

FIRST DRAFT:
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**HIGHLIGHTS WITHOUT PRECEDENT:
WHEN ALI A. MAZRUI LED THE WAY**

*Prepared for Special Purposes
for the Ali A. Mazrui Makerere Foundation
Kampala, Uganda
and for The International Institute
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Herndon, Virginia, USA*

I. Ali A. Mazrui was the first African scholar to occupy each of the following positions:

(a) Full professor in any of the humanities in any university in East Africa – beginning in 1965 at Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda

(b) Full professor of Political Science in any university in East Africa – beginning in 1965 at Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda

(c) Dean of Social Sciences in any of the universities in East Africa – from 1966 to 1968 at Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda

(d) Vice-President, International Political Science Association (Headquarters in Paris, France, at the time) from 1968 to 1971

(e) The first young scholar in Africa as a whole to be promoted from Lecturer to full Professor in less than two years – skipping the intermediate ranks of Senior Lecturer and Associate Professor (Reader).

II. On the basis of available records Ali A. Mazrui was the first African graduate student to publish full-scale scholarly articles in the following

professional journals:

(a) "On the Concept of 'We are all Africans'," *The American Political Science Review*, Journal of the American Political Science Association, Vol.57, No.1, 1963.

(b) "Edmund Burke and Reflections on the Revolution in the Congo", *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 5, No. 2, 1963.

(c) "Consent, Colonialism and Sovereignty", *Political Studies*, Journal of the Political Studies Association of the United Kingdom, Vol. 11, No. 1, 1963.

(d) "African Attitudes to the European Economic Community", *International Affairs*, Journal of Chatham House, Institute of International Affairs, London, U.K., Vol. 38, No. 1, 1963.

(e) "The United Nations and Some African Political Attitudes," *International Organization*, Vol. 18, No. 3, 1964.

III. On the basis of available evidence Ali A. Mazrui was the first African graduate student to be given access to the following high profile British media:

(a) Op.Ed. article, "Why Does an African Feel African?", *The Times*, (London,U.K.), 1962.

(b) Two select radio talks: "The African Innocence" and "The Dress of African Thought" *The Third Programme* (intended for British intellectual elite), British Broadcasting Corporation, (London, U.K.), 1963.

(c) Chairing radio discussion on British Foreign Policy with Harold Wilson, Leader of the Labour Party and later Britain's Prime Minister, British Broadcasting Corporation, Overseas Service, 1962.

IV. On available evidence Ali A. Mazrui was the first African scholar to publish three books within the single year which followed the successful defense of his doctoral thesis at Oxford. The books published were as follows:

(a) *Towards a Pax Africana: A Study of Ideology and Ambition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, and London: Weidefeld and Nicolson, 1967).

(b) *On Heroes and Uhuru-Worship*. (London: Longman's and New York: Humanities Press, 1967).

(c) *The Anglo-African Commonwealth: Political Friction and Cultural Fusion*. (Oxford: Pergamon, 1967).

V. Ali A. Mazrui was the first African to be invited to Australia to give the Dyson Distinguished lectures and tour the Australian continent.

The lectures were annual at that time and were administered by the Australian Institute of International Affairs, Sydney and Melbourne. The first Dyson Lecturer in this distinguished series was the British philosopher Bertrand Russell. Mazrui delivered them in 1972.

VI. On available evidence Ali A. Mazrui was the first African scholar to be appointed both as Fellow of the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences, Palo Alto, California, and Senior Fellow of the Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace in consecutive years.

The two appointments were in two consecutive academic years, 1972–1974. During the same period Mazrui was also appointed Visiting Professor in the Department of Political Science, Stanford University, Stanford, California. Dr. Mazrui used his two years in Northern California to complete the following books:

(a) *World Culture and the Black Experience* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1974).

(b) *Soldiers and Kinsmen in Uganda: The Making of a Military Ethnocracy* (Sage Publications, 1975).

(c) *Who are the Afro-Saxons?: The Political Sociology of the English Language* (The Hague: Mouton Publishers, 1974).

VII. Ali A. Mazrui was the Senior Representative for Africa within the international team of researchers known as the World Order Models Project (WOMP 1970–1977).

The members of the group met every year in different parts of the world to compare notes about global trends, identify which trends were positive and which negative, and respond with appropriate policies accordingly. Each member of the group was assigned the task of drafting a

book which viewed the world from the perspective of his or her own region. There were published separate books viewing the world from an Indian, Latin American, Middle Eastern, U.S., European, Japanese as well as African perspectives. Ali Mazrui's massive global volume from an African perspective was entitled as follows:

A World Federation of Cultures
(New York: Macmillan/Free Press, 1977)

This 508-page volume is Ali Mazrui's most ambitious book. The World Order Models Project was sponsored by the Institute of World Order in New York, and chaired by Professor Saul Mendlovitz of Rutgers University, New Jersey.

VIII. Ali A. Mazrui was Editor of the final volume (Volume VIII) of the massive historical project, the UNESCO General History of Africa, whose headquarters was at the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in Paris, France.

The 1,190-page volume edited by Mazrui was authored by more than a dozen distinguished scholars, and took nearly a decade to compile. Ali Mazrui was the only Political Scientist entrusted with one of the volumes. All of the other editors were distinguished professional historians or archaeologists. Mazrui served on the International Scientific Committee of this multiple volume UNESCO General History of Africa. Mazrui also served on the Executive Bureau of the Project. Mazrui's own massive volume was entitled, quite simply, *Africa Since 1935*.

Like the other volumes of the project, Mazrui's volume was published simultaneously in English and French, and was later translated also into Arabic. There were also abridged editions of the volumes not only in English and French, but also translated into Kiswahili and Hausa.

IX. Ali A. Mazrui was the first African and the first Muslim to be invited by the British Broadcasting Corporation [BBC] to deliver the highly prestigious

annual radio lectures, named the Reith Lectures, which were named after the Founder Director-General of the BBC, Lord Reith.

Mazrui's six lectures were entitled *The African Condition: A Political Diagnosis*. A companion book under the same title was published by Cambridge University Press in New York and by Heinemann Educational Books in London, U.K. The companion book has been widely used in college classrooms across the English-speaking world. *The African Condition* was first broadcast in 1979.

The BBC Reith Lectures are broadcast on both the world service and the domestic programs. Across the years the Reith Lectures have included multiple Nobel Laureates, including Aung San Suu Kyi of Burma (Myanmar) and Wole Soyinka of Nigeria.

Previous historic personalities who gave the BBC Reith Lectures included Lord Bertrand Russell, Lord Radcliffe, Arnold Toynbee, and George F. Kennan.

The first Reith Lectures about Africa were given by Mazrui's Oxford tutor, Dame Margery Perham. Her lectures were entitled *The Colonial Reckoning* (1961) which coincided with Mazrui's own years at Oxford as a student.

X. Ali A. Mazrui was the first African to make and narrate a major international television series, shown in dozens of countries and translated into several languages.

When the TV series was first shown in 1986, it triggered a national debate. The Mazrui television series was sponsored and financed by both the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) and the Public Broadcasting Service of the United States. The title of the TV series was *The Africans: A Triple Heritage*, and was first televised in 1986 in Britain and the United States. Since then *The Africans* has been shown in dozens of countries, and translated into several languages, and been utilized in classrooms on campuses across the English-speaking world. It is now available in videos and DVDs.

The Africans was filmed in about twenty countries in Africa and in France, Great Britain and the United States. The filming was done mainly by

the British Broadcasting Corporation, helped by the Public Broadcasting Service and the Nigerian Television Authority. The TV project cost about four million dollars in all. The TV series triggered controversy in the United States and, to a lesser extent, in the United Kingdom. The theme was that contemporary Africa was a convergence and synthesis of three civilizations—Africanity, Islam and the West.

XI. Ali Mazrui was appointed as the first African and the first Muslim Albert

Schweitzer Professor in the Humanities in the State of New York.

These Chairs were established by the late Governor Nelson Rockefeller in the 1960s, following the death of the Nobel Prize winner, Albert Schweitzer, in 1965. The Chair was awarded by the Department of Education in Albany competitively to one university within the State of New York which could provide additional research support for the successful candidate. The Binghamton campus of the State University of New York made a bid for the Chair with Ali Mazrui as their candidate. In support of the Schweitzer Chair Binghamton created a small Institute of Global Cultural Studies, with Ali Mazrui as the Permanent Director. He was first appointed in 1989.

XII. Mazrui was the first Black person to be appointed Andrew D. White

Professor-at-Large at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York.

The appointments are honorific and each is occupied for six years. The person appointed was at that time expected to visit Cornell once every semester, deliver two or more public lectures, and be accessible to both graduate and undergraduate students. The professor would then return to his or her regular university until the following semester when he or she was due to make another visit to Cornell.

Ali Mazrui's Professorship-at-Large lasted from 1986 to 1992. When it ended he became the first Andrew D. White Professor-at-Large to be made *Emeritus*. Cornell also appointed him Senior Scholar in Africana Studies with effect from 1992. He continued at Cornell in that capacity until 2012.

XIII. Mazrui was appointed the very first Walter Rodney Distinguished

Professor at the University of Guyana, Georgetown, Guyana, South America.

The Chair was created by the Head of State of Guyana in memory of the late Walter Rodney, a distinguished Guyanese historian, who was assassinated about a decade earlier. Mazrui was approached by the Office of the Head of State Cheddi Jagan. By the time Mazrui went to Guyana it was Janet Jagan, the widow, who had become Head of State. Mazrui gave public lectures not just on campus in Georgetown, but also to other audiences in the country as a whole. He was also honoured by both the President of the country and by the Prime Minister.

XIV. Ali Mazrui was elected the first Muslim President of the African Studies

Association of the United States, and one of the first Africans to lead this organization. He was President 1979–1980.

This is the largest Association of Africanists in the world, whose annual meetings are attended by hundreds of scholars working on Africa. It publishes scholarly journals, and awards annual prizes for excellence in African studies. As former President Ali Mazrui subsequently managed to raise \$50,000 for the Association from Chief Moshood Abiola. This became part of an Endowment which launched an annual distinguished Lecture of the Association, named after Chief Abiola. Ali Mazrui was invited by the Association to deliver the very first M.K.O. Abiola Lecture. Chief Abiola himself was elected President of Nigeria, but was prevented by the military from assuming office.

XV. Ali Mazrui was elected the very first Chairman of the Center for the

Study of Islam and Democracy, based in Washington, DC.

This new organization was designed to promote lectures, conferences and research on the relationship between ancient Islamic values and modern democratic principles. The Center tried to promote such concerns not just in the United States but also in the Muslim world. The latter effort was mainly through conferences or lectures held in major Muslim cities. Mazrui presided

over the Center for two years, a very formative period in the life of any organization.

XVI. Ali Mazrui was the first Chair, Center for the Study of Islam and Democracy, Washington, DC (Approx: 1998 to 2004).

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XVII. Ali Mazrui was the first African Member of the Board of Trustees, Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies, U.K. (From 1999 to the present).

Ali Mazrui was the first African to serve on the Board of Trustees of the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies, Oxford, England. He was elected unanimously, and has since been re-elected every four years. Mazrui has also given public lectures at Oxford University under the sponsorship of either Islamic Studies or African Studies since the 1970s.

XVIII. Ali Mazrui was the Founding Father of a project to identify the 100 greatest African books of the 20th century. As Founding Father of the Project he presented the Prize to Nelson Mandela in Cape Town in 2003.

THE FINAL LIST WAS ANNOUNCED IN FEBRUARY OF 2002

Mazrui had originally proposed the concept of 100 greatest African books of the 20th century at a Book Festival in Harare, Zimbabwe. Many publishers were in attendance, and they decided to implement Mazrui's proposal. Committees were created to survey the entire corpus of African literature, and evaluate winners in relevant languages.

As inventor of the concept, Mazrui's own books were disqualified. But he was given a special role in awarding Prizes to others, including honoring Nelson Mandela for the book he wrote in prison, ***Long Walk to Freedom***. The grand ceremony occurred in Cape Town, South Africa, in 2003.

XIX. Ali Mazrui was invited by the Prime Minister of Malaysia to deliver the very first of special annual distinguished lectures in the capital city of Malaysia in 2010.

Ali Mazrui and his wife, Pauline, were received in Malaysia by the current Prime Minister, Najib Razak, and by the preceding Premier, Mahathir Mohamad.

Mazrui had been assigned the topic "A MUSLIM CENTURY: MYTH OR REALITY?" by the Prime Minister's office. Mazrui was to choose the relevant century and write about it. He was to submit the text in advance so that it could be printed for distribution immediately after the delivery. Ali Mazrui fulfilled all the conditions.

XX. Ali Mazrui was the first to be interviewed by the Library of Congress for New Literary Series: "Conversations with African Poets and Writers" in Washington DC in 2011.

Ali Mazrui launched a new literary series of the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., in partnership with The Africa Society of the National Summit of Africa. The literary series is entitled "Conversations with African Poets and Writers." To inaugurate it Ali Mazrui was interviewed extensively about literary and cultural trends in post-colonial Africa. The interview took place on October 7, 2011 in the colorful Thomas Jefferson building of the Library of Congress. There was an audience whose members later asked Mazrui questions on literature and culture. The entire proceedings were carefully recorded for the archives of the Library of Congress.

XXI. Ali Mazrui is the first Distinguished Scholar of the Global South Caucus, International Studies Association, USA [2012].

The Global South Caucus of the International Studies Association (ISA) selected Ali A. Mazrui to be the first to receive their Distinguished Scholar Award at the 2012 annual convention of ISA in April 2011 in San Diego, California, with a luncheon in Mazrui's honor. Mazrui also accepted an invitation to give a presentation at ISA on "India and China in Africa's Experience: Between Rivalry and Partnership".

SPECIAL AWARDS AND HONORS

- A. Mazrui was appointed Chancellor, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, Nairobi, Kenya, from 2004 to 2010. He was the first Chancellor of a Kenya University who was not Head of State, and the only Chancellor who was part of the Kenyan Diaspora abroad.
- B. President Mwai Kibaki of Kenya awarded Mazrui the National Honor of the Order of the Burning Spear, First-Class in 2007.
- C. President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa awarded Mazrui the National Honour of Grand Companion of Oliver Tambo in a special ceremony in Pretoria in 2007.
- D. In 2010 President Mwai Kibaki announced the first list of national heroes (*Mashuj'aa*) of Kenya since independence in 1963. Mazrui was among them.
- E. In 2005 *The Foreign Policy* magazine in Washington, DC nominated Ali Mazrui among the 100 greatest public intellectuals alive. *Prospect* magazine in London supported the nomination.
- F. In 2007 Ali Mazrui became the first Muslim to deliver the Distinguished Commonwealth Lecture in London, U.K. His topic was "The Power of Language and the Politics of Religion." The lecture was subsequently published in the Oxford-based Journal, *The Round Table* Vol. 97, No. 394, 2008. Mazrui's lecture in London was chaired by the Secretary-General of the Commonwealth, Marlborough House, London, U.K.
- G. Ali Mazrui gave the first Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Distinguished Lecture at Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass., USA, sponsored by Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Islamic Studies Program at Harvard. The lecture was delivered on November 1, 2011.