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The critical and honest observer will often notice a subtle condescension by Westerners towards Africans and resentment on the part of Africans towards the West. Where does this tensed and unfortunate relationship originate from?

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END OF ARROGANCE. Africa and the West – Understanding their Differences.

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INTRODUCTORY QUOTES

1. Introduction

“The industrial societies of the West who have traditionally understood themselves as teaching and preaching societies have to become learning societies.”
(Wolf Lepenies 1995, 6)

2. History of the relationship between Africa and the West

How can a constructive approach towards Africans develop when Westerners look down on them? Is it astonishing when the attitude of Africans towards Europeans is characterized by bitterness, suspicion, and distrust?

3. African social structure

“The African individual can only say: I am, because we are; and since we are, therefore I am.”
(Mbiti 1999, 108-109)

4. Ethics

“Your brother is your brother even if he stinks.”
(Makumba 2007, 155)

5. Spirituality

“The physical and spiritual are but two dimensions of one and the same universe. African peoples see that invisible universe when they look at, hear or feel the visible and tangible world.”

(Mbiti 1999, 57)

6. Reason and individualism in Europe

Main features of the European mind: emphasizing *reason*, i.e. critical, independent thinking, and *individuality*, i.e. the strengthening of the individual in religious, political, economic, and social affairs.

7. Excursion: Understanding and Interpretation

One way of approaching reality is to collect facts, to *measure*, to structure data. Another way is to *describe* reality. Facts and descriptions need to be *understood* and *interpreted* in their sense. Sense cannot be measured.

8. The encounter of two cultures

Encounter and co-operation between Africa and the West will improve when both sides question their own attitudes towards the other, when they listen to each other, and when they talk freely about the undercurrent conditions of their relationship.

9. ‘Development’

“Development” must lose the connotation of *under*-development in comparison to the West. Rather, African societies must improve, change, and *reform* according to *intrinsic* laws, rules, and necessities of society, economy, politics, education.

10. End of arrogance

Instead of teaching and preaching, Westerners ought to get into the habit of *modesty*. For their own progress, Africans should overcome their *distrust* towards the West because distrust holds them *captive*.

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