



A Tale of Two Africas: Nigeria and South Africa as Contrasting Visions

Ali A. Mazrui

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Nigeria and South Africa provide the socioeconomic and political contrasts in the African condition. Some of these contrasts can be demonstrated in the following dialectics: Nigeria is the Africa of human resources, South Africa is a land of mineral resources; Nigeria is repellant to European settlement; South Africa is a magnet for such settlement; Nigeria is a mono-racial society, South Africa is a multiracial society; Nigeria is grappling with the politics of religion, South Africa's is pre-occupied with the politics of secularism; Nigeria is Africa's largest exporter of oil, South Africa is Africa's largest consumer of oil; Nigeria is a paradigm of indigenization, South Africa is a paragon of Westernization. Building on these contrasts, Professor Ali Mazrui, master of the dialectical approach to socio-political analysis, demonstrates how the two most influential countries between the Niger and the Cape of Good Hope are alternative faces of Africa.

_____ Professor Ali Mazrui needs no introduction to any student of African politics. Recently nominated as one of the 100 greatest living public intellectuals in the world by the Washington-based journal, Foreign Policy, Professor Mazrui is the author of more than twenty books and hundreds of articles published all over the world. He was the author and narrator of the highly regarded television series *The Africans: A Triple Heritage* (BBC/PBS, 1986). He is currently Director of the Institute of Global Cultural Studies and Albert Schweitzer Professor in the Humanities, State University of New York at Binghamton. He is also Andrew D. White Professor-at-Large Emeritus and Senior Scholar in Africana Studies, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, USA; Chancellor, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, Thika, Kenya as well as the Albert Luthuli Professor-at-Large at the University of Jos, Nigeria. James Kariuki is Professor of International Relations with a special interest in the African Diaspora. He has published extensively on African Politics, Global Africa and International Relations. He currently works at the Africa Institute of South Africa (AISA) in Pretoria where he is the Head of the African Diaspora Unit.

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