

## **RACISM AND THE AFRICAN PREDICAMENT: A CRITICAL INTERPRETATION AND DECONSTRUCTION OF OGUEJIOFOR'S EXTERNALIST ARGUMENT**

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### ***ABSTRACT***

This article is a critical interpretation and deconstruction of Oguejiofor's analysis of the African predicament. That most African countries in the 21<sup>st</sup> century are still suffering severe political and socioeconomic conditions is incontestable. The point of contestation among scholars is on the remote and immediate cause(s) of the political and socioeconomic predicaments in contemporary Africa. This article is a clinical examination of the position of the Nigerian philosopher, Josephat Obi Oguejiofor using the philosophical tools of critical analysis and argumentation. After a careful study of the works of Oguejiofor on the African predicament, we assert that Oguejiofor is an externalist in the sense that he tends to argue that the major factor(s) responsible for the predicaments of post-colonial Africa is/are external rather than internal. Our contention is that Oguejiofor's externalist argument is valid. However, we point out that his externalist argument did not vividly explain "why" Africans are yet to liberate themselves from the heinous heritage of slave trade and colonialism like other people have done and "how" Africans can overcome their predicament and develop their continent. To wit, the basic submission of the article is that the primary cause and fundamental factor that have continued to vitiate Africans' efforts toward overcoming their predicament even in the contemporary world is racism; and that Africa's predicament can hardly be overcome until our institutions of learning begin to produce a "thinking" public instead of a "nodding" public.

*Keywords: African predicament, Oguejiofor, Philosophy, Racism.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Josephat Obi Oguejiofor is an erudite Igbo-African catholic priest, scholar, a passionate researcher, copious writer, philosopher, theologian, and a Modern European Language Teacher. Although he has written a number of books, many

articles and conference papers, he is perhaps best known for his book titled *Philosophy and the African Predicament* (2001). In spite of being a multi-dimensional scholar, Oguejiofor is primarily a philosopher and the central theme that runs through most of his philosophical works is the African predicament. Oguejiofor's works address the nature, causes and possible solution to the African predicament in the contemporary world. But what is this phenomenon called the African predicament?

The African predicament refers to the historical and existential factors that make it difficult for Africans to exploit nature, harness their resources, meet their basic needs and in so doing protect, promote and preserve their well-being and as well lead a happy and relatively long life. The historical factors include the enslavement, colonization, dehumanization, suppression, domination and exploitation of Africa's human and material resources by Western powers for the development of their countries to the detriment of Africa. The existential factors include psychological trauma, inferiority complex, inter-African-state conflicts, civil wars, incessant intra-state ethnic and religious crises, intra-state terrorism, brain-drain, abject poverty amidst abundant wealth, bad governance, political instability, moral decadence and the suppression, domination, exploitation and misappropriation of the commonwealth of Africans by Africans in public offices. At this point, it is pertinent to note that the basic question here is not if these factors are real/factual, all Africans and non-Africans know and accept that these factors exist. The question is "what" created them and "why" are these factors still in existence after decades of political independence?

Given the official abolition of slave trade and colonialism, some scholars argue that the cause of the existential predicaments of Africans is fundamentally internal, while some argue that it is fundamentally external. In this sense, Oguejiofor takes a stand with the externalists. The objective of this essay is to interpret, examine and defend Oguejiofor's position against the position of the internalists and thereafter deconstruct and strengthen Oguejiofor's externalist position by linking it to racism proper. The offshoot of this exercise is the interpretation and the defense of the thesis that racism is the primary cause that propelled the historical factors; and still sustains the existential factors, responsible for the African predicament in the contemporary world.

### **WHAT IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE AFRICAN PREDICAMENT IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY?**

Generally, scholars and commentators on Africa would agree that the 21<sup>st</sup> century Africa is still a continent where underdevelopment is endemic (Oguejiofor, 2009:251). Indeed, it is a fact that the Africa of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is still a continent characterized by high death rate, malnutrition, political turbulence, intra-state terrorism, ethnic and religious conflicts, bad governance, gross stagflation, infrastructural decay, high rate of crime and moral decadence. Most contemporary Africans are living below the poverty line. They lack the basic necessities of life-food, shelter and clothing. They have to a large extent been

subjected to sub-human conditions - roaming the streets as beggars, sleeping under the bridge, in gutters bashers/containers, and if lucky enough may eat once a day. The most annoying aspect is that most of these dehumanized Africans are youths, graduates with different academic qualifications. These are the ones who have chosen the part of moral heroism. The morally weak ones often become criminals. The question that has engaged most African scholars is what may be responsible for this condition. The major contending arguments are between the internalist argument and the externalist argument.

### THE INTERNALIST ARGUMENT

The internalist argument refers to all arguments that portray the view that the major cause of the post-colonial African predicament is bad leadership without any attempt to link the cause of bad leadership in Africa to any external/non-African factor/force(s). Though the internalist argument has different versions, the dominant ones are the corrupt leadership argument and the prevailing value system argument. Proponents of the corruption leadership argument include A.A Madiebo, J.O. Odey and C. Achebe. What is perhaps, the best rendition of the corrupt leadership argument can be with Nigeria/Africa is "simply and squarely a failure of leadership". The explicit point buttressed by the internalist is that the developmental crisis in post-colonial Nigeria nay Africa is fundamentally caused by the failure of leadership. Proponents of this thesis adduce evidence from the political history of post-colonial African countries to substantiate it. The internalists seem to have a point here. After all, even a cursory refection, our political history reveals that most of our post-colonial political leaders are essentially corrupt, kleptomaniac, and irresponsible rulers that oppress their people, misappropriate and siphon public resources to the detriment of the common good and in the process alienate, oppress and dehumanize the people whom they were supposed to serve.

The import of this is that colonialism has little to do with the current crisis of development in Africa; though an in-depth study of the works of Achebe distanced him from this interpretation of the corrupt leadership argument by scholars such as Umez (2000.36) and Odey (2005 and 2007). The position of Odey (unlike that of Achebe, who ultimately sees the failure of leadership in Africa as part of Africa's predicaments created by external factors) is that the African predicament in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is fundamentally a creation of African leadership. Hence he asserts.

Africa, our beloved continent, is in chains. It has always been. However, what makes her tribulations more disturbing these days is the fact that her chains are no longer the creation of white colonialists but those of our black brothers who are armed with the most despicable form of white colonial mentality. They have become so conceited in their way of thinking, so blind, deaf, and insensitive to the suffering of the people, so ravenous in their

pursuit of the earthly mammon, so brutal in their tussle for power and so myopic in their viewpoint that they have mortgaged the future of generations yet to be born and by so doing have rendered the continent more hopeless than ever (2005:14).

Odey's conception of the corrupt leadership argument fails to tell us the origin of the "despicable form of white colonial mentality" of African leaders that have invariably made them "blind, deaf and insensitive" to the sufferings of their brothers and sisters. Secondly, given that "there is nothing wrong with anything else" in Africa apart from corrupt leadership, one wonders why other Africans, that are "moral" and "responsible" have continued to permit the seemingly incessant emergence of corrupt or/and irresponsible leaders. Given the truism that human behavior is to a large extent systemic (Umez 2000:36-7), it will be difficult for a society with a strong value system to always produce irresponsible leaders. This singular fact punctures the corrupt leadership argument of the internalists; either most Africans are corrupt, or there is something fundamentally wrong with their social structures and/or values which bred, tolerate, encourage and sustain the incessant emergence of irresponsible, insensitive and oppressive rulers. The problem therefore is not "simply and squarely a failure of leadership", something more fundamental must be wrong.

In view of the above fact, the internalists often trace the cause of irresponsible leadership in Africa to the prevailing value system in most contemporary African societies/countries. The basic argument is that the prevailing value system in most contemporary African countries such as Nigeria is one that "encourages tainted, corrupt, and illegal practices as necessary and sufficient means to ends" (Umez 2000: 58) and that corrupt leadership is a necessary product of this value system. What this comes to is that the seemingly incessant emergence of irresponsible, nay incapable leaders in Africa is the predominant corrupt value system in Africa. In other words, overwhelming majority of contemporary Africans are corrupt and irresponsible. Hence, they tolerate, accept, encourage and sustain a corrupt, insensitive and irresponsible leadership class. The validity of this position is indisputable. The contemporary value system in most Africa countries tolerates and encourages the misappropriation of public resources for personal interest. Most of the impoverished masses even celebrate their kin's men and women who misappropriate public resources and enriched themselves as heroes and condemn those left public office poor because of their honesty and accountability. Oguejiofor acknowledged the veracity of this fact (2001:36). After all, the effects of this type of attitude on development are almost self-evident. Thus, the problem here is not whether the prevailing corrupt value system argument is valid or not for both the internalists and the externalists accept their validity. The bone of contention among them is the origin of the said value system. Is it essentially a heritage from our traditional African worldview or from our unholy contact with the West?

Against this back drop, the internalists tend to argue that the contemporary predominant value system in Africa is an essentially a heritage of traditional African culture. The logical conclusion of the internalists argument, especially as presented by Odey (2005) and Oyebola (1982) suggests that Africans are fundamentally corrupt, lazy and comparatively inferior human beings with inferior values and systems of thought that are fundamentally incapable of helping them to explore and exploit nature to protect themselves, promote their well-being; accelerate and contribute meaningfully to human civilization. This implication of the internalists argument is well buttressed by Oyebola in the preface to his book, *The Black Man's Dilemma*. Odey (2005:96-107) corroborates Oyebola's position and in summary concludes that "we should stop blaming Europe, the Whiteman. He is no longer responsible for our agony. We are our worst enemies" (2005:107). The point Odey and Oyebola are stressing is that the contemporary predicament of Africa can no longer be validly traced to external factors. The off-shot of this is that they subscribe to the proposal of Kreijen that "state failure in Africa should ultimately be seen as a self-inflicted problem" (2004:2).

Contrary to this position, Oguejiofor contends that corrupt leadership as well as the prevailing negative value system in Africa are fundamentally neither the products of African traditional value system nor the essential cause of the African predicament in the contemporary world. For him, the failure of leadership in Africa as well as the prevailing negative value system are necessarily the products of external factors. We now proceed to present, interpret and examine Oguejiofor's critique of the internalist argument.

### **OGUEJIOFOR'S EXTERNALIST ARGUMENT**

Contrary to the position of the internalists, the externalists argue that Africa was comparatively developed before her contact with the Western world and that the problems of Africa began during the contact. They maintain that the economic relations between Africa and the West during the contact were asymmetrical; for while Africa contributed meaningfully to the development of the West, the West exploited, oppressed and underdeveloped Africa (Rodney 1972). The externalists see the contemporary crisis of development in Africa as necessarily a heritage of the African contact with the West. Our duty here is to interpret Oguejiofor's externalist argument in corroboration with the view of other eminent scholars in response to the position of the internalist. In this regard, we begin with Oguejiofor's discussion on the historical contribution of Africa to civilization.

Prior to his presentation of the historical contribution of Africa to civilization, Oguejiofor acknowledged the peculiarity of the African predicament in the 21<sup>st</sup> century: "Africa's problems appear all the more acute in our days given progressive changes taking place in other parts of the world which were formerly grouped within the awkward club of third world" (2001:23). Oguejiofor here is referring to Latin America and Asia. He argues that it is a fact that the progressive

economic growth going on in Latin American countries and Asia countries in contrast to Africa where there is “hardly any Island of hope in a sea of seeming despair” makes it possible for one to forget or ridicule the historical fact that the same African continent was “vital to the origin and development of mankind and a great deal of its civilization” (Oguejiofor, 2001:23-4). The point Oguejiofor is buttressing here is that the claim of Odey and Oyebola concerning the historical inferiority and backwardness of Africa is historically unfounded. Oguejiofor of course substantiated his claim with a good dose of historical evidence and intellectual findings of modern scientist (Oguejiofor, 2001:24-25).

The basic implication of this argument is that Africans are fundamentally creative, industrious and reasonable human beings who prior to the negative Western influence were able to use their thought systems to exploit nature to advantage and in so doing spearheaded the evolution of human civilization and technological prowess. Sequel to this, Oguejiofor contends that the stagnation and consequent retrogression of Africa was occasioned by the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, consolidated by colonialism and institutionalized by colonial education (2001:26-63). The peculiar nature of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade brought “all round stagnation to the African continent”: It “aided the industrialization of the West and sent Africa further down into the valley of underdevelopment. This is because in addition to the universal nature of slavery, the effects of the Trans-Atlantic slave Trade on the African is incomparable with that of any continent because its nature was uniquely marked out as the most cruel, prolonged, inhuman and the most devastating form of man’s inhumanity ever recorded in history. For about four centuries, the Trans-Atlantic slave trade systematically and incessantly depopulated Africa of most of her productive forces, introduced firearms and promoted violence in Africa and this inflicts Africans with a lot of invisible social, political and psychological defeatism. “In all, the legacy of the slave trade was that of fear, social insecurity, violence and political instability... The continent faced social and political instability for unusually long time, and emerged at the end of it a ghost of its ancient self (Oguejiofor, 2001:29, 31).

Moreover, when one considers the fact that the abolition of the Trans-Atlantic slave trade only succeeded in abolishing the depopulation of Africa and encouraged the enslavement, exploitation and dehumanization of all Africans in Africa during another prolonged period of time euphemistically called colonialism, one imagines how the internalists expect Africa’s historical achievements to survive and overcome the onslaught of over five centuries in a few decades. In fact, the social, political economic and psychological effects of colonialism on Africa/ns could be said to be more intensive and pervasive than that of the slave trade. For while the slave trade meant withdrawing the humanity, liberty and sovereignty of some Africans, colonialism meant the withdrawal of the humanity, liberty and sovereignty of all Africans; the forceful restructuring of their lives, societies, value systems, political institutions and the gross exploitation of their resources. Buttressing this point Okere (2005a:7) writes:

African slave trade and slavery were “abolished” in the sense of being updated and refined in a way to guarantee their perpetuity. The powerful nations of Europe that had carried on the slave trade now decide to make slaves of all African peoples not in faraway America, but in their homes, not by buying and selling them individually but owning them wholesale. They issued themselves certificate of occupancy over the entire land of Africa and a title of ownership. They withdraw the people’s sovereignty, declared all Africa a subject people and went ahead to reprogram their lives, economies and religions.

The fundamental point on relief here is that colonialism is substantially a consolidation of the violence, social insecurity, political instability, psychological trauma and developmental crisis which the Trans-Atlantic slave trade brought to Africa. Most African countries are the creation of colonialism without the consent of the people. And it is the intentional amalgamation of diverse African nations (with different traditions, religions and institutions) into one country without their consent that is responsible for the seemingly incessant ethnic and religious conflicts in most African countries that have continued to undermine economic development and good governance (Achebe, 2012:1-2). In view of this link between the Trans-Atlantic slave trade, colonialism and the constant social insecurity and political instability that hamper development in Africa, Oguejiofor asserts that: “Imperialism, despite some advantages which some have credited to it, was the touchstone of the many of the predicaments under which many parts of Africa groan today” (2001:32).

The corollary of this is that social insecurity and political instability in Africa are necessary heritage of colonialism. For colonialism did not only create “tension-prone” states in Africa, it also “foisted” inadequate alien systems upon it. Colonialism in Africa “meant the forceful imposition of alien social, economic and political structures.” Oguejiofor (2001:33) observes that this imposition empowered the West to alienate, oppress and dehumanize Africans as well as exploit their resources. Worse still, the West rationalized and institutionalized the alienation, oppression, dehumanization and exploitation of Africa/ns as necessary, normal and “philanthropic” through Western education. The dominant Eurocentric ideology that was woven and consistently reinforced and consolidated by centuries of perverse Western supremacist philosophy, anthropology and education (Ogbunwezeh 2005: 163) was that the African is essentially a sub-human being with neither a soul nor culture, art, history and civilization; a being with a childlike mentality, purely mystical, pre-logical, primitive, apolitical, barbaric, amoral and superstitious before their contact with the West (Oguejiofor, 2008:893, Asiegbu, 2009a:37-9). This was how the African was mentally incarcerated and infused with a pathological form of inferiority complex that annihilates critical and innovational thinking, and truncates African’s creative and imaginative powers and “makes sacrosanct whatever has

been bequeathed to us by European authorities...(Ezeani,2005:45) including the "artificial lattize" and "alien systems" foisted on us (cf Achebe, 2012:1-2). Consequently, the African was for centuries, consciously miseducated to loathe, nay derogate everything African and to love, nay glorify everything Western; to automatically uphold" and habitually employ the Western view point in all matters as the sole rational and civilized view (Chinwezu, 1978: xiv). Colonial education therefore made most Africans to conclude that their traditional systems and values are inadequate; and that the unworkable alien ones (foisted upon us by the West) that encourage diverse conflicts and the emergence of corrupt, inept, incorrigible and irresponsible governance (Asiegbu, 2009a: 12-25, Agbakoba, 2004:49) are the best alternative. In this connection, colonial education reprogrammed Africans to conclude that the progressive transformation and socio-economic development of their hitherto backward societies is the total dependence on the West; the blind acceptance, adoption and implementation of ideas and theories of development prescribed by Western powers and their institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). In spite of the fact that theories prescribed by Westerns powers and these institutions "often come with a great deal of "pre-accepted" philosophical values and assumptions, which may not fit the African experience or augur well for African aspirations" (Agbakoba 2003:1), African leaders have continued to accept and implement them. Hence, our contemporary dependence on the West. Concerning this, Oguejiofor vividly explains:

The attempt to create the new Arica in a new outfit of a modern culture and civilization implied the introduction of education. But the modern education that the first Africans received was completely Euro-based... the new African that emerged as the end product of acculturation was thus tailor-made not only to neglect but also to despise his own culture. The project of reeducation was by far the most successful of all colonial projects. The African, not being backed by a culture resilient enough to resist the onslaught, swallowed his indoctrination without reserve. The sign of modern learning, for him became how Europeanized he was, that is how much he was accustomed to what is "foreign" and how estranged he was from his own milieu. The concept "foreign" quickly acquired an added meaning", superior". ...Left in a state of uncertainty, with horrendous contempt of his traditional heritage, and hamstringed in his patently undersized coat of modern education, he became a sorry sight both to himself and his observers. Left in the hush of modernization, the alienated African is without a past, without a present and without a bright future (2001:42, 42).

At this point one will understand that the contemporary African condition is directly a necessary heritage from the Trans-Atlantic slave Trade, colonialism and colonial education. Slave trade dehumanized Africans and depopulated Africa,

did violence to her societies and stagnated her economy for centuries; colonialism consolidated the dehumanization of Africans, did further violence to her societies, by creating tension-prone states, destroy their traditional values and superimposed unworkable alien one's that encourage the emergence of illegitimate leaders, and in so doing consolidated the exploitation of Africa's resources even with the help of some Africans. Finally, colonial schooling rationalized and institutionalized the dehumanization, oppression and exploitation of Africans by making Africans to see themselves and their traditional heritage as inferior and as such accept whatever travesties the West present to them as the best alternative. Is it not "suicidal for lambs to see, think and act out of the assumptions about the world that reflects and further the interests of the lions and jackals preying upon them?" (Chinweizu, 1978: xiii) Odimegwu (2005:125) is right: "The fundamental purpose of colonialist education was to control the thinking of the African in order control his actions interminably". The arguments, actions and reactions of the internalists to the contemporary African predicament are fundamentally tailored by the type of education their proponents received; an attestation that such scholars are yet to liberate their incarcerated minds from the strangulating hold of colonial schooling and be able to view the world from an independent viewpoint and not just the Western viewpoint.

The corollary of the foregoing is that Oguejiofor externalist argument that "the predicament in which Africa finds itself can be summarized as the cumulative effects of man's inhumanity to man let loose on the African continent for centuries...by Africans themselves and others whom they came into contact" (2001:63) is historically valid and intellectually veracious. Be this as it may, Oguejiofor's argument only succeeded in explicitly telling us why Africa is backward today; it did not explicitly explain why it was possible for Europe to discover, conquer, enslave and underdeveloped Africa assumed to be the cradle of civilization. The position of internalists such as Odey is that the fact that Europe was able to "discover", conquer, enslave and dehumanize Africans renders the acclaimed historical achievements of Africa prior to her contact with the West probable (2005:56-59). Oguejiofor argues that the enslavement of Africa was facilitated by the fragmented nature of traditional African societies and the prevailing legal, and economic systems in Africa. In addition to this argument, we shall proceed to buttress the position that the peculiar nature of the enslavement and colonization of Africa was possible and its effect has persisted for so long because it was attached with racism.

## **RACISM AND THE AFRICAN PREDICAMENT**

Traditional African Societies operated small political organizations with sometimes tiny territory expanse without any centralized structures backed by efficient communication and administrative system. The vulnerability of such organizations to external aggression by a larger society with a centralized

government is obvious. Besides, the abundance of land and natural resources in Africa and the fact that the legal and economic systems traditional Africans operate neither made land a private property nor repose much value on the possession of land did not in any way encourage territorial expansion (Oguejiofor: 2001:25). In the light of this, one will understand that the situation in Africa before the Trans-Atlantic slave trade makes territorial expansion neither necessary nor profitable. The European acclaimed "discovery" of Africa and their quest for territorial expansion was essentially inspired by their need for human and material resources.

However, the West would have been able to acquire their needs from Africa by engaging freely in symmetrical economic relations with Africa without doing any great harm to Africa but for their gross ethnocentric reduction and racism. The offshoot of this is that one of the major factors that made the Trans-Atlantic slave Trade and colonialism in Africa worse than that of any other continent is racism. In this regard we shall take a look at the meaning of racism and how it helped to define and still sustains Africa's predicament in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Racism is fundamentally a mental attitude towards and usually against people of another culture on the basis of external features such as skin colour, physical appearance, or other cultural characteristics. It is in this context referred to a psychological attitude, rather than a set of principles or a body of doctrine, that habitually projects one culture, especially one's own culture, as superior to that of another race often on the basis of skin colour and acclaimed cultural achievements (Ijere, 1990:16). It is against this back drop that Okere explains that even though the ontological status and scientific basis of race is doubtful, the reality, nay effects of racism as a social invention of ethnocentric Europeans are glaring. For him "Race is colour. Race is visible and more recognized on the street than even class or gender... Race and colour. Create difference. They divide and polarize and facilitate discrimination" (2005:53-54). The enslavement and colonization of Africa was so humiliating, dehumanizing and destructive and was permitted for a very long time more than that of any other continent because it was accompanied with racism (Wiredu, 1992).

Consequently, the Eurocentric conception of "Blacks" as inferior, primitive and sub-humans present the enslavement and colonialization of Blacks, Africans, as benevolent missions necessary for their civilization and humanization. Hence the need to reprogram and Europeanize them. Racism inspired the justification of slavery and colonialism in Africa by many eminent scholars such as Hegel, Charles de Montesquieu, David Hume, Levy-Bruhl (Asiegbu 2009b:37-39), Oguejiofor 2005:86-93) and their racist teachings were fundamentally incorporated into Western education introduced into Africa. Thus, the type of education introduced into Africa was as Rodney put it, "education for subordination exploitation, the creation of mental confusion and the development of underdevelopment" (2005:293). This is because it was an education that made the African to habitually loathe all things African and love all things European in

a very uncritical and deprecating manner. Hence, contemporary Africa, still depend on the West.

The point on prominent relief here is that on the one hand, racism was responsible for the prolonged dehumanization and underdevelopment of Africa because it tends to present the enslavement, colonialization and restructuring of Africa as necessary for its civilization, humanization and modernization. On the other hand, racism is also responsible for the contemporary predicament in Africa because it gave rise to a system of education that has inflicted the world, the West and all recipients of Western education with an "intellectual blindness" concerning the situation in Africa. An intellectual blindness that has misled most experts including Africans to think that the best way to reconstruct their societies and revitalize their people is by aping the West blindly (Oladipo, 2009:137). Asouzu christened this problem "unintended ethnocentric reduction" (2007a and 2007b). This is the attempt to approach a given reality with certain unintended preconceived ideas that will influence one's judgment negatively. Most of the suggestions (ideas and policies) and reactions of Western, Asian, and American experts about the African predicament no matter the good intentions of their proponents, are often inadequate because they are products of certain "Unintended ethnocentric reduction". Oguejiofor (2010: 1.14) presentation of the reactions of the world to the election of Barrack Obama to the presidency of United States of Africa is a classic example. Another reference point is the asymmetrical economic relations between Africa and the rest of the world in the contemporary world (Asiegbu 2009b:815).

Indeed, the blind acceptance of Western-oriented education even in contemporary Africa has continued to aid the sustenance of underdevelopment in Africa. Most contemporary Africans today who are recipients of formal education manifest different forms of endoracism-ethnicism tribalism, mutual mistrust and internecine conflicts, and xenomania-an inordinate attachment to and craving for things foreign (Odimegwu, 2005:123-4). This situation has continued to relegate the development of things African in preference of things foreign that are in most cases inadequate and counter-productive. Racism is therefore a major factor sustaining the crisis of development in Africa because it not only inspired the underdevelopment of Africa, but also created an education that serves as "ihe mkpuchi anya", a phenomenon of concealment (Asouzu 2013:10-14), that makes it difficult for the West, and even the African to understand the contemporary African situation, accepts responsibility and proffer plausible solutions instead of the usual prescription nay blind adoption of "pseudo-legitimate strategies" that veil the perpetuation of self-interest (Asouzu, 2003:98-100).

## CONCLUSION

Given the foregoing, our conclusion is that there is a necessary link between racism and the contemporary condition in Africa today. Racism is responsible

for the contemporary perception of Africa/ns by both the Western world and Africans. It is also the cause of the peculiar nature of the historical predicament of Africa – the Trans-Atlantic slave trade and colonialism. We further maintain that the contemporary situation in Africa seems to persist because it is often approached with an erroneous intentional or/and unintended ethnocentric reductions which at the end lead to the misinterpretation, misrepresentation and misconception of Africa/ns by Western oriented experts, opinion leaders, policy makers, political leaders, economists and journalists. This situation can only be ameliorated through authentic education and consistent conscientization of Africans in particular, and the world in general.

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