with a thorough exegesis on the concept
 5 of the soul. The soul, according to Aristotle (1931), is the essence of any living thing,
 6 such that this living *thing* is accorded a form: the form of the soul. To this extent,
 7 Aristotle (1931) endeavors into explaining two concepts as they relate to a living
 8 thing: *actuality* and *potentiality*.

9 *Actuality* entails two distinct, albeit converging, states in Aristotle’s philosophy
 10 to describe a *thing-being-in-its-own-type*—namely: *energeia* (ἐνέργεια) and
 11 *entelecheia* (ἐντελέχεια) (Sachs & Aristotle, 1995). *Energeia* is a *being-in-its-own-*
 12 *type* of a particular type of action, whilst *entelecheia* is the teleological conclusion
 13 of an *energeia*, thereby presupposing that—for example—in building a house, the
 14 building action is a *being-in-its-own-type qua* ‘building’, whilst the *telos* (end) of
 15 the building action is the finished house (Sachs & Aristotle, 1995). On the other
 16 hand, *potentiality* (*dunamis*, δύναμις) refers to the capacity to *bring-into-actuality*
 17 (*bring-into-being-in-its-own-type*) (Sachs & Aristotle, 1995). Aristotle (n.d.) further
 18 describes matter as having *potentiality*, and form having *actuality*, for, “The potency
 19 [potentiality], being, as matter, universal and indefinite, deals with the universal and
 20 indefinite; but the actuality, being definite, deals with a definite object, being a ‘this’,
 21 it deals with a ‘this’.” (p. 141).

22 In other words, Aristotle (n.d.) may be interpreted as saying that *potentiality* as
 23 a *bringing-into-actuality* must be understood to encompass matter as the element of
 24 a *substance* as spoken of prior, as matter is that which may *bring-into-actuality* the
 25 form *qua entelecheia* of the completed *substance*. Not only is this the case, but the
 26 process of *bringing-into-actuality* as an existential process which Exists in-the-world
 27 is already an actuality of its own kind, the actuality of *energeia* as movement
 28 (*kinesis*) towards a *telos* (*entelecheia*) (Sachs & Aristotle, 1995). This is exemplified
 29 where Sachs (1995) highlights that, when a man walks across a room, “The actuality
 30 of the potentiality to be on the other side of the room, as just that potentiality, is
 31 neither more nor less than the walking across the room.” and that:

32
 33 “The genus of which motion [movement] is a species is being-at-work-staying-itself
 34 (*entelecheia*), of which the only other species is thinghood. The being-at-work-staying-
 35 itself of a potency [potentiality] (*dunamis*), as material, is thinghood. The being-at-
 36 work-staying-the-same of a potency as a potency is motion.” (pp. 78-79).

37
 38 A particular moment in which the lapsus between Being and mere Existence
 39 comes into light is precisely the moment where *kinesis*, in the Aristotelian sense, is
 40 understood as the *actualization* of a *potentiality-qua-potentiality* as opposed to the
 41 *actualization* of a *potentiality’s* teleological *thinghood* in a *staying-itself(-in-itself)*.
 42 In other words, Aristotelian *kinesis* may be likened to the dialectical ‘Force’ of
 43 Hegel (2018) which is a *force proper* insofar as it negates its meditative action
 44 between a given set of contradictions by becoming something ‘mediately
 45 immediate’ in itself in this process, and thus an *actuality* in its own accord by being
 46 that which gives a happening in-the-world to *potentiality*. If we take Existence to
 47 mean anything *which is*, then it of course follows that *energeia qua kinesis* Exists,

1 for *it is* as an *actuality* (*being-in-its-own-type*). However, *kinesis* may solely Exist
 2 by virtue of the fact that it does not attain its *telos* as *entelecheia*, for at the moment
 3 that *kinesis* is transfigured into a species ‘*being-at-work-staying-itself*’ it must cease
 4 to be a ‘*being-at-work-staying-the-same*’, if *staying-the-same* ought to be
 5 interpreted as procedural in nature (Sachs & Aristotle, 1995). The procedural aspect
 6 of giving a *happening-in-the-world* to a *potentiality* must entail a fundamental
 7 dissolution of self-reference in terms of *thinghood*, if the above argument is
 8 followed, wherein *thinghood* is reserved for *entelecheiae*. Nevertheless, as we have
 9 examined, *energeia/kinesis* may itself be a self-referential *thinghood*—in the
 10 Hegelian sense of Force, for instance—for it is still an *actuality* as *being-in-its-own-*
 11 *type*. Thus, we come to a certain paradox of *thinghood* which may only be logically
 12 delineated by answering the deeper question of Being.

13 Heidegger (1971), for instance, distinguishes *thinghood*, especially from
 14 *objectness*, in an apophantic fashion, such that the *thinghood* of a thing attains such
 15 status by the capacity to *no-longer-exist* in a given space, and at a given time. In this
 16 regard, Heidegger (1971) gives the example of a jug, such that:

17
 18 “[...]no representation of what is present, in the sense of what stands forth and of what
 19 stands over against as an object, ever reaches to the thing qua thing. The jug's thingness
 20 resides in its being *qua* vessel. We become aware of the vessel's holding nature when
 21 we fill the jug” (pp. 166)

22 And

23 “When we fill the jug, the pouring that fills it flows into the empty jug. The emptiness,
 24 the void, is what does the vessel's holding. The empty space, this nothing of the jug, is
 25 what the jug is as the holding vessel.” (p. 167)

26
 27 In other words, what Heidegger (1971) argues for in this passage is that the
 28 *jugness qua thinghood* of the jug comes from its capacity to ‘hold’ a certain volume
 29 of fluid. Nonetheless, in its capacity to ‘hold’ something, it also carries the capacity
 30 to, a) *no-longer-be-as-empty-existence* before it comes to hold something, or b) *no-*
 31 *longer-be-as-holding-existence* when its contents are poured out (Heidegger, 1971).
 32 Thus, a certain void (*manque*) comes to be an essential element of *thinghood* in the
 33 aforementioned terms of the jug, and Heidegger (1971) himself corroborates this by
 34 explaining the paradoxical nature that, “The twofold holding of the void rests on the
 35 outpouring. In the outpouring, the holding is authentically how it is.” (p. 169).
 36 *Objectness*, on the other hand, would refer to the physical properties of the jug that
 37 can be said to Exist for the perceiver thereof—its length, width, height, etcetera
 38 (Heidegger, 1971). In this way, *objectness* may be relegated to a necessary condition
 39 that satisfies any given set of categories in the work of Aristotle (2000), where such
 40 categories describe—or we may say *inscribe*—the qualities of a certain thing. These
 41 qualities *inscribe* predicates (such as quality, quantity, relationality, etcetera) on
 42 whose *objectness* a thing is founded, and—consequently—whose absence the
 43 *thinghood* of a thing is founded on, likewise.

44 The above—and certainly necessary—distinction between *thinghood* and
 45 *objectness* by Heidegger (1971) is made more pronounced there where Heidegger
 46 argues that *thinghood* is not merely an apophantic delineation, but an ability of this
 47 apophantic nature of the ‘void’ of the *thing* to gather seemingly-unrelated and non-

1 corresponding categories (such as mortals and immortals, Earth and Sky, etcetera)
 2 into a solidarity: a ‘gathering’. For instance, in ancient rituals, the capacity of the jug
 3 to be ‘voided’ by an outpouring took on various significations which could be
 4 converged beyond the material limits of spacetime (i.e. an outpouring as libation for
 5 the Gods of the transcendental realm, or an outpouring of drink of water to sustain
 6 mortal life in the immanent, and diametrically opposed one), such that:

7
 8 “The gift of the outpouring is a gift because it stays earth and sky, divinities and
 9 mortals. Yet staying is now no longer the mere persisting of something that is here.
 10 Staying appropriates. It brings the four into the light of their mutual belonging. From
 11 out of staying's simple onefoldness they are betrothed, entrusted to one another. At one
 12 in thus being entrusted to one another, they are unconcealed. The gift of the outpouring
 13 stays the onefold of the fourfold of the four. And in the poured gift the jug presences
 14 as jug [*qua thing*].” (p. 171)
 15

16 We can thus conclude that *thinghood* must—of its very essence—be comprised
 17 of an Aristotelian *potentiality* that is not to be found in the concreteness of an
 18 *actuality*: either in its modality of *energeia/kinesis* as ‘*being-at-work-staying-the-*
 19 *same*’ or its *entelecheia* as ‘*being-at-work-staying-itself*’. Thus, it follows that
 20 *thinghood* as an apophantic essence cannot be *what is*, and thus cannot Exist, insofar
 21 as its very nature is predicated on *non-Existence/no-longer-Existence*.

22 If, however, *thinghood* is a non-actual *potentiality*, and is thus based on non-
 23 Existence, then its basis is in matter, for, as we have seen, *potentiality* lies within the
 24 material constituent of a substance (Aristotle, n.d.). It is leading on from this fact
 25 that I would argue that Nkrumah’s (1970) emphasis on the primacy of the material
 26 in *categorical conversion* comes to prominence, for—even if we are not dealing at
 27 the level of an Existence of an *objectness*, an *objective* nature—the apophantic
 28 nature of matter as a *no-longer-existing* itself still holds truth. For instance, the
 29 eventual, natural, and rather abstractly-conceptualized decay of uranium-238
 30 radionuclides to their daughter element of thorium-234 in *x* billion years is what
 31 makes uranium-238 itself as a shadow of its *objectness*, for it is in the *potential* to
 32 *no-longer-exist* that its *thingness* is distinguished from its *objective* Existence as “*x*
 33 kilograms of uranium-238, with *y* amount of radionuclides, and *z* atomic radii wide”,
 34 *ad infinitum*. To this extent, Aristotle (n.d.) himself delineates the uniqueness of
 35 *potentiality* as opposed to *actuality* wherein only *potentiality* holds the capacity to
 36 be its opposite (*contrary*), while *actuality* is fixed in a given form that does not
 37 tolerate its contrary, stating, “The capacity for contraries [*qua potentiality*], then, is
 38 present at the same time; but contraries cannot be present at the same time, and the
 39 actualities [embodying them] also cannot be present at the same time, e.g. health
 40 and illness” (p. 92). In this way, the same uranium-238 has the *potentiality* to be
 41 used in, for instance, generating plutonium, *or* has the *potentiality not-to-be-used*
 42 as such—which, I would argue, is the locus of its very utility to mankind: a utility *qua*
 43 *thinghood*.

44 From this position we may deduce what *to be* entails more clearly than ever;
 45 namely, Being is only ever defined as its capacity to its negative. A tarrying with
 46 itself as that which emerges in the shadow of its Existence is what Being must be
 47 said to entail as its fundamental essence. Yet to stop here with our inquiry would be

1 to forget the locus in which this tarrying with itself *qua* negative is brought forth:
 2 the locus of the material. It is only in matter that contraries, as we have seen, may
 3 be brought forth, for it is in matter that *potentiality* is a *potentiality-to-exist* or
 4 *potentiality-not-to-exist* as a certain substance—and in which these two contrary
 5 *potentialities* may co-exist until set into *actuality* (either as *energeia* or *entelecheia*).
 6 And as the form of a substance as a reciprocal to its matter is, for Aristotle (n.d.),
 7 something which cannot both Exist and not-Exist simultaneously—it is an *actuality*
 8 that allows no room for a lack thereof—so it follows that form itself cannot Be. The
 9 essence of the form of a substance, we may conclude thus, is that it solely Exists,
 10 and never Bes.

11 Aristotle (n.d.) himself subtly recognizes this there where he argues that, “that
 12 which is spoken of as form[...]is not produced, but the concrete thing which gets its
 13 name from this is produced, and that in everything which is generated matter is
 14 present, and one part of the thing is matter and the other form.” (p. 68). In other
 15 words, the form of a substance *always-already* Exists as an abstraction-in-retrospect
 16 after its coming to Existence, and is thus not itself produced by the efficient cause
 17 moving matter to create it therefrom. Nevertheless, however concretely Aristotle
 18 (n.d.) tries to put the aforementioned as an opposition in his critique of Platonism,
 19 this disjunction between form and matter takes up, arguably, a surprising level of
 20 abstraction, leveraging however much of a distance of substance away from the
 21 material conditions of production necessitated to bring it into Existence.

22 In such a way, furthermore, it becomes evident to see why *actuality* cannot be
 23 said to be—in spite of its *objective* nature—something to be found within the
 24 material conditions of the world, for its sole dependence rests on the assumption of
 25 transcendental forms that are themselves transcendent to the production process (yet
 26 are, nevertheless, still *within-the-world*, and thus not something external to it,
 27 insofar as the World cannot be conceived of without the difference bestowed upon
 28 it by these *actualities*). The *objectness* as such of an object is, in spite of being
 29 reducible to the materialism of the signifiers that quantify it, something which itself
 30 has to come out of the acquisition of a further, *formal* character of said object that
 31 had no basis in material reality *per se*. Even the “*x kilograms, y centimeters wide, z*
 32 *centimeters long...*” categorization of any Existent thing, while—of course—
 33 seeming physicalistic at first glance, entails the *formalization* of these qualities viz.
 34 *the form of x kilograms, the form of y centimeters wide, and the form of z centimeters*
 35 *long*, which concatenate into a respective form of the object interrogated.
 36 *Potentiality*, on the other hand, is that which always occurs as part of the material,
 37 determined by the interplay of units of matter indistinguishable in essence on their
 38 own. For, matter is the only thing that can carry the possibility to induce change in-
 39 the-world viz. dialectical resolution and creation-anew of contradictions, whilst
 40 forms remain static in order to be *formal* (“to mould’ — *formare*). Yet precisely how
 41 it is possible for a transcendental, abstract form giving an object Existence *qua*
 42 *actuality* is to be coupled to the dialectical nature of matter—without pitfalling into
 43 the *hard problem* in the philosophy of mind—remains a mystery yet to be explored.

44 If the above arguments are true, then the form of a substance as applied to a
 45 living thing—namely, its soul—also lies in wait for the locomotive of mystery to
 46 run it over. The soul as that “which is the actuality of a certain kind of body”

1 (Aristotle, 1931, p. 16) cannot Be, even though it Exists. But if the soul is not a
 2 necessary part of Being a living thing by virtue of its inability to *not-exist*, then how
 3 do we account for whether Man *qua* living thing is a Being, or an objective Existence?
 4 Furthermore, what logic delineates the possibility of both not simultaneously co-
 5 existing at the same time as different categorical modes of life for Man himself?

6 Aristotle (1931), perhaps noticing this issue at stake, attempts a synthesis of the
 7 notions of *actuality* and *potentiality* through the introduction of the concept of a
 8 ‘*first actuality*’ as an equivalent to a principal *potentiality-to-exist* as a living thing:

9
 10 “[...]the word actuality has two senses corresponding respectively to the *possession of*
 11 *knowledge* and the actual *exercise of knowledge*. It is obvious that the soul is actuality
 12 in the first sense, viz. that of knowledge as possessed, for both sleeping and waking
 13 presuppose the existence of soul, and of these waking corresponds to actual knowing,
 14 sleeping to knowledge possessed but not employed, and, in the history of the
 15 individual, knowledge comes before its employment or exercise.” (p. 14)

16
 17 To paraphrase, Aristotle (1931) states that the soul is the very medium that has
 18 to Exist as an *a priori actuality* in order for it to bring about the *potentiality-to-exist*
 19 of any other, subsequent substance concerning a living thing embodying it, or—in
 20 the above case—man himself. That is, this *a priori actuality* of the soul is what
 21 establishes a different trajectory of *potentiality* for living and non-living things. This
 22 may be said to solve the paradigm of infinite regress—at least in terms of living
 23 things—which necessitates a return to a ‘primary *potentiality*’ from which every
 24 *actuality* flows, which in turn must—insofar as it is a *potentiality* as a *potentiality-*
 25 *to-actuality/existence*—give way on its own accord to a *capacity-not-to-exist* as that
 26 which its *actualized* Existence as a *potentiality* is predicated on. For instance, in
 27 Aristotle’s (1931) case of the man who has an *actual* predisposition to using
 28 knowledge, yet who does not use it when he is sleeping as he does when he is awake,
 29 this predisposition to knowledge is an *actuality qua potentiality* in itself, and one of
 30 the characteristics of his soul as that *actuality* which allows the subsequent
 31 *potentialities* of his character to develop. Thus, this outlook offers a bridging point,
 32 particularly in light of man, for the two seemingly-dichotomized categories at hand,
 33 and—arguably—affords Aristotle (n.d.) somewhat of a placation for his notion that
 34 “actuality is prior to potency” (p. 121).

35 It is precisely the above resolution to the dichotomy of Being and Existence that
 36 may be said to be pivotal in Nkrumah’s (1970) own formulation of Consciencism.
 37 Namely, the centrality of the soul of man—particularly African man—as something
 38 which is neither material *potentiality*, nor purely abstract form as an *actuality*, but
 39 both, cannot be ignored (Nkrumah, 1970). For, it may be argued the whole principle
 40 of *categorical conversion* rests on there being a commonality that bridges the
 41 dichotomy between the immanent and the transcendental (Nkrumah, 1970). But
 42 where the immanent is, for Aristotle (n.d.), both the domain of *potentiality* and
 43 *actuality*—and the transcendental of forms formally negated (to however
 44 contradictory an extent, as we have seen above)—Nkrumah (1970), I would argue,
 45 presents more authentically the *thinghood* viz. Heidegger as the basis of material
 46 conditions of *potentiality*, and *objectness* as the *actuality* that resides within the
 47 powers of transcendental forms—yet which do not ‘transcend’ their own *Being-in-*

1 *the-world (In-der-Welt-Sein)*, inasmuch as the World contains them as materially-
 2 irreducible-albeit-continuous with it, and constitutive of it. The commonality to be
 3 found between *thinghood* and *objectness* thereby, I would argue—and such a
 4 commonality which allows a mediation in the first place between these two,
 5 irreducible categories—is none other than that which belongs to the soul: a Being
 6 and an Existence—an Existential Being, and is as such the fundamental basis for
 7 *categorical conversion* to unfold.

10 Nkrumah's Formulation of Existential Being

12 If, nevertheless, what establishes an Existential Being as a peculiar mode of
 13 *potential actuality*, or *actual potentiality*, is its soul, it still remains important for us
 14 to see both why Man himself occupies a special reservation as *the* Existential Being
 15 *qua* Man, and how Nkrumah himself may be said to treat this unique reservation.
 16 For, certainly it is indubitable that every thing may be said to have an *actuality* as
 17 form, and a material *potentiality*, and is as such indistinct from 'Existential Being'
 18 on its own (Aristotle, n.d.). To do this, however, we would benefit from a revisiting
 19 of this uniqueness to Man in light of Heidegger's notion of *Dasein*.

20 *Dasein* (being-there) is a mode of Being and Existence that is peculiar to Man
 21 in that "in its very Being, that Being is an issue for it." (Heidegger, 1962, p. 32). It
 22 is through *Dasein's* ability to understand the fleeting nature of its Being, primarily
 23 as a *being-towards-death (Sein-zum-Tod)*, that its modality of Being is unique to it
 24 (Heidegger, 1962). This faculty of *understanding*, as opposed to mere *knowing*—in
 25 the Jungian (2002) sense where *knowing* is founded upon a rationalization of
 26 conflicting with the irrationality of man's unconscious¹—is what is unique to man:
 27 it is unique precisely because it is an Existential issue for him (Heidegger, 1962). In
 28 this way, the Heideggerian (1962) uniqueness of Man *qua Dasein* may be said to be
 29 a furthering of Aristotle's (1931) notion that man's soul is unique by virtue of his
 30 'calculative' faculties, wherein "those who successfully resist temptation [mankind]
 31 have appetite and desire [as animals] and yet follow mind and refuse to enact that
 32 for which they have appetite" (p. 42). No longer must we consider, thus, Man as of
 33 a merely 'calculating' soul, but that this calculation itself entails deeper layers of
 34 *understanding* which give Man his peculiar position as the only Existential Being
 35 *qua Dasein*.

36 Nkrumah's (1970) notion of Being, as we have seen, revolves around the
 37 "painless recognition of the objectivity of different types of being." (pp. 85 & 86).
 38 But does Nkrumah not himself recognize the answer we seek in his position on
 39 man's Existential Being—namely, where he vouches for the *pain* it produces? This
 40 capacity to feel *pain*, of course, is not reserved for humans. But it is Pain with a
 41 capital 'P' that I would use to invoke the unique mode of existential angst Man faces,

¹It is worth bringing to attention the Lacanian difference between mere Imaginary knowledge of the ego (*connaissance*) and Symbolic knowledge of the subject (*savoir*) in this regard (Evans, 1996). For Lacan, *savoir* is what analysis aims at: unearthing Truth in the domain of knowledge through *full speech*, as opposed to the *connaissance* conscious, *empty speech* produces, which is merely Truth-assumed-to-be/Truth-misrecognized (*méconnaissance*) (Evans, 1996).

1 and which the existentialists (Kierkegaard, Heidegger, Sartre, etc.) have before me.
 2 Man's uniqueness in Existential Being is precisely what allows him the faculty to
 3 experience Pain: Pain as an anxious condition, and "that which anxiety is anxious
 4 about is Being-in- the world itself." (Heidegger, 1962, p. 232). Pain is *Painful*
 5 because of its realization—viz. *understanding*—of a certain *fading*; a *fading* of
 6 *actuality* in favor of *potentiality*, a *fading* of Man from his Existence into his
 7 authentic mode of Being. This *fading* is none other than the *understanding* of death
 8 (*Tod*), and *Dasein* as always-already a *Being-towards-death* (*Sein-zum-Tod*).

9 In this very way, Nkrumah (1970) aims to prescriptively disestablish the
 10 Painfulness of this experience; an experience of *authenticity*, where *authentic*
 11 *Dasein* refers to the state of *Dasein* that has come to terms with its "ownmost
 12 potentiality-for-Being." (Heidegger, 1962, p. 264), ultimately as *death*. But perhaps
 13 that is where he sets up his own ontological approach—a 'radical acceptance' of the
 14 flux between Being and Existence which, at any given point, may sweep an
 15 Existential Being into its dichotomizing grasp. From the *Wuji* come *Yin* and *Yang*—
 16 from the monad a dyad—the Chinese teach us, and such is the same in the case of
 17 Existential Being—if not being directly inspired by its vicissitudes, I daresay. It is
 18 Nkrumah's (1970) prescriptive assertion that our acceptance of this flux be
 19 Painless—in a rather Buddhist sense of 'letting go'—where his 'different types of
 20 being' refer to, in actuality, the flirtatious dance of *potentiality* and *actuality* in
 21 Existential Being, as distinct from any other *thing-in-the-world*.

22 Moreover, when it comes to the question of the 'primacy of the material', for
 23 Nkrumah (1970) it should—in the above way—be understood as the primacy of a
 24 *thinghood*. But *thinghood*, as we have seen, is what Existence precisely leaves in its
 25 wake when it *ceases-to-exist*. The *void* of the jug, for Heidegger (1971), could not
 26 be a *void* unless some entity Existed both a) to fill it prior, and b) within an Existing
 27 container of *objectness* as the object of the jug. The primacy of this *thinghood*
 28 Nkrumah (1970) describes in the following way by way of example of Einstein's
 29 theory of General Relativity:

30
 31 "If the sole existence of matter is asserted, then space and time, insofar as they are not
 32 matter, must be unreal. Philosophical consciencism does not assert the sole reality of
 33 matter. Rather it asserts the primary reality of matter. Here again, if space were absolute
 34 and independent, matter could not with respect to it be primary. Therefore philosophical
 35 consciencism, in asserting the primary existence of matter, also maintains that space
 36 must, to the extent that it is real, derive its properties from those of matter through a
 37 categorial conversion. And since the properties of space are geometrical, it then follows
 38 from philosophical consciencism that the geometry of space is determined by the
 39 properties of matter[...]. In Einstein's Theory, the loss is calculable according to the
 40 general formula $e = mc^2$ where e represents ergs of energy, m mass, and c the velocity
 41 of light[...]. According to philosophical consciencism, however, though the whole of
 42 this amount of mass is converted, it is not all of it which is converted to the emergent
 43 properties. In actual chemical changes, some of it transpires as heat. It is this reality of
 44 categorial conversion which prompts philosophical consciencism to assert not the sole
 45 reality of matter, but its primary reality. If higher categories are only surrogates of
 46 quantitative processes of matter, they are still not empty apparitions, but are quite real."
 47 (pp. 84 & 85)

48

1 In other words, Nkrumah (1970) purports that *categorical conversion* is solely
 2 able to proceed by way of a *loss (manque)*, such as a *loss* of energy when mass (*m*)
 3 is converted into its corresponding energetic value (*e*). As such, *thinghood*, as itself
 4 a *loss-of-Existence* (loss of *actuality* of “jug of water”ness when emptied), and yet
 5 a *potentiality-for-Existence* (filling the jug to create a “jug of water”) by that same
 6 token, must be understood as the pretext for any and all future transmutations of
 7 *categorical conversion* in Nkrumah’s (1970) philosophy. Thus, it becomes clear to
 8 see why there is a ‘primacy of the material’: by virtue of the fact that there is a
 9 *potentiality* to *lose* the *actuality* of a form of matter, the transcendental form that
 10 gives this *actuality* to matter is itself created. But, if this is the case, then it likewise
 11 holds true that Nkrumah subjects himself to paradox in light of our analysis, for how
 12 may one category be ‘primary’ in light of the other, and create it—insofar as creation
 13 invokes a cause for an *a posteriori* effect—if it is itself predicated on the *a priori*
 14 existence of this other category?

15 The above paradox, nonetheless, becomes resolved when we take into account
 16 the physics formula posited itself. For, in Einstein’s $E = mc^2$, one finds the answer
 17 to the problem at hand. Energy (*E*) is equal to mass (*m*) subjected to the *function of*
 18 *the square of light’s speed in a vacuum* (c^2). There is a *conversion* of mass to energy
 19 *if and only if* light’s speed in a vacuum acts on it, and this speed is a constant (2.99
 20 $\times 10^8$ meters per second). Similarly, energy can only convert into mass *alongside*
 21 this constant, and never mass on its own standing. What acts as a mediator, in both
 22 respects, between energy and mass is the speed of light, squared, and as such there
 23 is no possibility for their conversion without the *a priori* existence of this quantum
 24 of a fixed value: 2.99×10^8 m/s. The very fact that this quantum is fixed indicates
 25 that it is to be understood in the Nkrumaist terms as ‘matter’, for it is a “quantitative
 26 disposition” (Nkrumah, 1970, p. 85), and not a qualitative one: it has a value
 27 assigned to it. And whilst light itself is massless, according to physics—and thus
 28 has no quantifier of mass, seemingly making it purely qualitative and transcendental
 29 in nature—the sheer fact that its speed is quantitative means that it fits within the
 30 classification of ‘matter’, and allows us to equate it viz. its energy via the formula:
 31 $E = h \frac{c}{v}$ (E = energy, h = Planck’s constant [6.626×10^{-34} J/s], c = speed of light
 32 [2.99×10^8 m/s], v = frequency [Hertz]). Thus, the ‘primacy of matter’ in terms of
 33 the function of lightspeed is evident, and supported by physics.

34 Yet we must not be quick to be complacent, for—in the above way—we have
 35 negated *potentiality*, and posed an *actual* value (2.99×10^8) that seemingly ‘defines’
 36 light; we have made it into a formal thing viz. Aristotle. And, we have seen that for
 37 Aristotle (n.d.), matter *is potentiality*. This, I would argue, is solved when we realize
 38 that light is a quantized thing in itself *only because* it has speed, but that this quantum
 39 is not its only feature—light is also *only itself* by virtue of the fact that it is the only
 40 massless, standalone substance (with *potentiality qua matter* and *actuality qua form*)
 41 known. Thus, light—in addition to its *objectness* viz. its speed—also carries with it
 42 a simultaneous *thinghood* viz. its virtual *inExistence*. And its *objectness* viz. speed
 43 cannot Exist without the *thinghood* that is its elusive nature/*inExistence* as an entity,
 44 for its speed belongs to itself and itself only (nothing in Existence travels at-or-
 45 faster-than lightspeed). It is precisely this unique property of light which I would

1 argue allows the active state of *conversion* between seemingly unbridgeable
2 categories (i.e. energy and mass) to occur.

3 In this very example, however, we focus too hard on physics, with little regard
4 for the metaphysics and ontology the *categorical conversion* of Nkrumah posits. If,
5 to Einsteinian physics, light is the *objectness-thinghood* mediator of mass and
6 energy, then metaphysics and ontology finds its correspondent in the Existential
7 Being that is *Dasein*. Namely, *Dasein* as Existential Being finds itself as the *sole*
8 *mediator* with an Existence grounded in the *objectness* of the form of The Man (with
9 all its features), and Being grounded in the *thinghood* of Man as that *lack (manque)*
10 of himself that structures his subjectivity. For, no matter how he attempts to quantize
11 himself in spatiotemporal finitude, Man will always fail to fully represent himself
12 in his signifiers-at-hand (Lacan, 2002).

13 In the attempt to sketch the nature of Existential Being in light of Nkrumah's
14 Consciencism, we have, however, failed to address a final, important aspect of
15 *Dasein*: its *being-in-the-world (In-der-Welt-Sein)*. *Dasein*, for Heidegger (1962),
16 always finds itself in a world of other *Daseins*—other people—in addition to things
17 that merely Exist (as means to an end, or *ready-to-hand*, and as ends in their own
18 respect, or *present-at-hand*). *Dasein*, thus, finds itself amongst other Existential
19 Beings in its world, to tie it to our analytic.

20 Not only is this *being-alongside (Mitsein)* other Existential Beings present in
21 Heidegger's (1962) corpus, but this phenomenon itself edifies the idea purported by
22 Nkrumah's (1970) African socialism that communal life takes precedence over
23 individual life, and that the individual solely Exists because the community Exists
24 (*Ubuntu*)—a notion particular to African societies. Accordingly, Archbishop Desmond
25 Tutu has explained this notion as, "*Ubuntu* says not 'you are human because you think',
26 [but] 'you are human because you participate in relationships'" (Tutu, 2013, 2:44).
27 In this respect, Nkrumah (1967), in *African Socialism Revisited*, explained that
28 "what socialist thought in Africa must recapture is not the structure of the
29 "traditional African society" but its spirit, for the spirit of communalism is
30 crystallised in its humanism and in its reconciliation of individual advancement with
31 group welfare." (p. 1). This spirit of humanism is precisely what Kenneth Kaunda
32 (1968) calls "the greatest blessing bestowed on Africa" (p. 5) in that it is "Man
33 enjoying the fellowship of Man simply because he is Man" (p.5). Nevertheless, even
34 Kaunda (1968) argued that African society cannot merely regress to the past in this
35 regard, but must orient in the implementation of the metaphysical Spirit (*Geist*) of
36 African humanism in an ever-modernizing world of industrialization, writing:

37
38 "Our past is rich with this type of society [humanistic], for that is how the people of
39 old lived. From this we must get our strength to plan for our new society, always
40 bearing in mind that there is also a lot that is good from other people who, for many
41 reasons, good or bad, are now able to mix with us in the new international community."
42 (p. 27)

43
44 What the spirit of humanism proposed by African socialists allows us to deduce
45 is not that the African community ought to be an *objectness*-template to be followed
46 by modern African society. Rather, it is precisely in the *Master Signifier* of Spirit, a
47 *thinghood* that has only retroactively emerged after the collapse of traditional

1 society as a *potentiality* anew, that it should draw a kind of *mana* to organize
 2 contemporary, developing society around as it *actualizes* in *kinesis qua developing*,
 3 and eventual form (the Form of the Developed). This *thinghood* of Spirit, however,
 4 is none other—I would argue—than the *thinghood* of the very humanity of *Daseins*
 5 that have lived it once, but do not live it anymore. In such a way, the *humanism* of
 6 African socialism may be said to be none other than an embodiment of ancestral
 7 *Dasein* as an ever-haunting specter, to muse on Derrida (1994), perpetually haunting
 8 the *actuality* of contemporary societies as its *potentiality*—its guide to future
 9 Existence. In such a way, has African socialism not brought forth a resolution to the
 10 ‘supernatural’ notion of Spirit by grounding it in materialism itself? This being the
 11 case does not, however, ignore the fact that—even in ancestry—African societies
 12 have had a way to express *Dasein* to, arguably, its utmost capability in their sheer
 13 emphasis of Man’s role as ‘mediator’ between the categorical and transcendental
 14 realms, as we have seen (Nkrumah, 1970). Perhaps it is precisely because of this
 15 particular point that African socialism had found such a firm footing in the first
 16 place—a firm footing in the ontological and metaphysical by being the only
 17 ideology purporting Existential Being (unlike the dehumanizing, Existent Marxist-
 18 Leninism, or the abstractly individualistic Being of capitalism) (Kaunda, 1968).

19 Nevertheless, in this detailed exegesis on Nkrumah’s conception of Being—the
 20 interfaces where Consciencism grapples with African society as it *has-Existed* and
 21 *is-Existing*, and is yet to Exist—the applications of such an ontology cannot be said
 22 to stop at the level of postcolonial analysis of African society. Rather, I would argue
 23 that Nkrumah’s theory, and the African situation, will be intricately applicable to
 24 contemporary, technologically-saturated society, and the crisis of Being it produces
 25 in *Dasein*.

26
 27

28 **Consciencism and Enframing in the Era of Technology**

29

30 Aside from the detailed exposition on ontology as it relates to human Existence,
 31 the later Heidegger (1977) also flirts with the question of Being as it relates to our
 32 ever-expanding age of technology. In the 1954 essay, *The Question Concerning*
 33 *Technology*, Heidegger (1977) sets out to define the essence of technology by
 34 examining the way humanity related to it in the past, and how it related to it in the
 35 late-industrial present of the Cold War era. In spite of the relevance of this piece at
 36 the time—coinciding with the Third Industrial Revolution and post-war economic
 37 boom—many would, nevertheless, argue that Heidegger’s insights remain so to this
 38 day (Huttunen & Kakkori, 2021). In this part in particular, I would like to focus on
 39 why precisely Nkrumah’s Consciencism outlined previously, especially in light of
 40 its unique notion of Being, bears a further synthetic potential with Heidegger’s
 41 notions in the domain of technology.

42 Heidegger (1977) begins his essay by evoking the question of what the essence
 43 of technology is, and arguing that such an essence cannot be found in a conception
 44 of technology as an *instrumentality*: a mere means (*energeia*) to an *actuality-as-end*
 45 (*entelecheia*), writing, “Technology is therefore no mere means.” (p. 12). In this
 46 light, Heidegger (1977) further explains that technology is itself likewise capable of

1 being an end *qua entelecheia*, as it is the effect which is caused by the conception
 2 of its product *in potentia* by Man. For, if we understand technology to be a mere
 3 means, and a mere cause that produces an effect *qua* product, we fail to see the fact
 4 that the conception of the *need-to-Exist-as-product*—in which case it is a liminal
 5 *not-yetness* as a *potentiality* for the product—is itself a cause for the *actualization*
 6 of the *energeia* necessary to give the product Existence (Heidegger, 1977).

7 This pivotal point, for Heidegger (1977), is distinguishing the essence of
 8 technology—and its human operators—in the ‘past’ versus ‘present’, with
 9 technology in the past having been not a mere means to an end of manufacturing
 10 (*instrument*), as was mentioned, but that which allowed a certain active relation
 11 between its causes in what is called ‘*bringing-forth*’ (*Her-vor-bringen*). *Bringing*
 12 *forth*, Heidegger (1977) explains, is that which “brings hither out of concealment
 13 forth into concealment” (p. 11), an act which he calls ‘*revealing*’. In such a way,
 14 *revealing* is constitutive of the Truth (*aletheia*) of the thing at hand—its relation to
 15 Existence as an *actuality*, in our analytic (Heidegger, 1962). Past technology,
 16 likewise, was not solely concerned with the *revealing* of a product in the sense of
 17 *physis*, or a *bringing-forth* out of itself (*en heautoi*)—like a flower that blooms from
 18 a plant—but also entailed a different type of *poiesis* (creation/making) that *brought-*
 19 *forth* in another (*en alloi*): the artisan as Man himself operating the technology
 20 (Heidegger, 1977). In this *bringing-forth* of himself, Man was—in a sense paralleled
 21 to Marx—able to *actualize* himself through his *potential-to-produce* via tools and
 22 machines, and as the possessor of his labor’s Truth imbued with his *Existence-as-*
 23 *producer*. Heidegger (1977) thus concludes this part by saying, “Technology is a
 24 mode of revealing. Technology comes to presence (*West*) in the realm where
 25 revealing and unconcealment take place, where *aletheia*, truth, happens.” (p. 13).

26 Furthermore, Heidegger’s (1977) emphasis was that technology—in the past—
 27 served as a *gathering* we spoke of prior in relation to the *thinghood* of the jug. This
 28 ability of technology to *gather-together* the Aristotelian Four Causes [the formal
 29 cause (the form of the product), efficient cause (artisan as maker), material cause
 30 (what matter comprises the product), and final cause (the *telos* of the product)] was
 31 something unique to—and defining of—the *bringing-forth* of past technology as its
 32 essence, moreover (Heidegger, 1977). For, technology was not a mere means for
 33 manufacture, but an instrument of an *actualizing* a Truth which was always-already
 34 there, but which has come into unconcealment from being hidden (Heidegger,
 35 1977).

36 At the turn of the Third Industrial Revolution—which saw a gradual
 37 replacement of the Fordist, centralized production model with the post-Fordist and
 38 decentralized one (Dormois, 2013)—Heidegger found himself questioning the very
 39 *bringing-forth* then-modern technology introduced into society, such as gene
 40 technology and nuclear power, although his critique undoubtedly reached, in
 41 retrospect, the vicissitudes of the Second Industrial Revolution of mass production,
 42 too (Huttunen & Kakkori, 2021). Heidegger (1977) noticed that technology in the
 43 modern age halts the above-explained *poiesis* characteristic of past technology as a
 44 way of *revealing*, and instead purports itself towards a different kind of *revealing*:
 45 *Enframing* (*Ge-stell*). *Enframing* is a “way of revealing having the character of
 46 destining, namely, the way that *challenges-forth*.” (Heidegger, 1971, p. 29), where

1 *challenging-forth*—as opposed to our aforesaid *bringing-forth*—treats the
 2 world, and Man as part of it, as a *standing-reserve* to be set-upon. This *standing-*
 3 *reserve*, for Heidegger (1977), refers to a form of spatiotemporal paralysis of things-
 4 in-the-world, writing, “Everywhere everything is ordered to stand by, to be
 5 immediately at hand, indeed to stand there just so that it may be on call for a further
 6 ordering.” (p. 17). In such a way, it sets these things, to relate to Heidegger’s (1962)
 7 earlier work, *Being and Time*, as *present-at-hand*: there to be examined not as per
 8 its use value, but as an object of examination. Nevertheless, it is precisely this which,
 9 Heidegger (1977) says, negates the *objectness* of the object *present-at-hand*,
 10 writing, “whatever stands by in the sense of *standing-reserve* no longer stands over
 11 against us as object.” (p. 17).

12 I would argue that this is for no other reason than the fact that—if we examine
 13 an object without its purpose and usefulness to us (*qua telos*), an object as being
 14 *ready-to-hand*—then the distinctions between “object A” and “object B” become
 15 very subtle, and eventually dissolve formally. For instance, a lamp and a bottle both
 16 are distinct objects in-the-world, but their distinction, arguably, does not depend on
 17 the quantifiable categories (spatiotemporal arrangements/shapes) as much as it
 18 depends on the fact that we *use* a lamp to *see*, while we *use* a bottle to *contain*. For,
 19 if we attempt to dissect the *objectness* of these objects down to their fundamental
 20 material causes, we would find that the bottle is made of the same ‘strings’ that make
 21 up the lamp, and vice versa. In such a way, the forms of the lamp and the bottle—
 22 their *actualities* as being distinct from each other—only relate to their *potentiality*
 23 to be used in “scenario x” as distinct from “scenario y” by Man which imbues this
 24 *potentiality* onto them through his *Dasein*; a *readiness-to-hand*. Should they
 25 become *present-at-hand*, and thus observed as objects of scientific inquiry separate
 26 from the subject’s conception of their utility, then they fall into a purity of matter
 27 when we categorically strip them down to their sole material cause: a *pure*
 28 *potentiality* (*potentialitas in puritate*), a *potentiality* to be *anything*—and thus
 29 *nothing in specific*.

30 In *Enframing*, the sheer issue of *revealing* the *presencing-at-hand* of objects
 31 which negates their *objectness* thus forces them into *thinghood*, the apophantic
 32 complement to their prior Existence as a Being (non-Existence). Though, Heidegger
 33 (1977) wishes to make it known that this influx of *thinghood* in things *present-at-*
 34 *hand* in an *Enframing* does not solely pertain to things-in-the-world, but Being-in-
 35 the-world (*In-der-Welt-Sein*) itself as *Dasein*: the Existential Being. Heidegger
 36 (1977) explains this by writing:

37
 38 “Only to the extent that man for his part is already challenged to exploit the energies
 39 of nature can this ordering revealing happen [as *standing-reserve*]. If man is
 40 challenged, ordered, to do this, then does not man himself belong even more originally
 41 than nature within the *standing-reserve*? The forester in the woods[...]he is made
 42 subordinate to the orderability of cellulose, which for its part is challenged-forth by the
 43 need [*potentiality*] for paper.” (p. 18)

44
 45 It becomes clear to see how what seems to be at issue in *Enframing* is precisely
 46 a *potentiality* that becomes unresolved and *unactualized*: a *potentiality-for-*
 47 *potentiality*. The *potentiality* of paper—to even begin to be used as something

1 *ready-to-hand* in manufacturing reminiscent of ‘past technology’ —calls into
 2 necessity a *potentiality* for cellulose to develop, but which never *actualizes* (insofar
 3 as then there would be no *need* for paper anymore), and which itself *potentializes*
 4 the lumberjack *qua Dasein*. Nonetheless, this cycle of *potentiality* needs to itself be
 5 able to remain *in potentia*, insofar as an ever-perpetuating desire for something
 6 incompletely obtainable keeps *Enframing* as itself. *Enframing*—perhaps precisely
 7 because of its tendency to *potentiality-for-potentiality*—has a tendency to block any
 8 future *bringing-forth* as *poiesis*, leaving production in a liminal space of
 9 unfulfillment (Heidegger, 1977). This echoes in the fundamental insatiability of
 10 demand *qua* “demand for love” as the origin of the perpetuating, unfulfillable nature
 11 of human desire Lacan (2007) speaks of.

12 The implications this carries for *Dasein* faced with such a *potentializing* may,
 13 arguably, be noticed at the first light of such a problem. For, as we have seen, *Dasein*
 14 is an Existential Being, and not a mere Existence, or mere Being. In *Enframing*
 15 reducing the world to *thinghood*—and *Dasein* with it—it fundamentally jeopardizes
 16 *Dasein*’s Existence in-the-world. *Dasein*’s *actualization*—namely through its labor,
 17 the things *ready-to-hand qua* means of production, and the products of its labor
 18 thereof—fades into a *potentiality-for-potentiality* characteristic of *Enframing*, and
 19 “*more originally*” (Heidegger, 1977, p. 18) so than other objects in the world. But it
 20 is precisely because *Dasein*—in its *objectness* as an Existence in-the-world—
 21 suffers from *Enframing* ‘*more originally*’ than other objects, and thus a relegation
 22 to mere *thinghood qua Being*, that this relation sows a *potentiality-for-actualization*
 23 of *Dasein* from this state: a *freedom*.

24 Heidegger (1977) explains that, “Precisely because man is challenged more
 25 originally than are the energies of nature[...]he never is transformed into mere
 26 *standing-reserve*.” (p. 18), and that, “It is to the happening of *revealing*, i.e., of truth,
 27 that freedom stands in the closest and most intimate kinship.” (p. 25). Due to the
 28 fact that *Enframing* is yet another mode of *revealing*—and *revealing* a
 29 ‘concealment’ of the world’s *objectness*, as opposed to its unconcealment (*qua*
 30 form) in *poiesis*—it runs the *potentiality* to its own demise *qua potentiality-for-*
 31 *potentiality*: it runs the *potentiality* to return to unconcealment as a mode of
 32 *revealing* the Truth (*aletheia*) (Heidegger, 1977). And, for Heidegger (1977), Man
 33 as *Dasein* may be said to play a cardinal role in this very shift of modes of *revealing*,
 34 wherein, “when we once open ourselves expressly to the *essence* of technology [as
 35 *Enframing*], we find ourselves unexpectedly taken into a freeing claim.” (p. 26).
 36 Thus, Heidegger (1977) concludes that, “The rule of *Enframing* threatens man with
 37 the *possibility that it could be denied to him to enter into a more original revealing*
 38 *and hence to experience a more primal truth [aletheia].*” (p. 28). In this very way,
 39 it may be said that—by threatening *revealing*—*Enframing* reveals its *thereness* for
 40 Man to subsume in all its glory; a double-edged blade, its kryptonite through and
 41 through its very hegemony.

42 In such a way, aside from Heidegger’s exegesis, Nkrumah’s Consciencism may
 43 be said to offer one of the—if not the only thoroughly elaborated—philosophy and
 44 ideology for the aforementioned *freedom* in the modern technological age. For, the
 45 sheer emphasis on—what we have dubbed as—Existential Being in Nkrumah’s
 46 (1970) philosophy, and its African socialist principles, offer the capacity for *Dasein*

1 to become *free* in its relation to the world of ever-evolving technology without the
 2 need to seek refuge in a technologically-primitive past. If Man's unique capacity is
 3 his ability to mediate between the immanent and transcendental viz. *categorical*
 4 *conversion*, and is thus a 'bridge' between the Existential nature of the
 5 transcendental *actuality*, and the Being of material *potentiality*, then—as has been
 6 explored—he must have elements common to both. This is precisely himself as an
 7 Existential Being, precisely among other Existential Beings (*Daseins*) he calls his
 8 *community*.

9 A point of emphasis as a methodology in this *freedom* becoming *actualized*
 10 shared by both Heidegger (1977) and Nkrumah (1970) alike is the role of art.
 11 Nkrumah (1970) describes art in capitalist and communist societies alike as having
 12 been perverted in favor of ideological indoctrination of an establishment, writing:

13
 14 “Today, in the socialist countries of Europe, where the range of conduct is fixed by
 15 socialist principles, that particular art which glorifies the socialist ideology is
 16 encouraged at the expense of that art which the supremacy of aristocrats or the
 17 bourgeoisie might inspire[...]The bourgeoisie for their part injected a puritan strain into
 18 art, and in general directed it along lines of portraiture.” (pp. 63 & 64)

19
 20 Nkrumah (1970), however, gives the example of art being used for
 21 revolutionary purposes, such as Francisco de Goya's own, which aimed to destroy
 22 the notion of an existing superstructure, and from here likewise comments on
 23 African art's nature in that:

24
 25 “It is the moral-philosophical preoccupation in terms of which this portrayal was done
 26 which explains its typical power. It is this also which explains the characteristic
 27 distortion of form in African art. In the portrayal of force, whether as forces of the
 28 world, of generation and death, or the force of destiny, it was essential that it should
 29 not be delineated as something *assimilated and overcome*. And this is the impression
 30 which the soft symmetries of lifelike art would have given. It is to avoid this impression
 31 of force overcome that African art resorted to distortion of forms.” (p. 64)

32
 33 Relating this back to what we have said about *Enframing*, it is precisely the
 34 *potentiality-for-potentiality* which negates human Existence that African art actively
 35 depicts, in spite of the African tribal societies centuries ago which painted it
 36 certainly not having reached the level of technology the world has now. Yet what
 37 makes African society so peculiar in this regard is that it understood the dynamism
 38 that Heidegger (1977) lays his bet on being primarily an element of contemporary
 39 technological society in a seemingly Painless fashion. It seems almost as if these
 40 societies interrogated the very nature of *potentiality-for-potentiality* opposed to
 41 *potentiality-for-actuality* without any recourse to Heideggerian, technological
 42 *Enframing*, or existential Pain and suffering in light of this very *potentiality* as did,
 43 for instance, Schopenhauer. This, thus, is precisely why I would argue that
 44 Consciencism, in recourse to an absorption of the Spirit of these African societies,
 45 paves the only *bona fide* way forward in combatting the modern problem of
 46 *Enframing* viz. this 'carrying' of history on one's shoulders. It is precisely this
 47 *dehumanization*, on the one hand, which is paradoxically contained in the Spirit of

1 humanism in African socialism as the seed for its very own humanization: a
 2 humanization of *Dasein(s)* through the *freedom* it gives by depriving it, much like
 3 *Enframing*.

4 In a use of art in the tradition of African art applied to contemporary, *Enframed*
 5 society, we find a certain “essential space of man’s essential being [which] receives
 6 the dimension which unites it to something beyond itself from out of the conjoining
 7 relation (*Ver-hältnis*) [between man and technology]” (Heidegger, 1977, p. 39). Art
 8 is, furthermore, for Heidegger (1977), a way of returning to *poiesis* as a primary
 9 mode of *revealing*, where “It was finally that revealing which holds complete sway
 10 in all the fine arts, in poetry, and in everything poetical that obtained *poiesis* as its
 11 proper name.” (p. 34). To support this, Heidegger (1977) further emphasizes art’s
 12 uniqueness in relation to Nietzsche’s *will-to-power* (*Wille-zur-Macht*) in *The Word*
 13 *of Nietzsche*, where he says that, “The essence of art, understood from out of the
 14 will to power, consists in the fact that art excites the will to power first of all towards
 15 itself[...].” (p. 86).

16 Understanding the above exposition, it becomes clear that art—in all its
 17 manifestations—serves as the catalyst for the transformation of *potentiality* into
 18 *actuality*, and, coupled with Consciencism as a guiding philosophy which intricately
 19 lays out the experience of African societies having Painlessly grappled with this
 20 dilemma centuries prior as their lived experience, serves as the key to *Dasein*’s
 21 *freedom* in today’s world. It may be said to be the key to maintaining *Dasein*’s
 22 nature as an Existential Being in a world which ever-so-frequently attempts to strip
 23 it of its Existence thereby. Placing Man at the helm of *categorical conversion*, as
 24 Nkrumah did with Consciencism, allows Man to always straddle the boundary
 25 between the immanent and transcendental, and maintain it hence, such that in no
 26 case is he to be solely reduced to a similitude to other *potentialities*, nor a sole
 27 identification with other *actualities*.

30 Conclusion

31
 32 What has been ubiquitous across the above analysis is the tension between
 33 *potentiality* and *actuality*, Being and Existence, and how both are encompassed in
 34 ever-changing social contexts. Heidegger’s critique of modern technology,
 35 culminating in the notion of *Enframing*, illustrates how *Dasein* risks being reduced
 36 to mere *standing-reserve* where *potentiality-for-potentiality* dominates, leaving the
 37 possibility of genuine *poiesis* suspended. In our *Enframed*, contemporary world, the
 38 freedom of our *Dasein* is imperiled, and the very act of *revealing* the truth (*aletheia*)
 39 is threatened by the insatiable technological ordering surrounding us.

40 Yet, as this work has shown, the philosophy of Consciencism provides
 41 guidance for reclaiming that freedom, and bridging the aforementioned
 42 dichotomizations through a Painless resolution. Nkrumah’s emphasis on—what I
 43 have called—Existential Being, mediated through the communal Spirit of African
 44 socialism, demonstrates that humanity can navigate the challenges of technological
 45 *Enframing* without reverting to a primitive past or fully succumbing to the state of
 46 *thinghood*, either. Art itself emerges as the perfect catalyst of this transformation,

1 and Consciencism thereby frames a materialistically-grounded-but-simultaneously-
 2 idealistic *modus operandi* in which *potentiality-for-potentiality*—so central to
 3 *Enframing*—can be used against itself in allowing *Dasein* among other *Daseins* a
 4 taste of authenticity: an authenticity *qua* its very *freedom*.

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