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CONCEPT OF THIRD WORLD AND IDENTITY: A HERMENEUTIC APPROACH

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Abstract

The term 'Third World' represents one of the bases on which nations of the world are classified based on geographical, economic, and political considerations. Alfred Sauvy, in his 1952 article published in the French L'Observateur, used it to present a classification of the nations of the world during the Cold War era into US-NATO block or the First World, Soviet-Communist block or the Second World and other nations, non-aligned to either of the two blocks called the Third World. This aside, Sauvy also uses the term to describe the living conditions of medieval France's third estate or commoners and the antagonism in relations between them and members of both the first and second estates before and during the French Revolution. Although the original reference is stratification based on social status, which pitched the commoners of France against the nobles and the clergy, it equally presents an idea of denigration, accounting for the fact that poor countries of the world are classified as third-world nations or dependent nations. Consequently, the recent use of 'Third World' often describes abject socio-economic and political conditions associated with the so-called least developed nations of the earth. Description of such deplorable social and economic situations as a matter of necessity demands conscientious motion towards the first/second world conditions as the sole paradigm and measure of development or progress. In other words, the third world, exploited, ignored and despised like the third estate, wants to and should be something. Questions deducible from this with regard to social identity, social consciousness, imitationism or its nonexistence thereof are not farfetched. These questions are pertinent in any discussion of the concept 'Third World' and would guide our interpretation of the concept, especially as it applies to Africa. The idea is that, although Africa and the other parts of the world are regarded as Third World nations that desire and work to assert their self-identity, this could only be properly stated by identifying acquired traits within their peculiar cultural ideals.

Keywords: Third World, Identity, Hermeneutics

Introduction

It is indubitable that there are significant gaps between the nations of the world and between the different peoples on earth; hence, we have such classifications as first world, second world, third world and even recently, fourth world. Of all these classes and concepts, the third world is the most discussed and, ultimately, mind-boggling. The fact is, whenever we hear the term 'third world' mentioned or used, it brings to mind so many stereotypes such as underdevelopment, backwardness, poverty, hunger, diseases, exploitation, the forgotten peoples of the world, high crime rate, conflict and strife, e. t. c., conditions which do not exist or marginally do in the other worlds. This is so because the term, as often perceived and represented, ranks far below the other worlds (first and second) in the scheme of things. Thus, it is usually hard to conceive or even discuss 'third world' if not in reference to the others; the extent of their growth and advancement, a height the third "worlders" are yet to attain and may never do. In other words, one can boldly state that the third world so

perceived has no existence, no position or name of its own, since it is only mentioned from derived dependent point of view. As such, one is not at a loss why, in the dependency theory, the third world nations comprise the periphery nations while the supposed nations of the first and second worlds are the core nations that are at the centre of and do determine the economic-political structure of the world. But does this mean that the third world has no identity? Who and who comprise the third world, and what standard features connect them?

The use of the term 'Third World,' apart from its geopolitical designation, was intended to show—the non-recognition of some people as measuring up to the supposed standard that befits man as such, for the very idea of the third world right from its coinage denotes denigration and denial. It was born out of the European superiority complex and also at a time when most parts of the world were under Western subjugation in the form of colonialism and imperialism. Though projected to show the political-ideological divide of the Cold War era, it comes with the undertone of cultural, economic and political superiority of Europe, America and the other so-called Western nations, when compared to other countries that are not so ranked. Evident from this is that the socio-economic conditions within most nations in Africa, Asia, Oceania and Latin America are far below that obtainable in the Western countries, just as the socio-economic conditions of the third estate of medieval France were far below those of the first and second estates of the realm. The estates of the realm were the broad social orders of the hierarchically conceived society that was recognised in medieval Christian Europe. So, hierarchically, the third estate depended on and was subservient to the other estates, such that their position and circumstances were only seen from the position and social importance of the other two estates. The third world is but an appendage and a determined position. But is there no way the third world or estate could assert her position independent of the first and second worlds or estates?

Clarification of Terms

Third World

The term 'Third World' has been used to bring out the idea of stratification and inequality among world nations. The concept of such division among nations arose right from the onset of the coinage of the term and its use by the French demographer Alfred Sauvy during the Cold War era. The Cold War, borne out of ideological differences, created a rough geopolitical alliance that pitched the NATO-Capitalist bloc nations against the Eastern-Communist bloc nations. That is, the first-world countries were rated first versus second-world countries, while all the other nations caught up in the middle of this war, non-aligned to either side, were collectively referred to as third-world nations. That is:

...Alfred Sauvy coined the term "third world" to refer to everyone else, the countries unaligned and uninvolved with either side of the Cold War division. With the naming of the third world, it followed that the Cold War blocs should get numbered, too. The democratic, capitalist countries within the Western sphere of influence became the "first world". The communist-socialist states that were part of or allied with the USSR became the "second world"¹

Sauvy's use of the term pictures the tripartite hierarchical social order of the then European middle age, viz, the clergy or the first estate, the noble or the second estate and the commoners or third estate of the realm. This gradation or structure was based on the medieval ranking of importance; the commoners or the third estate were considered the lowest order of the realm and subservient too, when compared to the other two estates.

Going by this, therefore, the idea of non-alignment in the considerations of Sauvy implies the lowest status or position in comparison to either the first world or the second world. Lack of position invariably translates to a very low standing or non-existence, hence non-recognition.

However, recent considerations and use of the term have gradually tended to shift from the initial idea of a geopolitical alliance. The third world has come to be used to distinguish levels of development and economic strength of different nations of the world. It now defines the development gap between peoples and cultures, dividing humanity into the haves and the have-nots. M Soniak explains further thus:

At the end of the Cold War, the three worlds' model took on more of an economic context rather than a geopolitical one. The first now usually refers to western, industrialized states, while the second world consists of the communist and former communist states. The third world still encompasses "everybody else", mainly in Africa, Asia and the Middle East, and tends to be a catchall for "developing nations" that are poor, less technologically advanced, dependent on the developed countries, or have unstable governments, high rates of population growth, illiteracy and disease, a lack of middle class, a lot of foreign debt, or some combination thereof.²

However, this still coincides with the medieval European hierarchical classification of the realm, which reflected the economic standings of the various estates. Here, the third estate (like the third world) comprised the commoners or the least economically endowed, whose labour and sweat promoted the higher economic status of the other two estates. "The higher estates dependency on the commoners' production, however often divided the otherwise equal common people into burghers of the realm's cities and towns, and the peasants of the realm's surrounding lands and villages"³; further adding to their predicament. Just like in feudal societies, the serfs do not own wealth or lands; instead, they labour to increase the economic status of the wealthy landowners. Consequently, the non-alignment of these nations implies not just their non-participation in the Cold War but, more importantly, the fact that the acclaimed two higher worlds are the basis for and in terms of which these nations of the world can be assessed and measured in terms of the growth and development. In short, their social status serves only one purpose: to depict the level of development in the other worlds they are bereft of.

Going by this, then, the obvious points of intersection among third world countries is their uniformity in terms of economic status depicted in the form of extreme poverty, overpopulation, underemployment, famine, poor level of education, low standard of living, lack of technological advancement, bad governance, crime and conflict etc. On this basis, too, it would be correct to even classify some poor countries that aligned with either the NATO bloc (Vietnam, for instance) or the Communist bloc (Cuba, for instance) during the Cold War, among the third world nations. These countries were among the more significant parts of the world which had no interest in the ideological issues of the war but were manipulated into forming alliances with either the first-world or second-world nations through aid reception and other forms of economic cooperation. Understandably, the economic weaknesses of these countries pre-disposed them to joining such alliance. This equally brings out that the term 'third world' goes with a certain mentality: the developed versus the underdeveloped and the culturally superior versus the culturally inferior. The implication is that one (strong nations) expects the other (perceived weak nations) to lean on and learn from them. Walter Rodney represents this in his dependency theory, in which

African nations form the bulk of periphery countries in the world economic system dominated by the core countries of the West, that is, Europe and America. Arising from this, then, is the idea of classification, division, segregation, domination, and consequent exploitation among the human race.

Third world has equally been used as ‘third position’ and ‘third force’ to refer loosely to the idea that the interests of the former colonial and oppressed nations are best served by taking an independent position from both the Capitalist and Communist ideological systems. This idea and use was made famous in the 1960s as a result of the growing independence of the former colonies and the publication of Franz Fanon’s *Wretched of the Earth*. Hence, intellectuals and leftists in the West and the former colonial nations extensively used these. The movement aimed at realising this situation was popularly referred to as ‘Third Worldism’. ‘Third Worldism’ is a political movement that argues for the unity of third-world nations against first-world influence and the principle of non–non-interference in other countries’ domestic affairs. Groups most notable for expressing and exercising this idea are the Non–Aligned Movement (NAM) and the group of 77, which provide the basis for relations and diplomacy between not just the third world countries, but between the third world and first and second worlds”⁴. Recent scholarly journals and books down the 1970s employed this idea in most of their descriptions and discussions on and about the former colonies. However, whichever way ‘Third World’ is used, the term undoubtedly posits the idea of this gap between the perceived big strong nations and the small weak nations and the fact that the survival of these weak nations depends, ultimately, on the strong nations.

Identity

The word ‘identity’ derives from the Latin *identitas*, which translates as sameness. That is, “sameness in all that constitutes the objective reality of a thing. It further means unity and persistence of personality or individual comprehensiveness of a life or character”⁵. Identity connotes uniqueness, individuality and distinction in things or among people. It refers to “distinctive characteristics belonging to any given individual or shared by all members of a particular social category or group”⁶. In other words, identity implies one’s conscious self-image and how one construes one’s self-model or individuality. Identity has been treated in various ways, including personal, social, and cultural aspects.

Personal identity deals with the question, who am I? Who is a person? The concern here is a matter of differentiation based on uniqueness; hence, personal identity refers to peculiar attributes, ideals and values that differentiate a person from others. It shows the goals, values, beliefs, and even features that an individual adopts, holds, or has that distinguish him or her from others. In other words,

We often speak of one’s “personal identity” as what makes one the person one is. Your identity in this sense consists roughly of what makes you unique as an individual and different from others. Or it is the way you see or define yourself, or the network of values and convictions that structure your life. This individual identity is a property (or set of properties).⁷

The issues here are the concerns that arise as a result of our being a person or individuals. Thus, these questions arise: who is a person? What defines an individual? Or what is that by which one is said to be distinct from another? The word ‘person’ is from the Latin word *persona* and the Greek word *prosopon*, both referring to masks worn by actors

on a stage, representing the different characters on the stage or a play. “A person is a being, such as a human that has certain capacities or attributes consisting personhood, which in turn is defined differently by different disciplines, and by different cultures in different times and place”.⁸ The question of the differences in the conception of the person by scholars and cultures grounds the identity problem. It equally brings to the fore the fact that a person’s attributes and capacities cannot be fully described independent of the context and cultural affiliations. In this regard, Erik Erikson conceptualised identity as resulting from the dynamic interplay between individual and context. He said, “the environment in which a child lived was crucial to providing growth, adjustment, a source of self-awareness and identity.”⁹ Consequently, the question, what is that by which one is said to be distinct from another, can only be adequately answered by discussing the cultural and social aspects of identity.

Cultural identity is self-perception and self-definition within the context of and as part of a particular group or culture. It “is the identity or feeling of belonging to, as part of the self-conception and self-perception to nationality, ethnicity, religion, social class, generation, locality and any kind of social group that have its own distinct culture, in this way that cultural identity is both characteristics of the individual but also to the culturally identical group that has its members sharing the same culture identity”.¹⁰ This in other words implies an interaction leading to interface between a person and the cultural situations, such that the perceived personal identity of an individual is identical with such cultural situation. This is a sense of integration and solidarity with the ideals of a given cultural group and the attitudes, beliefs and behaviours that manifest as a result of this solidarity towards others. Therefore, it is a culture that assigns an individual a place and role through such identification with its structures, values and ideas. This happens thus:

...the formation of one’s identity occurs through one’s identification with significant others (primarily with parents and other individuals during one’s biographical experiences, and also with “groups” as they are perceived). These others may be benign such that one aspires to their characteristics, values and beliefs (a process of idealistic-identification) or malign-when one wishes to dissociate from their characteristics (a process of defensive contra-identification).¹¹

The perceived groups, their mores, and the ideals, labels, and conventions with which one identifies form one’s social identity. These assign social roles and responsibilities that properly define one’s identity. Therefore, identity as such is a synthesis of personal, social, and cultural self-conceptions.

Since identity is a mark of distinction among people, it has formed the basis for classifying people into racial or ethnic groups. This breeds the idea of categorisation or stratification into human groups, especially as witnessed by the European exploration and conquest of other continents. In other words, identity introduces the concept of superiority and inferiority of races, the idea of the culturally strong or advanced versus the culturally weak or non-progressive. This has given rise to many stereotypes associated with the perceived inferior identity or group by the perceived superior races. Such stereotypes, according to D. A. Masolo, are what metamorphosed and “gradually grew into a formidable two-pronged historical reality (in Africa): slavery and slave trade on the one hand, and (the denial of) academic expression on the other”.¹²

Hermeneutic of Third World and Identity

“Like the third estate,” writes Sauvy, “the third world is nothing, and it wants to be something”.¹³ Raised here is the question of identity, which is one of the issues implicit in the idea of the third world. What is the identity of the third world? How is the third world identified? In contention here is not just how the other worlds define the third world, but equally and of greater importance is how the third world defines self about the other worlds. The import of this and the reverberation it has generated both in its sociological and epistemic senses do not need much emphasis.

The third world, born out of the ideological positions of the Cold War, is seen as non-aligned since it belonged to neither of the identified positions in contention at the time: the NATO-Western bloc versus the Communist-Eastern bloc. As a result, Sauvy's non-alignment is nothing since it has no position and, by extension, no identity. His idea evokes only the existence of two worlds, Western countries and the countries of the Communist bloc, between which a cold war raged. “This opposition tightened to deny the existence of a third world, the worldwide underdeveloped, moreover coveted by the two blocks”.¹⁴ In other words, apart from the two identifiable worlds, there is nothing or any other position; what exists can only be identified through alliance with either of the two blocks; otherwise, it is nothing or not in existence. Consequently, the third world can only exist as an extension of the first or second worlds. It is only from these two known positions that existence and identity can be bequeathed. Logically, when one is neither A nor B, he cannot be in a position, for there is no C or AB position. Therefore, using the ideological differences of the Cold War era, the third world stands for a negation of identity or, at best, a non-identity.

But what constitutes this negation? Negation as such presupposes its determination at all, hence its existence; positionlessness is invariably a position already for the very fact that it is seen as such. According to Sauvy, the third world is comparable to the third estate of medieval France. The third estates comprised the commoners, labourers, peasants and all the cadre of persons ranked in this social order of the era. Sauvy asserts that:

The commoners were universally considered the lowest order. The free peasants paid disproportionately high taxes compared to the other estates and were unhappy because they wanted more rights. In addition, first and second estates relied on the labour of the third, which made the latter's unequal status all the more glaring. Men and Women shared the hard life of physical labour and food shortages.¹⁵

So, the social conditions of the first and second estates of the realm were comfortable compared to those of the commoners. Added to this is the fact that the condition and social realities of the third estate were controlled and determined by the former two, making them very dependent. Consequently, the identity of the members of the third estate was only derived from the social positions or perspectives of the members of the first and second estates.

From the preceding, then, the social realities of third-world nations are underdevelopment, poverty, hunger, and disease occasioned mainly by the members of the first and second worlds. “Many third world countries are located in Africa, Latin America, and Asia. They are often nations that were colonized by another nation in the past”.¹⁶ Colonization and indirect subjugation of former colonies by their former colonisers constitute the significant reasons why the third world nations are slow in evolving socio-economically. There are countries like Ethiopia, for instance, who never had experience of colonisation, yet their condition is not any different from that of the rest in Africa. The

explanation for this could be found in the fact that these countries sought economic growth through an alliance with the economies of the first and second worlds and were instead undermined by these two superpowers, who were sceptical of their neutral stand during the Cold War era, hence plunging them into the same situation as the former colonies. Further conquering and domination of the third world was necessitated by creating and absorbing into a global market controlled by these two worlds. Other supposed forms of assistance, like financial aid and debt waivers or cancellation, all deepen the situations of the third-world nations by making their survival and existence solely dependent on the higher social orders and their economy. The socio-economic identity of the third is, by this, made to assume only a defined-determined path- a path created for them by the other. Gerard Chailand explains further:

The dependence theory suggests that multinational corporations and organizations such as the IMF and World Bank have contributed to making third world countries dependent on the first world countries for economic (and indeed social) survival. The theory states that the dependence is self-maintaining because the economic systems tend to benefit first world countries and corporations. Scholars debate whether population growth is a main source of problems in the third world or if the problems are more complex and thorny than that. Policy makers disagree on how much involvement first world countries should have in the third world and whether third world debts should be cancelled.¹⁷

Apart from the First World/Second World determination of the Third World through colonization and indirect dominance in the form of trade and material assistance, there is the issue of stereotypes faced by Third World members. "People in the first world, for example, often describe third world countries as underdeveloped, over populated and oppressed. Third world people are sometimes portrayed as uneducated, helpless or backwards."¹⁸ This situation akin to Levy Bruhl's Primitive doctrine is further emphasised and blown to proportion through videos and graphics that usually depict individuals in this world, mostly children and the aged, as dying of hunger, malnutrition, diseases and proper care. A steady flow of these graphics further shows the Third World as enveloped by bad governance and irresponsibility, constant agitation and unrest, conflict and violence. As a result, the image of the third world presented is too deplorable and hopeless, hence despicable when compared to the First and Second Worlds and their existential conditions. Thus, one hardly wonders when the Third World is identified as the exploited, the defeated, and the poorest in the scheme of things in the world order.

Psychologically, this negative perception is also imparted to Third World members. It informs how the Third World identifies herself in relationship with the First World or Second World nations. It is expected that in international relations, members of the Third World consciously and unconsciously denigrate their identity about the nations of either the First or the Second Worlds, especially when it is perceived that some benefit would accrue from doing this. To buttress this Doris Salcedo expresses: "I am a third world artist; from that perspective of the defeated people -it's where I am looking at the world."¹⁹ Doris is from Bogotá, the capital of Colombia, a Third World country in Southern America. Further understanding of her conception of the impact of this perception of the Third World on her people through her artistic representations is very vital:

Salcedo's understated sculptures and installations embody the silent lives of the marginalized, from individual victims of violence to the disempowered of the third

world. Although elegiac in tone, her works are not memorials: Salcedo concretizes absence, oppression and the gap between the disempowered and powerful. While abstract in form and open to interpretation, her works serve as testimonies on behalf of both victims and perpetrators.²⁰

This shows the Third World's identification of self as nothing and her positionless position; hence, her identity is charted by the already established or identified two positions.

In the case of Africa, for instance, scholars argue that this was how the Blackman was gradually led to accept himself as inferior compared to the Whiteman, hence incarnating in him the consciousness to become or assume the identity of the other. To postulate this, Sauvy writes that the Third World is nothing but wants to be something. Therefore, she could only become that which is already defined and identified, the identity assigned by the First/Second World. In other words, the impulse to change identity and be identified as something would logically culminate in the identification with the already identified. Consequently, Third World people, striped as they are of any form of identity, significantly project and exhibit perceived social cum political identities found in the First and Second World nations. For instance, an African or a Nigerian who had lived in any of the Western countries would always proudly display an acquired Western pattern of life before those who have never been outside the shores of the continent; these, on the other hand, would usually admire or envy him, as the case may be, thereby denigrating their own home-grown values. This imitative spirit has generally translated into efforts at restructuring social life and social structures within most Third World countries to reflect perceived social conditions within most Western countries. Thus, the increased and rapid urbanisation witnessed in these nations such that their rural lifestyle and traditional structures are fast disappearing if not completely eroded. The reason for this change is easily submerged under the idea of movement towards the future; that is, the Third World gradually strides towards the First and Second Worlds.

Another aspect of this movement is seen in migration activities. That is, citizens' migration from the Third World to the First/Second World, and the incessant rural to urban migration experienced within Third World nations. Shrivastava defines migration as an "instrument of cultural diffusion and interaction giving rise to the idea of people within people".²¹ Various reasons for such cultural diffusion through migration range from economic interests, need for survival and quest for a better living to desire to identify with a higher culture. All these point to the movement towards self-identification and the belief that this can only be realized outside one's original cultural setting. Lastly is the urgency with which many Third World nations readily joined the globalization process. The globalisation process intends to build a one world system, and present a platform on which each nation of the world is identifiable in the scheme of things in the world order. However, as Ikenga Oraegbunam observes, "creation of inequality, in disfavor of the less privileged countries, erosion of cultural identities and uniqueness, non-recognition of pluralism, marginalization of authority seem to be the most visible demerits of this globalist process".²² Therefore, one cannot but ask; how has the Third World fared in her tend to become the other?

Third World, Identity Crisis and Poverty

As we have seen, the Third World is implicitly a non-position and, without identity. Her urge to assert herself can only be satisfied from the position of the First or Second World.

This necessity to project self-identity introduces yet a despicable social condition: identity crisis. This is a situation of alienation, in which one is estranged from his traditional values as he tends towards or desires to be identified with values that are not his and that he finds difficult to assume. The result here is obvious: what, according to Oraegbunam “Ehusani has termed “ego distortion”.²³ This is because the individual is no longer what or where he used to be as he has shifted from this position, neither is he where he is going as he is not one with this. Mbefo argues that this is the “Cruellest legacy...that brought a confused sense of identity”.³¹ The Acculturation process implies that culture is dynamic, but this “uneasy union of two alien civilizations”²⁴ produces a different personality altogether: one who is at the crossroads and whose world is in disarray. This is simply because he is neither here nor there. In the words of Frantz Fanon, the Third World appears *Black Skin, White Masks*.

This crisis situation impinges on growth and development as there is great difficulty in defining true values worth having. According to Nnoruka, the explanation for this condition is easy, and it is because Third World people have refused and, therefore, failed to tackle the questions properly, “What am I? What kind of entity, what kind of being? To what exactly does the term, I refer? What constitutes my person?”²⁵ Consequently, the true identity of the Third World remains elusive and problematic. The tendency to continually define her identity from the position of the First and Second Worlds further escalates her positionless position. Chukwudum Okolo, in his reflections on the Nigerian culture, argues that this imitative spirit is what has degenerated into Squandermania Mentality, a psycho-social disposition in which the individual views everything in their material consumable values. He emphatically writes, “the concern here, however, is not the socio-political and economic changes evident in the African but the influence his vision of the white man’s material culture has on own tastes and values”.²⁶ He further argues that:

The cumulative effect has certainly been the enlargement of (the African) tastes, a change in his life style, in his social values, outlook on life etc. He now defines his social importance, social class in terms of wealth accumulation and display, the type of home he lives in, property acquired, social entertainment held, etc. Consequently, the instinct of wasteful or unproductive spending and wealth exhibitionism, two great indices of squandermania mentality, become high in the individual.²⁷

The consequences of such social values on the growth and progress of any society are not farfetched. As a result, Africa and, indeed, Third World nations are embroiled in interminable woes of underdevelopment and poverty, such as poor and insufficient water and food supply, unending inflation, poor infrastructure and social amenities, bad government, social aggression and conflict, constant war, and high mortality rates.

The rate of underdevelopment and crisis within the Third World has not been helped much by the contemporary globalization process. Instead, as earlier observed, the intention to create a one-world system, especially in form of a global trade system, has further aggravated the development woes of Third World nations. This Gerard Chailiand explains thus:

Combination of conditions in Asia, Africa, Oceania and Latin America is linked to the absorption of the third world into the international capitalist economy, by way of conquest and indirect domination. The main economic consequence of Western domination was the creation for the first time in history, of a world market. By setting up throughout the third world sub-economies linked to the West, and by

introducing other modern institutions, industrial Capitalism disrupted traditional economies and, indeed societies. This disruption led to under development.²⁸ Consequently, globalization, in this instance, is the Capitalist's iron fist in a glove or cat's paw that drives the Western agenda of further underdeveloping the already underdeveloped or expanding the perceived gap between the Third World and the other worlds. In short, Third World nations are urgently faced with, as a matter of necessity, the severe task of bridging this gap between them and the higher worlds. Otherwise, "globalization with its attendant effects of identity crisis and cultural alienation may become more intense."²⁹ This being so, the Third World would never catch up.

Third World, Search for Identity and Growth: Whither Africa?

Fully stated, Sauvy's position reads, "like the third estate, the third world is nothing and it wants to be something. The term implies that the third world is exploited, much as the third estate was exploited, and that like the third estate, its destiny is a revolutionary one".³⁰ From this position, we have tried to establish that the conception of the Third World just as with that of the third estate of the realm, is likened to lack of identity and alienation leading up to the abject conditions shown which are commonplace within those countries classified as the third world nations. It is obvious too, that these are not just external imposition, but has also become how the Third World conceives herself with regard to the others; hence the third world members in order to establish an identity necessarily run into crisis. This condition has further compounded the woes of Third World nations, prompting the question; what is the way out? For Sauvy, the destiny of the Third World is revolution; that is, to vigorously and conscientiously change the social order of things as it affects her. This implies that the Third World is called on, as a matter of urgency, to assert her own position, her place, her identity and uniqueness in the world order. Her position and identity has been called into question, requiring her to make a distinct mark or take a different step from what the other had perceived her to be. To do this implies that she should device proper positive means that would improve her present deplorable heritage, and as well make her stand up to the prejudices and demands of the other worlds.

Using Africa as a point of departure, these align with the repeated call made for African resurgence and for her to assert her own place among the comity of nations in the world. Various scholarships have shown the necessity of this by depicting how far off Africa has fallen in the scale of things operational in the world. Consequently, the first step is to realize that circumstances in history have necessitated the fact of cultural interference and interdependence. The African/Third Worlder should live within the reality of this. Acculturation and globalization with their attendant inequalities have placed the third world nations at the mercy of the other worlds; as such, their recovery and search for recognition should begin thereof; that is, from this realization. Such psychological disposition is very necessary, and should be the spring board to achieving social wholeness.

Foundational to this resurgence too is total mental and academic re-orientation. This is a very important step in the right direction as it stresses the fact that the African cannot determine its identity by burrowing deep into Western culture, as most contemporary citizens of the third world tend to do. "What defines who and what they are is the sum total of their ways of life. By trying to willingly emulate or being compelled to adopt the ways of life of the other as the Europeans impose theirs on African and as Africans would want to copy the western values, does not change the identity of such Africans (for the better)".

³¹ There is much to be gained from reviving and retaining some of the traditional African cultural ideals. Such re-orientation would serve to curb the defeatist mental attitudes of the African which suppose that anything Western is superior and better; a situation that C.B. Okolo describes as the “uprootedness of African being”.³² This will take place in form of critical self-examination and analysis of assimilated values to determine whether they are worth having, and after, situating these within the context of our indigenous social schemes. This is very necessary as most scholars believe that the areas of language, religion, economy, politics and fashion are the main avenues through which the process of Western superimposition on the African has always been made possible.

With the reconstitution of the indigenous system, and conscious efforts to situate some important foreign models within the African context, the African identity would begin to emerge. All the efforts to propose authentic African philosophy and to properly posit what it is all about are steps in this direction. These clearly present the experiences of Africans within their world, as such positing their contributions to the collective world social order. African position must find its weapon in the African environment through collective African cultural heritage, and it is only within this living conditions of the Africans could their intellectual content be forged. This would serve as catalyst and aid the need for, and the third world’s course to social revolution. Thus it will be impossible to reverse African/third world dependence on the other worlds without such mental reconstitution and reorganization. Part of this is what Zaato Knor calls “cultural sensitivity”.³³ This involves consciousness of one’s cultural identity and the need to preserve it irrespective of other cultural influences, interferences and enticements. Cultural sensitivity usually implants in one a sort of fanatic disposition or a kind of protectionism towards the issues of his or her identity. “In spite of how bitter (this) may appear, (it) is a tonic to awaken the consciousness of the people...that it is, their interest to do everything possible to keep their identity”.³⁴

Also, path to African/Third World resurgence necessarily involves tackling economic realities within the Third World nations and among their citizens. This situation as has been variously portrayed is deplorable and quite appalling. Consequently, taking on this is very important especially with the contemporary capitalist definition of the order of things in terms of wealth and material possessions, a situation which the Third World cannot evade having been inseparably tied to the current globalization process. If Africa and indeed, the rest of Third World hope to project their position before the other worlds, they need to seriously tackle issues of abject poverty and inequality among their citizens, and also their failing economies. To necessitate this, governments in the Third World need to institute and, vigorously and sincerely enforce policies that would bring about serious socio-economic reforms in their nations. This is because “drastic action is required to improve conditions in third world countries, including urban and rural public work projects to attack joblessness and underdevelopment, institutional reforms essential for the redistribution of economic power, agrarian reform, tax reform and the reform of public funding.”³⁵ All these would prove the basis and impetus for economic growth and even sciento-technological breakthrough that have indigenous underpinnings. The contemporary emphasis and re-emphasis on the efficacy of the traditional African medicine, its re-development and use in the treatment of diseases in Nigeria at the present is an instance in this direction. Imbibing similar steps in other fields of endeavor would go a long way in reducing the emphasis and

over dependence on the Western economy and aids, which on the long run, are contributory to Africa/Third World poverty.

Lastly, Africa and the other Third Worlders should recognize that the greatest enemy and stumbling block to their economic improvement is corruption occasioned by bad leadership. Scholars on African condition are univocal in proffering this as the basic problem that weighs down all the attempts so far made by the black man to develop his environment. Consequently, political reorganization is paramount if Africa/Third World would achieve any substantial social growth of her own. This should be aggressively and courageously pursued and put in place. Juridical and penal institutions should equally be strengthened to help curb crime else the aforementioned reforms may fail to bear any fruit, and the intention of poverty reduction becomes only but a farce.

Concluding Reflections

No doubt the perception and use of Third World was born out of social stratification and has culminated to denigration of races. Alfred Sauvy's coinage of the term from the standpoint of the social realities of the third estate of the medieval France is but a reflection of the European spirit and posture at the time in their respective colonies. At the time Sauvy published his article in the French *L'Observateur* in 1952, most parts of the world now classified as Third World nations, were under western subjugation and influences in form of colonialism and imperialism. One is hardly surprised that he used the term to refer to the exploited and dominated countries of Asia, Africa, Oceania and Latin America, who then exhibited the common traits of underdevelopment. As such, Sauvy's conception is in consonance with David Hume and Georg W. Hegel's denigratory description of the underdeveloped (African) as bereft of any form of reasoning in comparison to the Europeans. As Njoku presents this; "the African (Underdeveloped) mode of thinking was taken to be mythical and illogical; while the Western thinking is said to be scientific, rational and logical".³⁶ Therefore, the use of the term to refer to the gap or social distinction between the nations of the world tends to justify the European occupation and activities in their respective colonies at the time. The distorted pictures of human life and the despicable conditions within the third world nations provide basis to just regard colonialism and imperialism as but a rescue mission, in which case the former colonies owe their masters eternal gratitude. In other words, Sauvy indirectly projects and supports the rationale behind the scramble for and partitioning of Africa and the rest of Third World.

Similarly, the term, as employed by Sauvy, also gives backing to the contemporary European neo-colonial activities in the developing world, in form of economic subjugation, political manipulations and interferences. The sense is that most Third World nations are perceived as very helpless in managing their own affairs, hence needing further guidance from their former overlords. Globalization in this case implies an untold burden, modern slavery and unending suffering in form of perpetual dependence for existence and survival by the Third World on the First and Second Worlds. In other words, Third World is condemned to eternal reliance on the guidance and help of their 'big brothers', the West. This being the case, one hardly wonders at the understanding of development thus:

The term "underdevelopment", fraught with direction, postulated the existence of a development and only one, which the American economist, Walt Whitman Rostow was to theorize in the stages of the Economic Growth (1960). The big number of the poor countries was explained by their delay in a world process of development

whose United States opened the way, the result being a company of abundance, and economically liberal. It was thus appropriate, by means of an economic aid and from financial, to accelerate a too slow process, or sometimes hardly started.³⁷

However, Third World has the right to re-define herself differently. She has right to development and growth just like the other worlds; to define these on her own terms. The right to development is her inalienable right same as the fundamental human rights. Udombana describes development right as “the right of each people to freely choose its economic and social system without outside influence or constraint of any kind, and to determine, with equal freedom, its own model of development”.³⁸ This belongs equally to all human societies irrespective of race, social order and any other such classifications. As a result, governments in the Third World nations should take steps towards development by making concerted efforts in ending dictatorship and all such models of rulership reminiscent of the European domination. The roots of most problem in the Third World are not all historical, but are also consequences of the internal political decisions of most sovereign Third World states. Democratic governance has proven so far to be more accommodating of development and economic growth because it is tuned towards people and their right to self-determination. Third World should give true democracy a chance. This would give impetus for economic regeneration to be engraved at the heart of all governmental policies, de-emphasizing to an extent the capitalist trend of the world globalist process. Western economic models should be co-opted if necessary but should be adapted to each national, socio-cultural milieu. Acculturation is right if proper care is taken to avoid swallowing everything about the West hook line and sinker. Finally, part to this process also demands that the former colonialists and imperialists sincerely contribute towards the economic resurgence of their former colonies. This should be seen as “entitlements to these nations not welfare or charity”.³⁹ It is their human rights in the present scheme of things within the international community.

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