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General Theme:

PERSONAL QUESTS AND CONFLICTING VALUES

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by
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Introduction

To paraphrase Charles Dickens in **Bleak House** once again, "it was the best of times, it was the worst of times." We celebrated during the year one hundred years of literary excellence in Africa's experience. We marked the legacies of such twentieth century African Titans as Kwame Nkrumah, Julius Nyerere, and Nelson Mandela. My family buried some dearly loved members and planned the weddings of others. I suffered the aches of old age but enjoyed the privileges of being an elder. Africa, Islam and the West continued to be my own triple heritage. We sadly said eternal farewell to some friends.

But there were also war drums and the ominous music of anthems. The war on terrorism became a selective struggle against weapons of mass destruction. I got involved in a Binghamton course on "Terrorism and War" and I hosted a conference on whether globalization was a dialogue of civilizations. At the micro-level of my family and of my classrooms we debated the ethics of the death penalty.

My itinerant career continued unabated. In the second half of 2002, I crossed the Atlantic literally more than a dozen times. The range of my destinations was from Kuala Lumpur to Cape Town, from Kuwait City to Entebbe, from Addis Ababa to Manchester. I managed to include my city of birth, Mombasa. Let me share with you some of these experiences in this twenty-seventh newsletter to my friends, colleagues and members of my

extended family. I hope you find the newsletter entertaining as well as informative! Bless you for your patience!

II. Political Harassment and Mazrui-Bashing

One of the more positive consequences of the tragedy of September 11 is the increased interest in Islam in the United States and elsewhere in the Western world. There is more curiosity than ever about Islamic thought, culture, theology and civilization. Colleges and universities are starting new courses, and a spate of new books about Islam have been appearing. Mind you, some of the books create more confusion about Islam than they explain it.

The Department of Political Science at Binghamton University encouraged me to teach a course on "ISLAM IN WORLD POLITICS". It was a lively class. But far more ambitious was a course on "TERRORISM AND WAR" consisting of lectures by different campus professors from different disciplines. Nearly five hundred (500) students took the course. The most hotly debated lecture was my own lecture on "**Islam between Zionism and Pax Americana**". The campus Rabbi wanted to see the videotape to check if my lecture had been anti-Semitic. The Rabbi later came to see me in my office for a friendly exchange of views. Though my lecture had been strongly critical of Israel, the Rabbi seemed satisfied that my lecture had not been anti-Semitic.

Daniel Pipes, the militant Zionist and Islamophobe who heads the Middle East Forum, was less impressed by the distinction between anti-Zionism and

anti-Semitism. He co-authored an article in the NEW YORK POST in which he denounced me and a number of other professors as "Extremists on Campus." My colleague at Binghamton, Dr. Robert Ostergard was in reality "guilty" only of having been the co-ordinator of the course on "Terrorism and War" – but Daniel Pipes denounced Ostergard also as an "anti-Zionist extremist"! Guilty by association!

Even worse was Daniel Pipes' decision to establish a website called "CAMPUS WATCH" on which an initial list of eight professors nation-wide were targeted as political extremists. The professors belonged to different religions, and were scattered from California to New York, from Ann Arbor in Michigan to Georgetown, Washington, D.C.. Students of the targeted professors were encouraged to spy and report on them. Although I was one of the eight targeted professors, I would like to believe that none of my own students have been hostile to me, or been spying on me!

That does not mean that there are no extremist students on my campus. I am repeatedly a victim of the student right-wing publication, BINGHAMTON REVIEW. I have even been accused of raising money for Saddam Hussein!! The author, Jacob Dreisin, is startled by his own lies! He goes on to say:

"Can you believe that? Saddam Hussein, one of the richest men on the planet, is stealing billions from his own people while sending checks for \$25,000 to the families of every Palestinian suicide bomber, and Mazrui is raising money to help this guy out! Amazing!"

The allegation is so utterly ridiculous that I do not mind sharing it with friends and family as a hilarious case of Mazruiphobia! On the other hand, our home in Binghamton was pelted with raw eggs. We had to call the local police and show them the damage. Was the egg attack just youthful exuberance by some young people? Or was it political and influenced by right-wing propaganda? Either interpretation is feasible.

An even more disturbing development was an avalanche of angry letters I received from people who thought I had written to them in either abusive or politically vituperative terms. In other words, some Mazruiphobes were sending out damaging e-mails in my name to third parties in a bid to ruin my reputation. There might have been hundreds of such bogus e-mails which went out in my name. This entire e-mail culture has serious risks for the reputations of the innocent. Such identity theft is particularly ominous.

An additional harassment we suffered during the year was another kind of e-mail spam. These were hundreds of e-mails addressed directly to me by anonymous and abusive critics. There were occasions when our entire e-mail system was clogged up and rendered inoperative. We considered reporting all this Internet harassment to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). But as Christmas and the holiday season approached, our tormenters apparently came to their senses. The harassment seemed to peter out. At least until the next time ! God preserve us!

III. Africa, Mandela and the Centennial Muse

In July 2002 we assembled in Cape Town, South Africa, to celebrate Africa's 100 best books of the last one hundred years. Africa's Nobel Laureates in Literature were expected to be among the winners – Wole Soyinka, Nadine Gordimer and Naguib Mahfuz. At least one book of each literary Nobel laureate met Africa's own centennial standards.

What was not expected among the literary victors was someone whose Nobel Prize had been for Peace. This turned out to be Nelson Mandela. His book Long March to Freedom, written painfully while he was in prison under the apartheid regime, was chosen by the African literary jury among the one hundred best African books of the twentieth century. The Nobel Committee in Oslo had chosen Mandela in 1993 as a man of peace. The jury of Africa's 100 Books saluted Mandela in 2002 as a man of letters.

I was chosen to make the award presentation to Mr. Mandela at a glittering Gala Dinner celebration at the Cape Town Civic Center in South Africa. Other successful authors received their awards from Archbishop Desmond Tutu (another Nobel Laureate for Peace) and from Professor Njabulo Ndebele, Chair of Africa's Best Books Project and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Cape Town.

Nelson Mandela had, of course, excelled in many roles. He had excelled as a freedom fighter, as a prisoner of conscience, as a political and diplomatic negotiator, as Head of State and a statesman. In July 2002 we saluted Nelson Mandela as a writer.

Some scholars write history but do not make it themselves. Some statesmen make history but do not write it. But there have been people who both have recorded the annals of an age and contributed to the history of their own times. Outside Africa such a person included Winston Churchill – an interpreter of history and a maker of it. In Africa, such a synthesis of activist-author includes our own Nelson Mandela. In July 2002 we honoured precisely that synthesis.

It was an evening to celebrate a century of Africa's literary excellence. Of that century Nelson Mandela spent more than a quarter because of it behind bars. There are prisoners who become more bitter in a cage. Mandela became more humane without losing his love for freedom. There have been prisoners in history who compromised their principles in order to get early release. Nelson Mandela repeatedly scorned the bribe of an early release if the cost was moral compromise.

If by the end of the twentieth century there was one single statesman in the world who came closest to being morally number one among leaders of the human race, Nelson Mandela was probably such a person. Now in the twenty first century he has become the most distinguished and scathing critic of the American arrogance of power – the U.S. transition from Superpower to Super Empire.

His love of books was enhanced rather than diminished in prison. I personally discovered in an unusual way how Mandela had continued to read

widely even in jail. It was the occasion when we first met. Mr. Mandela was attending his first summit meeting of the Organization of African Unity, but before he himself was Head of State. This was in Dakar, Senegal, in 1992.

I met Nelson Mandela in the corridor, one to one. I said, "Mr. Mandela, my name is Mazrui." He cut me short and completed my name, "Professor Ali Mazrui?"

Now why should Mr. Mandela in 1992 – when he had only recently been released after twenty-seven years in prison – have heard my name at all? After all, when he went to jail, I was a nonentity. The only explanation I could think of was that even in prison Mandela's reading was so wide-ranging that he had even read Ali Mazrui. I was flattered for myself, but more important, I was impressed by Nelson Mandela as a true lover of books.

In Dakar Mandela impressed me in his capacity as a reader. In Cape Town in 2002 we honoured him in his capacity as a writer. Although he had lost a quarter of the twentieth century behind bars, Mandela turned his bondage into a literary inspiration. His long walk to freedom was also a long march to literary excellence.

That dazzling evening in Cape Town reminded me of something else, relevant to Nobel-scale brilliance. U.S. President John F. Kennedy was entertaining about one hundred Nobel Laureates of different disciplines in the White House. Kennedy is reported to have said: "This is the largest concentration of intellectual power to have assembled in this room since Thomas

Jefferson dined here – alone!” That night in Cape Town, in 2002, I was confronting a concentration of literary brilliance of similar magnitude.

When in 1998 I proposed at a Book Fair in Zimbabwe that Africa selected Africa’s own 100 greatest books of the last one hundred years, I had no idea that the proposal would fly. After all, my many proposals to Africa and the world over the years have had a mixed record. My most controversial proposal in my BBC Reith Lectures in 1979 was a recommendation that the Third World should pursue nuclear proliferation as a method of forcing the existing nuclear powers to agree to universal nuclear disarmament. My designated nuclear powers in Africa were post-apartheid South Africa, Egypt and Nigeria. In the end, my recommendation had no takers in Africa – though outside Africa, India and Pakistan became nuclear powers independently of any recommendation from me!! North Korea is teasing and taunting the world with similar nuclear aspirations.

But if my proposal about bombs never took off, my recommendation about books has indeed reached fruition. But I did successfully persuade Africa to celebrate one hundred years of its own literary excellence. Perhaps the book is, in the final analysis, more powerful than the bomb. A book can be a griot between covers, a sage in perpetual symbols, a creative moment captured for eternity.

The book has its rivals. There is literature in the oral tradition, on the radio, in magazines and their short stories, in drama on television, and now on

the Internet. But there is a sense in which every great book is scripture in a special literary meaning.

Perhaps in the future Africa should select and honour the ten best books of each ten years. And when the century is complete, Africa should take another look and still identify the one hundred greatest works of that century. The choice at the end of the century may not be identical with the selection from decade to decade. After all, some decades may produce many more outstanding books than others.

What significance should I give that Project of 100 best books in my own life? Since my idea had come to fruition, was this the equivalent of my having completed one more book of my own? Or was it the equivalent of my having another child? My first five children were biological; was this sixth child literary?

I would like to believe that the fulfillment of such a big idea was the equivalent of having another child rather than completing another book. The event was momentous, had needed the crucial support of others, and had signified creativity at its best. Did it take the equivalent of a hundred best books to equal the excitement of having a child?

Because the idea of Africa's best books originated with me, my own works were disqualified from consideration. And it was not appropriate for me to serve on the jury. Instead I was given the honorific title of "**Founding Father**"!

IV: Mazruiana Africana

One of Africa's most promising events of the year 2002 was the peaceful and successful election in Kenya in December. A ruling party which had been in power since 1963 was thrown out by the electorate. And a President (Daniel arap Moi) who had been in power since 1978 retired relatively gracefully. Mwai Kibaki was convincingly elected the new Head of State of Kenya.

President Kibaki and his newly elected government issued an open invitation to all Kenyans who had emigrated abroad to go back home and help rebuild the badly damaged country. Many of us who had settled in other lands engaged in renewed soul searching. To return or not to return? That was the question. I was interviewed by the media, both Western and East African. There was no easy answer to the invitation to go back home.

But how did we become émigrés in the first place? What forced us into exile? The prospect of a new Kenya led us into "recollections without tranquility".

Because of Idi Amin's misrule in Uganda, I was forced to resign my professorship at Makerere University in Kampala. My most natural base after that should have been the University of Nairobi. But the Nairobi Vice-Chancellor in 1973 took me to lunch at the Nairobi Norfolk Hotel and told me that he was unable to hire me.

In Uganda I had been too outspoken about both Milton Obote and Idi Amin when they were in power. Because of this reputation of my

outspokenness, Vice-Chancellor Karanja decided he could not risk hiring me. This was the beginning of my being boycotted by the universities in Kenya in spite of my being in demand in many other countries of the world. The Kenyan universities seemed intimidated by the Moi regime.

Since the day I was rejected by the University of Nairobi under Moi, I have held multiple professorships in the United States, the United Kingdom, Nigeria and the Caribbean. I have also given lectures in all the inhabited continents of the world. Since October 2002 alone I have lectured in Africa, Europe, the Middle East and North America. So why was Kenya academically closed to me?

My BBC/PBS television series "THE AFRICANS: A TRIPLE HERITAGE" has been seen by millions of people, shown in dozens of countries and translated into several languages. Because of President Daniel arap Moi my television series has never been shown in my own country, Kenya. Will my compatriots now see it under President Mwai Kibaki?

Although I myself was never detained or imprisoned by the Moi regime, my nephew, Professor Alamin M. Mazrui, was locked up for more than a year without trial. My other nephew, Sheikh Munir Mazrui, and my grandnephew, Muhammad Khamis Mazrui, were also arrested at times under the Moi regime.

I personally suffered by being ostracized by most Kenyan universities, by having my television work boycotted, and by being prevented to give public lectures most of the time. Mind you, some things did improve in Moi's last years

in power.

In the new post-Moi Kenya my dilemma is whether I would like to live in Kenya and visit my sons in the United States from time to time, or live in the United States and visit my Mombasa family from time to time. It is an extremely difficult choice.

I do not think former President Moi should be humiliated or brought to trial in spite of his many sins and crimes. But he should be encouraged to give back to Kenya the millions he has accumulated.

I recommend that a Daniel arap Moi Charitable Foundation be created. The former President and his henchmen like Mr. Biwott should be pressured to contribute millions of dollars to this charitable foundation. But they should have no say whatsoever on how the money is spent. The Foundation should be a way of enabling the former President and his partners to compensate wananchi appropriately.

With regard to my historic link with the new President of Kenya, Mwai Kibaki, in the 1960s he was intended to become the first Black East African professor of economics; and I was intended to become the first Black East African professor of political science. I did become the first East African professor of political science. Indeed, I became the first East African to become professor in any of the social sciences, including economics!! But it was soon clear that Mwai Kibaki was destined for a role much more historically important

for Kenya – the first competitively elected President of the country this century.

In the new Kenya I would like to be at least eligible for appointment in one of Kenyan universities, even as a visiting professor! In the new Kenya I hope I will be able to give public lectures with greater freedom. But who knows?

What is much more important is whether the new Kenya will adopt the new Constitution which the Commission chaired by Professor Yash Ghai had so painstakingly constructed. A new Kenya Constitution is indeed needed. The draft is there. It is time to take the next step.

My other East African home after Kenya has always been Uganda. After all, I had spent ten of the best years of my life in Uganda as a professor and Dean at Makerere University (1963-1973). But never in my wildest dreams did I expect to be invited back to Uganda one day to speak about civil aviation!! That is what happened in the year 2002. The Civil Aviation Authority in Uganda invited me to travel from Binghamton to Kampala to give a major address at the International Conference Center on "THE AVIATION INDUSTRY SINCE SEPTEMBER 11". The Prime Minister of Uganda, Professor Apollo Nsubambi, was in attendance. So were genuine Ugandan experts on aviation and a supportive speaker from British Airways. But mine was the main address – a mere novice on aviation except as a consumer!

In reality I could not speak much about the industrial aspects of aviation, but I could address the politics of aviation – especially on "Political Violence and Air Safety".

The date of my lecture coincided with the Muslim festival of Eid el Hajj (the Pilgrimage festival). It was a public holiday in Uganda. There was nervousness about what kind of attendance we would get. But the holiday worked to our advantage. We had a huge turn-out. My main host, Ambrose Akandonda, was particularly pleased.

In the course of my brief stay in Uganda Prime Minister Nsibambi took me to his Makerere residence for lunch. He had lost his wife Rada a few months before. Apollo was still shaken by the bereavement. I had known them both ever since my own Makerere years. Nsibambi and I discussed the old days – as well as the future.

One of my earliest lectures about September 11 was delivered in January 2002 to mark Martin Luther King Day in Maine. I was the keynote speaker at the annual M.L.K. Breakfast of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in Portland, Maine. My topic was: "*THE DREAM OF MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. AND THE NIGHTMARE OF SEPTEMBER 11: FROM THE CLAN TO THE QAEDA*".

It was a huge star-studded breakfast. In attendance was the Governor of the State of Maine, the Mayor of Portland, the Chief of Police, and a thousand other distinguished guests of the state. I have celebrated many Martin Luther King Days since King's official birthday became a Federal holiday. The event in Portland, Maine, in 2002 will remain particularly memorable.

V. Mazruiana Islamica

My identity as a Muslim has had variable manifestations. I was nominated among the 100 Great Muslims of the 20th Century. This nomination was made by the Institute of Objective Studies, New Delhi, a research institute in India. The happy news was communicated to me by Professor A. Momin, Head of the Department of Sociology at the University of Bombay. The names of the one hundred Muslims and their contributions will be published in a special book. The population of Muslims in India is well over 120 million.

Elsewhere I presented a paper on "Islam between Christian Allies and Western Adversaries" at an international conference on "Confidence Building and Conflict Reduction", sponsored by the Institute of International and Strategic Studies, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, June 2-6, 2002.

In the United States, I was re-elected Chair of the Center for the Study of Islam and Democracy, Washington, D.C.. The Center sponsors conferences, lectures and publications about the relationship between Islamic doctrine and democratic values.

I was privileged to serve on the Board of Directors of the American Muslim Council, the Board of Trustees of the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies, England, and the Academic Board of the Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding, Georgetown University, Washington, D.C..

At the University of California, Berkeley, I gave a lecture entitled "Islam between Economic Globalization and Political Marginalization: Semitic Divergence

and African Convergence.” It was one of the series of lectures organized by UC-Berkeley in response to September 11. While I was in the Bay area I also addressed the World Affairs Council in San Francisco on “Africa’s Islamic Experience: Revival, Expansion and Radicalization.”

At the fifth International Conference of Contemporary Middle Eastern Studies, held in Cyprus at the Eastern Mediterranean University, I presented a Keynote address entitled “The Truth Between Terror and Tyranny: The United States, Israel and Hegemonic Globalization.” The theme of the conference as a whole was “September 11, Clash of Civilizations and the Role of the Media.” It was held in April 2002.

In another paper I subsequently examined how both Arab Africa and Black Africa had been affected by the war on Terrorism. My thesis was “Afro-Arab Crossfire: Between the Flames of Terrorism and the Force of Pax Americana.” This lecture was addressed to the Ethiopian Institute for Peace and Development in Addis Ababa, in December 2001.

Since September 11 I have lectured in four continents on the causes of international terrorism. The cities where I have lectured include Berlin, Dubai, Kuala Lumpur, Kampala, Abu Dhabi, Washington, Athens, Addis Ababa, New York, Manchester, Oxford, Barcelona as well as Binghamton.

In the Spring of 2002, the Binghamton Political Science Department offered a course on “Terrorism and War”, coordinated by Professor Robert Ostergard of the Institute of Global Cultural Studies. My own lecture within the

course was about whether American policy towards the Middle East was a major cause of international terrorism. "Just as we need to know the causes of domestic crimes, we need to know the causes of international terrorism." My lecture became the most controversial part of the course and spilt over into the national media (not-always accurately)!!

I also gave a lecture at the World Bank in April 2002 entitled "From Structural Adjustment to the Sacred Adjustment: Globalization and the New Sectarian Politics in Africa." Through satellite the lecture was heard and seen live in a number of African capitals. In Washington, D.C., I could also see my questioners in Africa on the screen and answer their questions. The discussion included the role of Islamic Law in the new Nigeria.

In Kuwait I was a guest of Kuwait University, but the university shared me with the journalists of the country in a major bilingual Press conference in Arabic and English. I lectured on "ISLAM BETWEEN DEMOCRACY AND UNDERDEVELOPMENT", on "THE UNITED STATES AND THE MUSLIM WORLD" and on the question "HAS A CLASH OF CIVILIZATIONS BEGUN?" (three different lectures to different audiences).

VI. The British Connection: Manchester and Oxford

The University of Manchester in England was where I did my Bachelor's Degree in the 1950s. My closest friends at Manchester were Molly Vickerman, a language student from Yorkshire, Muhammad Ali Abdulrahman, whom I had

known since we were children in Mombasa, and Burjor Avari, a Parsee student of history who became a true intellectual companion and was very stimulating.

Two years after we graduated from Manchester I married Molly Vickerman and we subsequently left for Uganda and had three children there. Muhammad Abdulrahman got a job in the Persian-Arabian Gulf, but he has now retired back in Mombasa. Burjor Avari is back in Manchester as an academic at a sister academic institution – the Manchester Metropolitan University.

Well, this last year Burjor invited me back to the city of Manchester and asked me to give a couple of lectures on this new campus. Burjor, who is of Indian origin but who grew up in Kenya, is now a multicultural activist in Great Britain. He has even been honoured by the Queen with an M.B.E. (Member of the British Empire). At the Manchester Metropolitan University he organizes and coordinates evening lectures on intercultural themes.

It was under the auspices of these evening lectures that he invited me to his university. My own evening lectures for him were on the following controversial topics:

- I. AFRICA AND THE WEST: WHO IS INDEBTED TO WHOM?
- II. KASHMIR AND PALESTINE: THE FLAMES OF UNFINISHED PARTITIONS

There was a significant Black turnout for the first lecture, which provoked a lively debate on reparations. Burjor Avari chaired the first lecture himself.

For the second lecture Avari invited two discussants to comment on my lecture. Burjor rightly assumed that my lecture would be pro-Palestinian. So he invited a Zionist-Jewish scholar from London to respond to what I had to say about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

On the issue of Kashmir Burjor Avari wrongly assumed that my lecture would be anti-Indian. So he invited an Indian scholar who was a special advisor to the Indian Government. In reality my position on Kashmir was neither pro-Indian nor pro-Pakistan. It was pro-Kashmiri with a constructive and even-handed approach.

The lecture on Kashmir and Palestine was chaired by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor of the University. As you can imagine, the discussion was very lively – but fortunately it was also civil and disciplined.

Socially and academically Burjor arranged for some interesting colleagues to either dine or lunch with me, or simply meet with me. And he and I did a bit of nostalgic sightseeing in Manchester – visiting one or two places we had frequented when we were undergraduates. Dennis Austin, a retired Professor from the University of Manchester who was a friend from the old days, was supposed to join us for one of the lunches. Unfortunately he fell down at his home the day before and needed hospital treatment. Since then Dennis Austin and I have caught up with each other by correspondence.

If Manchester was the place of my bachelor's degree, Oxford was the place of my doctorate. I am a member of the Board of Trustees of the Oxford

Centre for Islamic Studies [OCIS]. I have been going to Oxford every year to attend these Board meetings. This last year I was particularly interested in the newly established research fellowship for a specialist on Islam in Africa, jointly offered by St. Antony's College and the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies. The fellowship has since been advertised and applications invited.

At Oxford University in recent years African Studies has declined, while Islamic studies has expanded. Indeed, the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies [OCIS] may soon have a newly built building of its own, architecturally compatible with both Islamic minarets and the traditional brooding spires of Oxford.

While Islamic studies has indeed become more visible at Oxford, the expansion has not been at the expense of African Studies. On the contrary, one of the factors which have kept Africanist concerns alive at Oxford has been the work of OCIS. The OCIS has successfully brought to Oxford such African luminaries as Nelson Mandela and Kofi Annan under Islamic auspices. The OCIS has also sponsored research on Islam in Africa. Director Farhan Nizami has brilliantly combined vision with pragmatism.

The Patron of the Islamic Centre at Oxford is Prince Charles, the Prince of Wales, who once gave a well-known, Islam-friendly lecture at Oxford on **"ISLAM AND THE WEST"**. This last year Prince Charles invited members of the Board of Trustees of OCIS to dinner at his official home. I was tempted to fly from Binghamton, New York, to be a dinner guest of the Heir to the British Throne. It

would have been the longest distance I had ever traveled for a single meal! Unfortunately pressures in Binghamton made such a spectacular trip impossible. It was truly tempting!

When I subsequently went to Oxford later in the year for the meeting of the Trustees, our official banquet was at Rhodes House, an institution established partly from the bequest of Cecil Rhodes at the beginning of the twentieth century. The bequest had also established the prestigious Rhodes scholarships. Bill Clinton was a Rhodes scholar when he was a student at Oxford. Today a specially commissioned painting of the former President of the United States hangs proudly at Rhodes House. In addition, there is a separate Rhodes Professorship of Race Relations, which was formerly occupied by the late Kenneth Kirkwood, one of my teachers at Oxford in the early 1960s. Kirkwood was succeeded as Rhodes Professor by T. O. Ranger, a specialist on Southern Africa and one of the founders of the Dar es Salaam School of African historiography. These days Terence Ranger and I meet in Southern Africa every other year.

VII. The Ethics of the Death Penalty

In the 1990s I had an informal bet with one of my sons that the death penalty would be abolished in the United States within his own lifetime – thus enabling the United States to catch up with the rest of Western civilization. For a while after the bet, the trend in America seemed to be going in the opposite

direction. My own state of New York left the ranks of the anti-death penalty states when the governorship passed from liberal Democrat Mario Cuomo to right-wing Republican George Pataki. The death penalty became an option in New York from eight years ago – and yet nobody has been executed yet.

I was reassured more recently by what was going on in Abraham Lincoln's old state – Illinois. Governor George Ryan suspended all death sentences after the courts in Illinois found that 13 death row inmates had been wrongly convicted since 1977 when capital punishment was resumed. In the same period 12 other inmates had been executed. The margin of error in death penalties seemed to be over 50%!

I was greatly impressed by Governor Ryan's moratorium on the death penalty and his appointment of a Commission to review the whole system. When I last went to Illinois to give a Distinguished Lecture at the Chicago State University in 2001, I received a formal letter from Governor Ryan, welcoming me to Chicago "on behalf of the citizens of Illinois". He did not know that he and I were kindred spirits in our distrust of the death penalty, but I knew.

In January 2003, I was at Amsterdam airport on my way to give a lecture in Barcelona, Spain. I realized that Governor Ryan was expected to announce his decision on whether he would commute all the death sentences in Illinois. So at Amsterdam airport I looked for a television set so that I could watch CNN and find out Ryan's decision. In the Business Class lounge at Amsterdam airport I learnt from CNN that Governor Ryan had indeed commuted the sentences of 167

condemned inmates to life imprisonment. Tears came to my eyes as I watched him saying: "Our capital system is haunted by the demon of error – error in determining guilt and error in determining who among the guilty deserves to die ... What effect was race having? What effect was poverty having?... I am not prepared to take the risk that we may be executing an innocent person."

Governor Ryan had pardoned four inmates because they had been tortured by a rogue policeman to confess. The governor commuted the remaining 167 death row inmates to life imprisonment – most of them without the possibility of parole. It was the biggest commuting of death sentences by a governor in the history of the United States.

Perhaps I will win the bet with my son after all. The death penalty may be abolished in the United States during his own lifetime. But if I am gone, how will I collect the winnings? In the nineteenth century, Western Europe led the abolitionist movement and the United States later caught up. In the twentieth century, Great Britain led the way in the war against Nazism and Fascism – and the United States caught up [after Pearl Harbor]. In the twenty-first century, Western Europe is already leading in the struggle against the death penalty. I am sure the United States will also catch up ethically in this struggle.

The first time I went public with my opposition to the death penalty was in connection with the debate about Salman Rushdie's Satanic Verses in the late 1980s. Until then my family and my friends knew that I was against capital

punishment, but I had not articulated my opposition either in my writings or in any public lecture.

It was the Rushdie affair which brought me out of this particular closet. On the one hand, I was outraged by Salman Rushdie's diabolic and Islamophobic novel, The Satanic Verses. Morally, the novel was indeed blasphemous and was itself Satanic. Politically, it was the worst illustration of someone from the Third World turning brutally against his own ancestry for the entertainment of Western cultural imperialism.

In November 1988, I had visited Lahore and Islamabad in Pakistan. Discussions about Rushdie's novel had included a particularly striking analogy in Pakistani circles. "It is as if Rushdie had composed a brilliant poem about the private parts of his parents, and then recited the poem in the marketplace to the cheers and laughter of strangers. These strangers then paid him money for all the jokes about his parents' genitalia."

South Asians were accusing Rushdie of pornographic betrayal of ancestry. Rushdie was himself of South Asian origins.

I did share the belief that Rushdie was a kind of cultural traitor to his ancestry. But I was also appalled by the death sentence which had been passed on him by Iran. In a public lecture I gave at Cornell University, which surprisingly reverberated around the world in 1989, I both condemned Rushdie's novel and appealed against the death sentence passed on him. I also declared my opposition to the death penalty for any kind of offence. I am convinced that

one can be a good Muslim and be opposed to the death penalty and to the amputation of the hand as forms of punishment.

I did meet Rushdie at a friend's home one evening in London. That was about a year before the publication of The Satanic Verses. Rushdie and I have not met again since then.

VIII. In the Shadow of Nkrumah and Nyerere

The year 2002 was the 80th anniversary of the birth of Mwalimu Julius K. Nyerere of Tanzania. The year was also the 30th anniversary of the death of Osagyefo Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana. These were two of the greatest Africans of the twentieth century.

The Nyerere anniversary was explicitly marked as an event in different parts of the world. The Nkrumah anniversary (since it concerned his sad demise) was only silently recognized by Ghanaian historians. It was not a matter for celebration.

Nevertheless, my own most important set of African lectures of the year 2002 concerned Nkrumah's legacy. I had been invited by the University of Ghana at Legon to deliver their most distinguished lectures – the Aggrey-Fraser-Guggisberg Memorial Lectures. The general theme of my lectures was

“NKRUMAHISM BETWEEN GLOBALIZATION AND THE TRIPLE HERITAGE”.

The three lectures were spread out in a single week. To my delight, the size of the audience kept growing from lecture to lecture, overflowing beyond the limits of the main lecture hall on campus.

One of the most moving moments occurred during my last lecture. My old friend and colleague, Professor Adu Boahen, was brought into the lecture hall in wheel chair. From his sick bed he had insisted on coming. I drew the attention of the audience to the painful sacrifice which Professor Boahen was making to have come and honour his friend. I then begged Adu to go back to bed, and we would send him the video of my lecture to watch at home. He finally agreed to be wheeled out of the lecture hall by his beloved wife, Mary, and an assistant.

Adu Boahen and I had each edited a volume in the UNESCO African History series. He had edited Volume VII on the colonization of Africa and I had edited Volume VIII on decolonization since 1935. Towards the end of the project Boahen was elected President of the International Scientific Committee of this UNESCO General History of Africa. I invited him to spend a semester at Binghamton and Cornell, partly to help me in the editing of Volume VIII. He came and we collaborated splendidly.

In November 1992, he ran for the presidential election in Ghana against Jerry Rawlings. Ghanaians were fond of Adu Boahen as a scholar, but were not ready for him as Head of State. Boahen lost to Jerry Rawlings.

When former President Rawlings and Mrs. Rawlings came to visit me at my hotel on my visit to Ghana in 2001, Rawlings expressed grave concern about

Adu Boahen's health. At that time Boahen had been flown to London for treatment and Rawlings knew the precise hospital! I respectfully suggested to Rawlings that it would be a nice gesture if Rawlings sent flowers and a card to his former political rival, wishing him a speedy recovery. I do hope former President Rawlings acted on my humble advice.

My visit to Ghana this last year of 2002 had one additional purpose apart from giving my three Aggrey distinguished lectures at the University of Ghana. The University at Legon wanted to honour former President Nelson Mandela and myself with doctoral degrees, honoris causa. For reasons of state the award for Mr. Mandela was postponed to a later date since he could not come to Accra. But I did receive my own honorary doctor of letters in full regalia and at a splendid ceremony.

My wife, Pauline, had also been invited to be an official guest of the University of Ghana, and was involved in some of the ceremonies by her husband's side. Although I had met the Head of State of Ghana before, it was a delight to see him again and to introduce him to my wife. President Kufuor presided at the award of the honorary degrees. I believe that Mr. Mandela and I were originally intended to be the only non-Ghanaians to be honoured that day. The other awardees were distinguished Ghanaians from different fields of endeavour. The Vice-Chancellor and his wife were superbly gracious to Pauline and me.

The Press in Ghana is now more pluralistic and livelier than ever – radio, television and the print media. Some judgments of mine on Kwame Nkrumah and Jerry Rawlings were hotly debated in the Press. Particularly controversial was the following conclusion of mine in my lectures:

“Kwame Nkrumah started his presidency as a democrat and ended up as a dictator. Jerry Rawlings started his presidential career as a brutal dictator, and ended up as a democrat.”

My judgments on both presidents were hotly contested by different sides of Ghanaian political opinion. My older judgment that *“Nkrumah was a great African but not a great Ghanaian”*, originally articulated in an article in Transition magazine way back in 1966 when Nkrumah was overthrown in a military coup, had never been forgotten in Ghana. That conclusion received a new lease on life during my visit in 2002.

Nkrumah’s old party – the Convention People’s Party [CPP] – issued a detailed Press statement in 2002 to rebut my conclusions on Nkrumah. I suppose the CPP and I agreed to disagree.

The Muslims of Ghana have discovered me. On this last visit in 2002 Muslim students at the University of Ghana invited me to give a separate lecture on a subject relevant to Muslims. I agreed, and the event was lively and successful. I was also interviewed by a Ghanaian Muslim on television on issues of interest to Muslims. I was also introduced to the current Vice President of Ghana, who is himself a Muslim – Vice President Alhaji Aliu Mahama.

Before Pauline and I left Ghana we visited the home of Adu Boahen once again to say good bye to him and Mary. Although we did our best to sound cheerful, it was a sad farewell. My old and dear friend Adu Boahen seemed seriously ill indeed. Our prayers are with him.

When I reported Adu Boahen's condition to his fellow historian, Professor Toyin Falola at the University of Texas, Austin, Toyin speedily decided to organize a special volume in Adu Boahen's honour. It was to be a multi-authored volume. Toyin Falola and I agreed that it would be a nice additional gesture if the volume included my third Aggrey lecture in Ghana which Adu Boahen had painfully attended in a wheel chair. This special volume in Boahen's honour has now been published by Africa World Press under the title of *"Ghana in Africa and the World: Essays in Honor of Adu Boahen"*.

This gesture by Falola and other admirers of Adu Boahen is itself a moving message of tribute to a great African scholar. Boahen's legacy will always be part of our own historical education.

The Pan African Writers Association [PAWA] also has its headquarters in Accra, Ghana. Its Executive Council awarded me an honorary membership in recognition of what the certificate describes as my "immense contribution to African literature." The certificate of honour was brought to Binghamton by the Secretary General of PAWA, Professor Atukwei Okai. The award was extended to me at a dazzling banquet of our Binghamton conference on the theme "Is Globalization a Dialogue of Civilizations?" Writers in attendance included Wole

Soyinka, the Nobel Laureate; statesmen in attendance included General Yakubu Gowon, former Head of State of Nigeria, accompanied by Mrs. Victoria Gowon. Lord Ahmed of Rotherham from the British House of Lords was also in attendance – as well as the city dignitaries of Binghamton and neighbouring townships.

An entirely different kind of tribute in the year 2002 was the posthumous salute to the memory of Julius K. Nyerere, the founder-President of Tanzania who died in 1999, but whose 80th birthday was celebrated last year. The Permanent Mission of Tanzania at the United Nations invited me to be the lead speaker at a special ceremony at the United Nations headquarters in New York to mark Nyerere's 80th anniversary. There were other tributes to Nyerere from diplomats and academicians. Among the academics was Mahmood Mamdani, who had taught for a number of years at the University of Dar es Salam in the past, and who is now a distinguished professor at Columbia University in New York. Professor Horace Campbell of Syracuse University also spoke. He too had once taught at the University of Dar es Salam.

But it was not just at the United Nations that I spoke about Mwalimu Nyerere. I was also invited to Dar es Salaam at a special ceremony sponsored by both the government of Tanzania and the Society for International Development. The present Head of State of Tanzania, President Benjamin Mkapa, as well as Salim Ahmed Salim, former Secretary General of the Organization of African Unity, also spoke at the ceremony.

But the Society for International Development (headquartered in Rome) had also invited me to deliver their 2002 Barbara Ward Distinguished lecture at their World Congress in Dar es Salaam which started on the same day. My theme for the Barbara Ward lecture was **"The Global Hostage Crisis: The South between Underdevelopment and Counterterrorism"**. President Benjamin Mkapa decided also to attend my lecture, although that had not been previously scheduled. I was delighted.

Towards the end of my Barbara Ward lecture I was presumptuous enough to suggest that the Society for International Development should rename their lecture "The Barbara Ward and Julius K. Nyerere Distinguished Lecture." This would combine the names of a distinguished Northerner (Barbara Ward was a British economist) and a distinguished Southerner; a female internationalist with a male globalist; a learned economist with a brilliant political figure. At the time of writing this Newsletter, I am still not sure if the Society for International Development would adopt my recommendation about renaming the lecture.

In December 2002, I attended a conference in Entebbe, Uganda, sponsored by the International Peace Academy in New York and the Faculty of Social Sciences at Makerere University in Uganda. My paper was jointly authored by Alamin M. Mazrui of the Ohio State University. In fact, Alamin was the one who was originally intended to present the paper in Entebbe, but he was taken ill just before he was due to leave the United States for Uganda. At extremely

short notice I stepped into his shoes. The conference was about problems of conflict and peace-building in Eastern Africa.

Our paper started with another tribute to the late Mwalimu Julius Nyerere, arguing that Nyerere had had a bigger impact on the fortunes of East African integration (both positive and negative) than any other citizen of the region. Participants in attendance included Tanzanians, as well as citizens from other countries in Eastern Africa.

On the very night of my arrival in Uganda I enquired about my old friend, Sulaiman Kiggundu – whom I had known since my own Makerere years when he was a student of economics at Makerere and I was the Dean of Social Sciences at the university. On my arrival in Uganda in 2002 Dr. Kiggundu was in prison. I knew about that, and asked my hosts how I could go and visit his family in Kampala and perhaps visit him personally in prison.

Under President Museveni, Dr. Kiggundu had once served as the Governor of the Central Bank of Uganda. Political differences between him and the Head of State cost him his job as the Governor of the Central Bank. Kiggundu then helped to start a bank of his own with special attentiveness to the problems of the Muslims of Uganda. He subsequently ended up in President Museveni's jail after some kind of banking conviction.

Well, in December 2002, I enquired about visiting him in prison. Two days later, while I was still in Uganda, Dr. Kiggundu was released from jail. I could not believe the remarkable coincidence. I managed to send a message to

Sulaiman in Kampala. He came to my hotel in Entebbe with his wife and two sons. It was a wonderful reunion of old friends, following his six months ordeal in prison.

Quite frankly, I never got to Kampala in December 2002!! Never before had I ever been in Uganda without visiting the capital city, Kampala. In 2002, “the mountain came to Muhammad in Entebbe” (so to speak) instead of my going to the capital. I knew that a number of my friends were coming to Entebbe, and this itself prevented me from going to Kampala in case my friends and I missed each other in the criss-crossing confusion.

In addition to my personal friends I was also visited in Entebbe by the two daughters of Omari H. Kokole, my Ugandan colleague at Binghamton University who had died suddenly in 1996 at the age of forty-four. It was wonderful to see the young women in Entebbe in 2002. They are now in their early twenties, but they are still struggling to understand why their Dad died so young and so “inexplicably.” I don’t suppose I have ever understood either.

Although I never got to Makerere in the year 2002, I did meet some former Makerere colleagues – including Dr. Semakula Kiwanuka, who is now Uganda’s Permanent Representative at the United Nations, and dear Dent Ocaya-Lakidi, whom I had hired for Makerere more than thirty years ago.

By telephone I also spoke with Tony Gingyera-Pinycwa, another colleague from my Uganda years. Since I left Uganda in the 1970s Tony has sometimes

headed the Department of Political Science at Makerere, and was for awhile Deputy Vice-Chancellor of the university.

One more item about the celebration of the 80th anniversary of Julius Nyerere's birth. With the help of Etin Anwar and her husband, Shalahudin Kawafri, I hurriedly put together a small book entitled *The Titan of Tanzania: The Legacy of Julius K. Nyerere*. The book consisted of papers and articles that I had written over the years about the career and policies of Julius Nyerere. This book was of a limited edition – intended to be presented to the current President of Tanzania, Benjamin Mkapa, when I went to Dar es Salaam for the Nyerere celebration and the conference of the Society for International Development. I did ceremonially present copies of the book to Benjamin Mkapa in Dar es Salaam in June to popular applause!

Though the book is currently of limited edition, we may have it commercially republished in a year's time, if all goes well.

IX. Death, Destiny and Coincidence

When I was growing up in Mombasa, Kenya, during World War II, I had two mothers – my Dad's two wives. My biological mother was my father's first and senior wife who lived in Mombasa town proper. Her name was Safia. My second mother lived in our country home (rural Changamwe). Her name was Aisha, but we called her "Bibie" as an affectionate title. My father spent the working week with my biological mother, and spent weekends with Bibie in the

country. Since my Dad wanted me to be around him most of the time, I commuted with him between the two homes.

Well, my younger mother Bibie died this last year (2002). She was in her eighties but had looked much younger than her age for decades. When I took my own children to visit her in the 1990s they were surprised by how much younger than me my mother Bibie had looked!

There were a series of coincidences this last year. Particularly strange had been my strong urge to call Bibie's home in Mombasa from Binghamton, New York. I dialed and got my sister Alya (her daughter by my Dad). I was startled to learn that Bibie had literally just died. I was the first person outside that particular house to know that – and I was calling from thousands of miles away.

I then dialed other members of the family in Mombasa to break the news to them. It was strange for someone in America to be telling family members in Mombasa about a death which had just occurred in their own neighbourhood. We wept together on the phone.

There were other remarkable coincidences. Bibie died almost exactly thirty years after the death of my biological mother in 1972. And my biological mother had died in what turned out to be my last year of residence in East Africa. I, my former wife Molly, and our children left for America not long after we buried my mother. But we did not know at the time that we were leaving East Africa [as residents] for good.

As if those were not enough coincidences, the last of my mother's sisters [Mama-Ena] died in 2002 within weeks of the death of Bibie. My biological mother had had half a dozen siblings. Mama-Ena was the last to leave us.

To top this parade of coincidences, I got the news of Mama-Ena's death when I was being hosted by her son, Abdul Nasser Shikely, in Kuwait. Abdul Nasser had been living in Kuwait for nearly fifteen years. This was the first time he and I had seen each other in more than a decade. That I should have been with one of Mama-Ena's sons in Kuwait when news came of her death in far-away Kenya was indeed another startling coincidence. Had I been in Binghamton, New York, I would not have been anywhere near any of Mama-Ena's children with whom to grieve in our shared loss.

My official hosts in Kuwait were Kuwait University, but Abdul Nasser and his wife and children were my only blood-relatives in Kuwait City. So they had been showing me the sights, and entertaining me to some Swahili cuisine. They had even arranged an AFRICA NIGHT in their home so that the African community in Kuwait City could come and break bread and dates with me. It was the day after the African Night that news about Mama-Ena's death was received.

Some of you may be wondering when my father died – before or after my biological mother, Safia? Brace yourselves for another coincidence! My mother Safia survived my father Al'Amin by a quarter of a century almost to the week.

Dad died in April 1947, mother Safia died in March 1972 – twenty-five years apart.

Let me conclude with a coincidence which brings together in sad unison my own family and that of my present wife, Pauline (Maryam). In the year in which the last of my mother's siblings died, the last of the siblings of Pauline's father also passed away. In the year 2002 we said a sorrowful farewell to our uncle, Chief Paul Uti, in Nigeria, as well as to Mama-Ena in Kenya.

Outside my immediate family death also took away some dear friends. In Ann Arbor, Michigan, we mourned the death of Lemuel Johnson, a distinguished multilingual man of letters originally from Sierra Leone. We were once colleagues at the University of Michigan. When he was Director of the Center for Afroamerican and African Studies at Michigan, he was technically my "Boss" as well as a dear friend. When I was offered the Albert Schweitzer Chair by the State University of New York at Binghamton, Lemuel tried his best to keep me in Ann Arbor. He lost that battle, but we remained friends and maintained contact right up to his death. I am still keeping in touch with his widow, Marian, who has been a dear friend in her own right.

If Lemuel Johnson was central in my concluding year at Michigan, Harold Jacobson (Jake) had been central in bringing me to Michigan in the first place. Jake was the Chair of Political Science at Michigan who had given me my first regular professorship in the United States after my flight from Idi Amin's Uganda in the 1970s. Harold Jacobson also passed away recently – a few months before

Lemuel Johnson's departure. We miss them both as friends and as major contributors to scholarship and the world of learning.

X. The Family in Transition

A year before I was due to celebrate my 70th birthday my mother-in-law in Nigeria – Mama Alice Uti – celebrated her 75th birthday. What is more, Mama Alice looked much younger than this son-in-law of hers. The Nigerian side of our family gave her a tremendous 75th celebration – gifts, songs, dance, food, poetry and plenty of laughter.

In addition to my beloved Pauline, Mama Alice gave the world five other children. And these children in turn have given her twenty-nine grandchildren. So you can imagine what a spectacular 75th her offspring gave her in Jos, Nigeria!! Mama Alice also has two great-grandchildren! We look forward to her return to Binghamton in 2003.

The American side of our family celebrated something else – the engagement of my first-born son Jamal to his beloved Susan. For years we had been waiting for the day when Jamal would meet the woman of his dreams. Two of his younger brothers, Al'Amin and Kim, got married before him and each is now a father. We were beginning to wonder if Jamal was waiting for his youngest brother of all to get married before Jamal took the plunge! His youngest brother of all – little Harith – is now nine years old.

Fortunately Susan emerged from the mists of romantic love, and the rest is history! At least we hope so! We look forward with delightful anticipation to the day when the knot will at last be tied, hopefully in 2003.

Jamal and Susan came to Binghamton to spend Thanksgiving 2002 with us. They were accompanied by Sarah, the brilliant daughter of Susan's by a previous marriage. For us it was a joyful introduction to our future daughter-in-law and to her first-offspring, Sarah. Those few days were a "Thanksgiving" occasion in more than the usual seasonal sense. After all, Jamal is nearly forty years old. It is indeed time he settled down as a family man.

Professionally, he does seem to have settled down. After a successful first degree from Princeton University and a graduate degree from Harvard, Jamal later joined the Federal Government of the United States. His boss is Colin Powell's son, Michael Powell – the Chair of the Federal Communications Commission.

My second son is, of course, Al'Amin. Al'Amin's most serious commitment of 2002 was to his own baby son, little Ali. I was so pleased when Al'Amin and Jill decided in 2000 to name their newborn son after his Grand-Dad. The little one is the next Ali A. Mazrui! The world has been forewarned!!

Little Ali is not only photogenic; we think he is televisual! At one or two years old he is already camera-conscious – and literally pauses elegantly for the camera. Can you imagine? We have magnificent shots of him smiling at the camera.

Al'Amin is my tallest son so far! Professionally, he has fluctuated between entrepreneurial and teaching roles. While Jamal had long been undecided whether to get married, Al'Amin has long been undecided what career was best for him. He may definitively settle to become a schoolteacher like his mother, Molly. That would make four of us engaged in education – Molly (the mother), Ali (the father), Al'Amin himself, and his younger brother, Kim, who is a professor of law at the University of Virginia, Charlottesville.

Pauline, my present wife, was also trained as a teacher right here at Binghamton University but she decided to devote her teaching talents to our own two little children, Farid (now eleven years old) and Harith (currently nine). Pauline also volunteers at their school a number of hours every week, as well as teaching our kids at home. The little ones have been getting excellent grades.

One assignment which Farid's class was given was to write a little report on a "famous person". Farid said to the teacher "My Dad! He is a famous person!" The teacher smiled and conceded the point! Farid was encouraged to interview his Dad for his school report. When my eleven-year-old son asked me for an interview, I did not refer him to my secretary for an appointment – as I usually do with other supplicants for interviews! Nevertheless we had to agree on a specific time.

He came to my "study" at home with a tape-recorder, and asked me questions which took me all the way back to the days when I was his age. Given the school assignment, he also wanted to know whether I was indeed a "famous

man” and, if so, what had made me “famous”. When I tried to be modest, Farid would not let me. He knew that I had been a television personality; that I traveled every year to the far corners of the world from where I telephoned him and his younger brother; and that I had written many books. But he wanted me to put all this together as a portrait of fame! That was what the school assignment had been all about. I capitulated!

Farid transcribed the audio-recorded interview and wrote a report based on it. The tape of the interview was submitted as an appendix to Farid’s report. The eleven year old was awarded a grade of 100% by his schoolteacher! It had been one of the toughest interviews I had ever had to confront – out of all the thousands of interviews in my professional career!

Talking of “portraits of fame” both Farid and his younger brother, Harith, have appeared in the local Binghamton town and campus newspapers more than once each. Reporter’s cameras are turned on our little boys from time to time – more because they look “newsworthy” themselves than because of their parents. Indeed, I suspect the cameraman or woman who has photographed my sons has known very little about their Dad!! Just a coincidence.

My professorial son, Kim, is becoming famous for different reasons. His meteoric rise to full professorship with tenure at the age of thirty-two was itself an attention-grabbing event. His university was established by Thomas Jefferson, the third president of the United States, in Charlottesville, Virginia, in the eighteenth century. Kim is professor of law at the University of Virginia.

He is already in demand as a lecturer at other institutions. One of those institutions in 2002 was Syracuse University in New York State. Kim came to the law school at Syracuse to make a presentation on constitutional issues arising out of affirmative action and of policies for compensating citizens for previous injustices to minority groups.

Since Syracuse is quite near Binghamton, Kim arranged to spend a night with us. I and my colleague Amadu Jacky Kaba later traveled to Syracuse University to listen to Kim's splendid presentation at the Syracuse Law School. The lecturing fee Kim is beginning to command is dangerously close to his father's rate in the United States! Should I feel proud or insecure? I am leaning towards pride. Kim is less than half my age.

In the United States I have two people named after my own Dad. There is Al'Amin, my son, and Alamin, my nephew. [They spell their names slightly differently.] We call my nephew "Alamin Senior", and my son "younger Al'Amin". To have called my son "Al'Amin Junior" would have caused confusion in the American idiom. Please remember Martin Luther King, Jr.!

My nephew's Dad, the late Sheikh Muhammad Kassim Mazrui, had helped to immortalize the writings of my father. Now his son Alamin is helping to immortalize my own writings. In the course of 2002, Alamin and our friend Goretta Mugambwa, were trying to put together a book on ALI A. MAZRUI AND HIS CRITICS – which would encompass the major debates of my life about the

African situation. The project may result in two volumes about DEBATING THE AFRICAN CONDITION, probably to be published by Africa World Press.

In the course of 2001-2002 my nephew Alamin also edited my lectures and papers on the issue of reparations. This has since been provisionally published under the title of BLACK REPARATIONS IN THE ERA OF GLOBALIZATION (2002). It may be more definitively reissued by Africa World Press in the year 2003.

My nephew Alamin and I have already published two co-authored books – *THE POWER OF BABEL: LANGUAGE AND GOVERNANCE IN THE AFRICAN EXPERIENCE* (Oxford and Chicago, 1998) and *POLITICAL CULTURE OF LANGUAGE: SWAHILI, SOCIETY AND THE STATE* (Nairobi, Oxford and Binghamton, 1990s).

Alamin's wife, Ousseina Alidou and her twin sister, Hassana, have been planning a future book on THE GENDER QUESTION IN ALI A. MAZRUI'S WORKS. If they do not look out, they may be overtaken by the Indonesian scholar, Dr. Etin Anwar, who has a similar project about my work on gender.

There are rumours that Molly, my first wife and the mother of my first three sons, is contemplating a second marriage in the year 2003. Although younger than me, Molly is nevertheless in her sixties. It is never too late for a second wedding. We all wish Molly and her chosen man happiness and true bliss. Amen.

The adventures of my brother's son, Zeid Harith Mazrui, have been taking a turn for the better. Zeid has been traversing the world looking for both political asylum and economic refuge. At last the United States government has granted him the right to work. Zeid is more oriented towards mechanical rather than academic skills. Zeid is more relevant when your car has broken down than when your book needs editing! We are grateful that some Mazruis are more practically relevant in their skills than others!

Ghalib Yusuf Tamim, another nephew of mine, has been working on the biography of my father in Sheikh Al'Amin Ali Mazrui in Kiswahili. Ghalib has accumulated a lot of material and data about my old man (his grandfather). Although his original report about my Dad was in Kiswahili, Ghalib has been working on an English translation as well.

In the course of 2002 Ghalib was my primary host every time I was in Nairobi, and Munir Mazrui (another nephew) was my main host in Mombasa. They often went beyond the call of duty in looking after their uncle. Asante sana.

I have one sister whose daughters have been a little more visible than her sons. This has been my sister Nafisa. Her oldest sons were hit by tragedy. The first son, Ahmed, has since died from cancer. Her second son Shakib has had nervous imbalances. However, her son Adil has done his best to compensate for these tragedies of older brothers. So has my namesake among her sons, Ali Manthry. Truly great nephews!

But especially striking have been the eldest daughter, Alwiyya, accompanied by the sisters Labiba, Fahima and Swafiya. My most regular correspondence with this side of the family has been through my e-mail correspondence with Swafiya. Through Swafiya I have learnt good news and bad, moments of grief and moments of celebration. May the more joyful news prevail in the years ahead. Amen.

Another e-mail "regular" among my nephews is Muhammad Yusuf Tamim, who is now a Canadian in Toronto. I hear from him regularly. His topics range from African politics to Islamic theology. Of all my North American relatives, he is the best educated in Islamic doctrine and theology.

Goretti Mugambwa and her daughter, Maria, have indeed become part of my Binghamton family. While Goretti was doing her bachelor's degree at Binghamton University she lived with us. Goretti did us proud! She was consistently on the Dean's list of excellence, and finally graduated magna cum laude. She won a number of awards as a new graduate. We were truly excited at her graduation.

We believe her daughter (now sixteen) has the same talents and level of dedication. In her performance in high school Maria once received a letter of congratulations from President Bill Clinton. Maria is a competent basketball player in high school. At least as important is the fact that Maria now has a driver's license – bringing the number of drivers in my Binghamton family to three, all of them women (Pauline, Goretti, and Maria)!! Before long Maria will

be going to college in either Canada or the United States – conceivably destined for a medical or alternative scientific degree. She has been a good role-model for my two youngest children – Farid and Harith. The Lord be praised.

XI. Is Globalization a Dialogue of Civilizations?

A conference of internationally renowned religious, cultural and political leaders discussing topics relating to globalization and the dialogue of civilizations was attended by more than 500 at the Holiday Inn-Arena and Heritage Country Club in our town of Binghamton, New York. My Institute of Global Cultural Studies was the hosting institution.

In different three-hour sessions devoted to conflict and dialogue between civilizations, participants debated topics such as religious intolerance, origins of terrorism, economic imbalances between developing and developed nations, the role of the United States as a super-power, and the importance of women in bringing about social change. Participants also responded to questions from the attending audience. Billed as “Global Town Meeting” Saturday’s events concluded a two-day long conference.

Participants in the conference included Wole Soyinka, the first African to win the Nobel Prize for literature; Lord Ahmed of Rotherham, the first Muslim appointed to the British House of Lords; General Yakubu Gowon, the Head of State who held Nigeria together during the Civil War in his country; Thomas Michel, Coordinator for Inter-Religious Dialogue for the Society of Jesus at the

Vatican, and many other prominent figures representing various nationalities such as India, Malaysia, Kenya, Nigeria, Ghana and Tibet. Religions represented included Islam, Judaism, Christianity, Hinduism and Buddhism.

The two-day event was unique in that it took place both on the campus of Binghamton University and on off-campus venues in the Southern Tier, bringing together "town and gown".

In my welcoming speech, I said that the conference was precedent setting as it joined together the debate over the process of "globalization" with the debate over the "clash of civilizations" in a manner that had not yet been attempted before. Although the conference was planned long before September 11, 2001, the events of that day made the issues addressed particularly urgent. "The state of New York has become more convinced than ever that civilizations and cultures should enter into continuous and substantive dialogue," I argued.

Chandra Muzaffar, President of the International Movement for a Just World in Malaysia, argued that "multi-ethnic, multi-religious communities need dialogue," that without such dialogue the results could be disastrous, and that when communities "isolate themselves from each other, tensions tend to rise." Atukwei Okai, Secretary-General of the Pan-African Writer's Association, noted that there was "no longer any way to escape such a dialogue." Jonah Isawa Elaigwu, President of the Institute of Governance and Social Research in Jos, Nigeria, called for a cost-benefit analysis of globalization from the perspective of North-South relations.

While overall the conference stressed the need for greater dialogue and understanding, it did not shy away from difficult issues. Radwan Masmoudi, Executive Director of the Center for the Study of Islam and Democracy in Washington, D.C., stressed the need to respect the civil rights of Muslims and Arabs in the United States and other Western countries. Ousseina Alidou from Rutgers University and Nkiru Nzegwu from Binghamton University stressed the need for greater enfranchisement and empowerment of women; and Lord Ahmed stressed that care must be taken in the use of the label terrorist, stating that many of those now regarded as great “freedom fighters” were “once considered terrorists by someone else.” Most participants stressed that if the potential beneficial effects of globalization are to be achieved without creating the kinds of conflicts that lead to violence and social injustice, then it is imperative to address the tremendous economic disparities between nations, to limit unilateral activity by superpowers such as the United States and to respect cultural differences. Ambassador Dudley Thompson from Jamaica stressed that some civilizations owed reparations to others for past injustices.

I was deeply moved by the event. I felt that bringing such prominent personalities from so many corners of the world was a significant feat for the Institute. It would not have been possible to bring them together in one place had they not been generous enough to forego the usual honoraria and fees they command for such appearances.

I was helped by my Institute team to spread the conference out over three venues. While logistical concerns regarding the size of the venue initially pushed the Institute in that direction, we became convinced that it would be a very important gesture to not only open events to the public, but to “literally and physically take the event into the community.” Michael Toler, the conference coordinator, was a brilliant organizer, helped by Ruzima Sebuharara, AnnaMarie Palombaro and others.

Friday’s events began with a closed door dialogue among 30 invited participants who were greeted by Frances Carr, Vice President for Research at Binghamton University, and Supervisor Andrea Starzak of the Town of Vestal.

On Friday evening Mayor Richard Bucci of Binghamton and myself welcomed participants before we heard comments by Lord Ahmed of Rotherham and the keynote speech by Wole Soyinka in front of an audience of approximately 130 persons.

Mary Ann Swain, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs at Binghamton University, Mayor Harry G. Lewis of the Village of Johnson City and Supervisor John E. Cheevers of the Town of Union were on hand to open the meetings on Saturday. Approximately 150 attended the morning session, whereas the afternoon session filled the 300 seats in the Heritage Ballroom to near capacity.

2002 was a year dedicated to debate on the “Dialogue of Civilizations” at the United Nations. The IGCS conference contributed to enlarging the debate

and to more adequately address the processes of globalization. "We are likely to find this is the first of a series of events that will continue the debate in this direction," said Atukwei Okai of Ghana. Niara Sudarkasa, former President of Lincoln University, warned against too much optimism about the consequences of globalization. She also profoundly distrusted the concept of "civilizations" – regardless of whether they were supposed to be in conflict or in dialogue. Muhammad Bakari, who had come all the way from Istanbul, regarded "globalization" as the latest euphemism for "Westernization". Ashis Nandy from India was concerned that both "globalization" and "civilization" were elitist concepts.

XII: Towards the Future: A Conclusion

Now that I am entering the seventieth year of my life, it would be unnatural if I did not start speculating about my possible retirement. Life and health permitting, should I retire when I am 75 years old in 2008? Or should I retire when I complete my twentieth year at Binghamton University in 2009-2010? Or should I begin to retire in installments much sooner, reluctantly giving up Cornell University first before I step down from Binghamton University later this decade?

And where should we retire to? Should we remain in the Binghamton-Ithaca, New York area, where we have lots of friends? Or should we move to a town where one of my adult sons lives? (The sons are currently "scattered"

across the states of Maryland, California and Virginia)!! There is also the option of our retiring in ancestral Kenya or Nigeria. Some friends have even suggested that I should retire in Oxford, England, as a midway point between my sons in America and our extended families in Mombasa, Kenya, and Jos, Nigeria.

At the moment the issue of my retirement is merely a hypothesis. I feel no sense of urgency for retiring, alhamdu li Llah!

However, my seventieth year is here. I hear rumors that publications in my honour are forthcoming. Dr. Seifudein Adem is a young Ethiopian professor teaching at the University of Tshukuba in Japan. He has completed a book about my approach to the study of world politics. For part of his research he had come especially to Binghamton from Japan to spend a few weeks at our Institute. His book is entitled *Paradise Lost, Paradise Regained: the Worldview of Ali A. Mazrui*. A special edition of the book is scheduled to appear this year with pictures.

My old friend, Parviz Morewedge, has edited and published a biographical festschrift in my honor. The book, entitled *The Scholar Between Thought and Experience*, has just been published by Global Publications.

Professor Toyin Falola at the University of Texas, Austin, had begun a project on what he calls The African Canon. The idea was to select a number of scholars who had significantly contributed to our understanding of Africa in the course of the twentieth century, and then republish their most influential articles in a single large volume for each author. The scholars chosen included

Professors Jacob Ade Ajayi, Richard Sklar, Bethwell Allan Ogot, Adu Boahen, and Ali A. Mazrui.

In every case but mine the scholar's influential articles were to be published in one volume. But in my case it was decided to publish three Mazruiana volumes. There were two reasons for treating my work differently – the quantity of my output and the diversity of my subject matter.

Ricardo R. Laremont and a team of assistants edited Volume I *Africanity Redefined* and Volume II *Africa and Other Civilizations: Conquest and Counter-Conquest*. These two volumes have just been published by Africa World Press in Trenton, New Jersey.

Volume III of my essays is being edited by Robert L. Ostergard, another colleague at Binghamton. The ambition is to have this third volume out before the end of 2003. Editorial associates involved in the preparation of these three volumes have included Fouad Kalouche, Tracia Leacock Senghatolislami, Michael A. Toler, and Betul Celik.

I have also referred earlier to the book being compiled and edited by Alamin M. Mazrui provisionally entitled **Debating the African Condition: Ali A. Mazrui and His Critics**. The book will include debates about gender, ethnicity, sexuality, civil-military relations, governance, and religion. My debating adversaries over the decades have included creative writers like Wole Soyinka and Paul Theroux, social scientists like Archie Mafeje and William Ochieng, editors like Conor Cruise O'Brien, and Heads of State like President A. Milton

Obote of Uganda and President Julius K. Nyerere of Tanzania. I am not sure what editor Alamin Mazrui has chosen to include in this volume about my debates on the African condition with such worthy adversaries. Will one volume be enough for such debates? We shall know when the publication is launched at the 2003 convention of the African Studies Association of the United States in November this year, Insha Allah.

My South African colleague, Abdul S. Bemath in Johannesburg, is busy updating his own book about me entitled The Mazruiana Collection: A Comprehensive Annotated Bibliography of the Published Works of Ali A. Mazrui, first published in 1998 by Africa World Press, New Jersey, and Sterling in New Delhi. Bemath's book about me has a Foreword by General Yakubu Gowon, PhD., former Head of State of Nigeria.

General Gowon and his dear wife, Victoria, honoured our home in Binghamton when they came to dinner in April 2002. In my sitting room there is a school photograph taken in 1945 with my face among dozens of other Mombasa kids. In exchange for a free book as a prize, General Gowon wittily challenged our other guests that evening to see if they could recognize me in the photo when I was only twelve years old. The General got into the spirit of the party, and personally challenged one guest after another. I do not think anybody really recognized me, but the General was generous enough to award the book to my dear friend also at the dinner, Dr. Niara Sudarkasa, former President of Lincoln University in Pennsylvania!! It was a hilarious mood of

relaxation and comradeship. The evening was concluded by remarkably eloquent post-dessert speeches by General Gowon, Chandra Muzaffar and Dudley Thompson.

Another humorous debate later in the year occurred in South Africa. Who had invented the concept of "African Renaissance"? Was it Ali Mazrui or Thabo Mbeki? In July 2002 I did have a brief encounter with President Thabo Mbeki in Pretoria, South Africa. We had known each other during the days of the struggle against apartheid, but 2002 was the first time I had met him since he became President of South Africa. But at our encounter we did not discuss our rival claims to the authorship of "the African Renaissance". Perhaps it was just as well – since Nnandi Azikiwe of Nigeria had coined it in the 1930s when I was only a mere child and Thabo Mbeki was not even born!

Anyhow, I was delighted to be able to pay my respects to President Mbeki in July 2002. I also addressed a special meeting of the African National Congress at their headquarters in Johannesburg about the impact of September 11 on Africa. The meeting was sponsored by both the ANC and the Institute of Global Dialogue in Johannesburg.

My lecture at the University of South Africa was on "**Comparative Terror from Shaka to Sharon: Religious, Racial, Revolutionary and State Violence.**" The lecture was sponsored by several different units at the University of South Africa in Pretoria. I had earlier lectured in Cape Town as a Keynote speaker to open a special conference to mark a century of literary

excellence in Africa's experience. I caught up with a number of old friends at the conference in Cape Town – ranging from Zeke Mphahlele, the man of letters, to David Harrison, the BBC television producer without whom my television series *The Africans: A Triple Heritage* would never have been done. David had been both the principal fundraiser and the Executive Director of the *Africans*. When we met in South Africa in July 2002 he asked me for an interview.

But on what topic? He wanted my evaluation of Nelson Mandela. Why a Kenyan's evaluation of Mandela when we were both in Mandela's own country? Well, David Harrison was working on a television project about Mandela, and wanted the views of prominent Africans from different countries about Mandela.

A Pan-African dinner in Cape Town was hosted by my old friends Nuruddin Farah, the Somali novelist, and his wife Amina Mama, the distinguished Nigerian scholar at the University of Cape Town. It was, in terms of conversation, a lively and most enjoyable evening. Later in the year I ran into Amina in Washington, D.C., at the annual meeting of the African Studies Association. Alas, it was a brief and hurried encounter. Perhaps we will meet again when I return to South Africa in June and July 2003 for the joint congress of the African Association of Political Science and the International Political Science Association, God willing.

The year 2003 is starting badly with war clouds over Iraq, civil conflicts in Africa, nuclear stalemate over North Korea, the pandemic of AIDS, and the spectacular tragedy of the space shuttle Columbia. But the Dorset novelist

Thomas Hardy reminded us "*If a way to the Better there be, it exacts a full look at the Worst*".

The English poet Shelley was of course even more optimistic in his "Ode to the West Wind":

O, Wind,

If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?