ETHIOPIA
The "Anomaly" and "Paradox" of Africa

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Ethiopia is a historically antique polity. It is one of the very few places that managed to sustain an unbroken chain of historical civilization free of foreign "corruption." Unlike Egypt, Mesopotamia, India, and others that were later overrun by alien and destructive forces, Ethiopia maintained its brand of African civilization intact. This created a fascination among Western intellectual circles. Nevertheless, Western scholarship saw Ethiopia as outlandish to Africa. Like ancient Egypt, Ethiopia was systematically de-Africanized in the annals of Western high culture. In this article, I attempt to identify the fundamental perceptions of Western Ethiopianist scholarship and the many images of Ethiopia that emanate from it.

THE ISOLATION IMAGE

In the words of Jesman (1963), "Ethiopia is the oldest African country, yet in many respects it is *in* rather than *of* Africa" (p. 10). This statement is typical of the views of the major protagonists of Western Ethiopianist discourse. Just as the Sahara is taken as the "natural barrier" that separates "White" north Africa from "Black" Africa, in the same way the Red Sea and the lowland desert that border Ethiopia are taken as the natural confines that cut off Ethiopia from the outside world. In this scholarly tradition, Ethiopia has been perceived as being both the anomaly and the paradox of African history. Ethiopia is studied in a geographical paradigm

that takes isolation from the outside world, Africa or otherwise, as its main theme of analysis.

The isolation image has been one of the most influential images in Western Ethiopianist studies. The famous statement of Gibbon (1956), "Encompassed on all sides by the enemies of their religion, Ethiopians slept near[ly] a thousand years, forgetful of the world by whom they were forgotten" (Vol. 5, p. 69), has been the preface to works written on Ethiopia.

Geography is cited to explain almost anything Ethiopian, including its millennial independence and civilization. This geographical determinism ignores a number of historical events that defy explanation within its terms of reference. For example, Lord Napier's British expeditionary force reached Maqdala, the heartland of the geographically "inaccessible" plateau, fought Tewodros II, defeated him, and pulled out. The Sudanese Mahdists set fire to Gondar. The Italians crossed the merciless heat of the Ogaden and the "impenetrable" plateau of Tigray in their march to Addis Ababa. For many an invader, Ethiopia's geography was no insurmountable hurdle. And yet, scholars repeatedly have explained away Ethiopia's continued sovereign status in extra-human terms.[1] When Ethiopians defeated Italians at the battle of Adwa, it was attributed to the hostile Ethiopian terrain. The centuries of independent statehood, intensely proud nationalism, fighting skill, numerical superiority, and close matching of firepower of Ethiopians with that of Italians were simply ignored.

Perhaps the best testimony against the isolation paradigm is the centuries-old slave trade from Ethiopia to the Arab world and beyond carried out by the Muslim Jabarti merchants. This "trade" was a demographic curse that bled Ethiopia dry. Ethiopian blood runs through the veins of many an Arab, Indian, Persian, and Turk.

Moreover, ever since its adoption of Christianity up until 1949, for more than 16 centuries Ethiopia had Coptic Egyptians as the head of its Orthodox Church. How do proponents of the isolation paradigm explain all this?

Referring to Ethiopia's unbroken line of centuries of independence, which he called "one of the social curiosities of a latter day Great Society," Toynbee (1965b) wrote,

> The survival of her political independence in the midst of an Africa under European domination; the survival of her Monophysite Christianity in the borderland between Islam and paganism; the survival of her Semitic language between the Hamitic and Nilotic language areas; and the stagnation of her culture at a level which is really not much higher than the level of the adjacent Tropical African Barbarism [makes Ethiopia unique in Africa]. (p. 365)

Toynbee attributed Ethiopia's uniqueness in Africa to "the virtual impregnability of the highland fastness in which the Monophysite fossil is ensconced" (p. 365). Budge (1970) commented, "The geographical position of Abyssinia has had a very great effect upon the history and character of the Abyssinian Ethiopians" (pp. 126-127). He further wrote, "The advantage of the high, rocky plateau to the Abyssinians was that it gave them immunity from invasion; its disadvantage was that it cut them off from the rest of the world" (p. 127). Rey (1923) said,

> From biblical times down to the present day, Abyssinia has periodically emerged from the mysterious obscurity in which so much of its story is veiled, and has appeared on the world's stage in connection with striking and even startling events, only to withdraw once again to seclusion behind the impenetrable barrier of its mountain ranges. (p. 9)

Tonkin (1972) wrote, "Ethiopia had never been easy of access. To a great extent its unique culture has survived just because its terrain made it a mountain fortress, the surrounding deserts lapping its steep escarpment walls" (p. 13). Quite recently, Lewis (1987) called Ethiopia "mysterious, isolated, diminished but unconquered" (p. 99).

It is through the isolation paradigm that the so-called Ethiopian psychological makeup, marked by xenophobia and siege mentality, is explained. That Ethiopians live in a land and sea-locked plateau, encircled throughout by the enemies of their religion, explains their social psychology, so goes the argument. Beginning from the 1936-1941 Italian occupation, the geographical thesis in explaining Ethiopia began to fade away as the Italian genius in road building violated the honor of Ethiopia's hitherto "impregnable" mountain fastness surrounded by hot deserts. The precursor came with the

Suez Canal. As Trimingham (1965) put it, "The opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 brought an end to the isolation of Abyssinia" (p. 120).

It is time that the geographical thesis in explaining Ethiopian history is given a decent burial.

THE ROMANTIC IMAGE

From land of Prester John (Sanceau, 1944) to the seductive charm of Amhara genius (Levine, 1967), Ethiopia has excited a romantic image in the annals of Western discourse. Far away geographically and yet so close religiously, this "Christian kingdom of mountain fastness" has fired the imagination of many a Westerner. Levine writes of Amhara life,

> I freely admit to having been seduced by the charm of traditional Amhara life. . . . Such sights and sounds! A minstrel singing his subtle lyrics as he bows a one-stringed fiddle; in the dark interiors of church, barefoot deacons holding beeswax candles and swinging vessels of smoking incense; the pomp of a nobleman moving cross country with his crowded entourage; a young girl washing the feet of her father's guest; warriors boasting with their martial chants; the stately rhythms of clergy chanting and dancing under the mid-day sun; the open marketplace, offering all manner of livestock, grain, and spices; the council of an elder, resolving a dispute; the simple dignity of the bow when two men meet. (pp. vii-viii)

As to the beauty of Ethiopians, it is a theme that has been emphasized repeatedly. Prouty (1986) wrote, "Beautiful the Ethiopians are—distinct on the continent of Africa for their straight noses, thin lips, attenuated body structure, and olive skin" (p. xii).

THE CIVILIZATION IMAGE

Ethiopian civilization, majestic and exotic, hibernated throughout its long history, lost in the entanglement of geographical isolation and hostile neighbors. Accordingly, Ethiopian history supposedly belongs to what Hegel (1956) called "un-historical history"

(p. 105), which is "only the repetition of the same majestic ruin" (p. 106). As Dugan and Lafore (1973) put it,

> Ethiopia is an Old Testament land [where] the Song of Songs and the Ten Commandments are a living lyric and a living law and where the sons of Solomon are kings and prophets still. . . .
>
> Ethiopia's civilization is the only one from the era of the Roman empire that survived into modern times with unbroken political continuity or with substantial resemblance to its classical state. It survived owing to an isolation almost as complete as Japan's. (pp. 11-12)[2]

THE "ADWA COMPLEX" IMAGE

The Italian defeat at the battle of Adwa on March 1, 1896, sent shock waves throughout the foundations of 19th-century European racism. Mockler (1984) called the Italian defeat "the greatest single disaster in European colonial history" (p. xli). Dugan and Lafore (1973) remarked,

> The Ethiopian triumph in 1896 that had left fourteen thousand of a European army dead or prisoners had been the first success in a long campaign to break the planetary sovereignty of Europeans; the black emperor of a big and empty land lost in the high mountains, encircled by a confusion of deserts, jungles, and undrawn frontiers, sounded reveille for a sleeping world. (p. 3)

The Adwa victory made Ethiopia respectable among Western powers and made Emperor Menelik II a power to be reckoned with. Ethiopia became recognized as a sovereign state in the interstate system. This was the most important outcome of the Adwa victory.

Thanks to the Adwa victory, the popular image of pre-Adwa Ethiopia as a land of barbarism lost in a mountain fastness, everything savage, including a "superstitious-ridden Christianity" (Bent, 1893, p. 51), changed dramatically. Adwa made Ethiopia become "civilized" instantly. As Marcus (1971) put it, "The battle of Adwa proved conclusively that an African power could successfully meet

the challenge of modern European imperialism: five days [after the battle of Adwa], the Italians recognized the fact by suing for peace" (p. 162). In the aftermath of the Adwa debacle, "Europe had to reassess Ethiopia and its ruler, in much the same fashion as they would Japan after Russia's defeat in 1905" (p. 162). Because "Adwa proved that Menelik was not a princeling who could be juggled . . . European chancelleries now had to come to terms with the fact of continued Ethiopian independence" (p. 163). A new image of Ethiopia and Ethiopians, an image in tune with Western racist imperialism of the times, had to be worked out. The easiest way to do so was to paint Ethiopians White. So was born the myth of Ethiopians as "Black Caucasians" (see Marcus, 1971). As Bernal (1987) remarked, "Where the racial stereotype of natural European superiority failed, artificial intervention was necessary to preserve it" (p. 249). The Black Caucasian thesis ascribed to Ethiopians was one such artificial intervention.

As Ethiopians were painted White—because the protagonists of racism could not accept defeat in the hands of Black Africans— Menelik was deified as a genius. As Marcus (1971) noted, Menelik was "no longer [seen as] a semi-barbarian" (p. 162). He was portrayed as industrious, hard-working, and disciplined. Skinner (1969) saw Menelik in typical American terms:

> Menelik has created the United States of Abyssinia—a work for which he was endowed by Nature with the constructive intelligence of a Bismarck and the faculty for handling men . . . [with the] sheer amiability of a McKinley. (p. 19)

The superlative terms to which Ethiopians and Menelik were referred were also extended to the army. "No longer was Menelik's army considered a motley band of barbarians brought together for looting and raping. The Ethiopian became a magnificent soldier in anyone's terms" (Marcus, 1971, p. 164). On the Ethiopian side, the Adwa complex gave Ethiopians pride—indeed, a sense of supe-riority. Vivian (1969), the British traveler in Ethiopia during the latter part of the 19th century, had this to say in regard to the Adwa complex of Ethiopians:

It is no doubt reasonable that a nation of niggers, possessing three hundred thousand rifles, should take a tone different from that of niggers who are not permitted to possess any, but they go too far when they presume to arrogate themselves a superiority over civilized countries against which they could not possibly stand up. I admire their ancient civilization so far as it goes, or rather so far back as it goes, and I hope that their independence may be respected; but this must depend largely upon their own wisdom and prudence and modesty. (p. 248)

THE BARBARISM IMAGE

Ethiopians were not, however, able to "enjoy" their "honorary Caucasian" status for long. Once the aftershock of Adwa subsided, the real face of Ethiopians began to be exposed. The detergent used to bleach them started to fade away, as the authentic "burnt face" could be no more hidden behind the White mask made in Europe. The military victory that made Ethiopians turn White now became a liability. Southard (1962) wrote,

[Ethiopians] are so proud of their military record that they have fallen into the error of believing that fighting prowess is the greatest of all national accomplishments, and that it is the one and necessary qualification to their right to existence as an independent nation. (pp. 2-3)

The only criterion that had made Ethiopians sovereign members of the interstate system and painted them White—their military prowess—was no longer sufficient for being admitted into the club of "civilized nations." Because Ethiopia was way behind in economic development, it had to "open up" its mountain fastness for modern civilization. If it could not do so of its own volition, force must be applied. Hence the need for direct colonial occupation. This task of the "White man's burden" was to be carried out by Italy, ever ambitious but never successful in its Ethiopian adventure. The most rational justification for Italian occupation of Ethiopia was made by the English novelist Waugh (1984), who wrote,

Abyssinia could not claim recognition on equal terms by the civilised nations and at the same time maintain her barbarous isolation; she must put her natural resources at the disposal of the world; since she was obviously unable to develop them herself, it must be done for her, to their mutual benefit, by a more advanced power [such as Italy]. (pp. 40-41)

THE BLACK COLONIALISM IMAGE

Ethiopia had effectively participated in the European scramble for Africa. This view is popular both within Western scholarship and the various nationalist movements in the Horn of Africa, including Greater Somalia nationalism. Toynbee (1965a) wrote that "Menelik saved Ethiopia from becoming one of the many victims of European colonialism by taking an active part in the scramble for Africa himself" (p. 44; see also Schwab, 1985, p. 5). Tidy and Leeming (1981) describe Menelik's territorial expansion between 1872 and 1898 as "part of the African partition of Africa and continued as part of the European partition" (p. 104). Gann and Duignan (1981) argued that Menelik's Ethiopia took an active part in the scramble for Africa by "competing effectively with the French, Italians and British along Ethiopia's borders" (p. 16). Bohannan and Curtin (1988) wrote that Ethiopia, "like Liberia, was not merely an African state that kept itself free of European control; it was also a secondary empire built by conquest and maintained by the dominance of the Christian Amhara from the old core area" (p. 342).

The so-called "Black colonialism" or "participation in the scramble for Africa" ascribed to Ethiopia is based on an amazing ignorance of or deliberate indifference to the history of state formation in 19th-century Africa. Africans throughout the continent were forming states through territorial expansion and political centralization so as to face head on the gathering storm of the "White man's burden." Menelik's expansion was part of the larger African scene. Like the Fulani empire of Sokoto, the Zulu state of Chaka, Samori Toure's fragile empire, the Kabakas of Buganda, and so on, Menelik's Ethiopia was expanding and centralizing in the midst of growing

European pounding on Africa. And yet, the Western-centered historical tradition, based on the European experience, assumes that, just like the Europeans scrambled for Africa, so did Ethiopians scramble for Africa—a fine example of Eurocentrism at work.

If, indeed, what makes Menelik a Black colonialist is the fact that he more than doubled the territory and population under his rule, then, obviously, Shaka should be 50 times more colonialist than Menelik because he expanded the territory and people subject to his rule by a factor of more than 100. There are many answers to the question, "How did Ethiopia manage to maintain its sovereignty in the midst of defeat all over Africa?," but an analogy based on the European scramble for Africa is not one of them.

THE ARROGANCE IMAGE

As a result of their Adwa complex against Europeans and "colonialist" domination over the "non-Abyssinians," Ethiopians repeatedly have been referred to as being very arrogant and rude. Waugh (1984) wrote,

> The essence of the offence [committed by Abyssinians] was that the Abyssinians, in spite of being by any possible standard an inferior race, persisted in behaving as superiors; it was not that they were hostile [to Europeans], but contemptuous. The White man, accustomed to other parts of Africa, was disgusted to find the first-class carriages on the railway usurped by local dignitaries; he found himself subject to officials and villainous-looking men at arms whose language he did not know, who showed him no sort of preference on account of his colour, and, had not the smallest reluctance to using force on him if he became truculent. (p. 35)

Murphy (1968) saw Ethiopians as having a "pathetic national superiority complex [that] tends to run wild for lack of sobering comparisons with other nations" (p. 5). Lipsky (1967) wrote of Amharas and Tigreans, whom he said "exaggerate their own and the[ir] country's importance, dealing arrogantly with neighbors, Westerners, or Asians" (p. 5).

THE "NATIONAL CHARACTER" IMAGE

Hosts of travelers' accounts and scholarly treatises on Ethiopia have made a number of comments on the "national character" of Ethiopians. From outright racists such as Vivian to refined social scientists such as Levine, the importance given to the psychological realm in the understanding of Ethiopians is quite enormous. Accordingly, Vivian (1969) wrote,

> It is perhaps in their ideas about gifts that the Abyssinians reveal their character most clearly. It is said of them that they are in the habit of giving you an egg in the expectation of receiving an ox in return. (p. 218)

Waugh (1984) wrote of another national character of Ethiopians, that of "tricking":

> Tricking the European was a national craft [of Ethiopians]; evading issues, promising without the intention of fulfillment, tricking the paid foreign advisors, tricking the legations, tricking the visiting international committees—these were the ways by which Abyssinia had survived and prospered. (p. 27)

Waugh "forgot" that all these characteristics he ascribed to Ethiopians are called diplomacy in Europe, and there they have very high status. The "tricking" abilities of Menelik were perceived by the Western powers themselves as one of the many facets of Ethiopian genius in the diplomatic field. Poor African "tribal chiefs" who, in their "child-like honesty," did not know how to "trick" Europeans ended up being colonized. Their honesty in the treaties they signed with European powers was taken as a manifestation of the "undeveloped African mind," innocent of modern diplomatic skills.

The obsession with the national character of Ethiopians was not just a hobby of some amateur traveler-adventurers such as Vivian and Waugh. The highly sophisticated professor from the University of Chicago had the same sociological observation to make about Abyssinians, in his case to the "core Abyssinians," the Amharas. Levine (1967) wrote,

> The Amhara is a master at *deception*. With straight face and con-
> vincing manner he will relate the most preposterous fictions. . . .
> The natural complement of such deception is pronounced *suspi-
> ciousness*. Amharas are constantly on the lookout for latent mean-
> ings and hidden motives. (pp. 250-251; emphasis in original)

Furthermore, "Perhaps the most characteristic form of interaction
among the Amhara is that of *domination*. The Amhara is at his
happiest when he is in a position to order someone about" (Levine,
1967, p. 253; emphasis in original). Alas, was the author of *The Will
to Power* Amhara? Or perhaps Machiavelli?

THE PITY IMAGE

When Mussolini's forces invaded Ethiopia in October 1935, the
"civilized" world felt pity for Ethiopia. Ethiopia was back on the
international stage. This time, unlike in the aftermath of Adwa, it
was to express the injustice being done to one of the very few
African member states of the League of Nations. The collapse of
the League of Nations was attributed to its silence on the Italian
aggression. Walters (1969) wrote that the Italian attack was "the
most important and most decisive chapter in the history of the
League" (p. 623). Harris (1964) wrote, "The Italo-Ethiopian crisis
of 1934-36 initiated a chain of events in Europe that culminated in
the Second World War" (p. v). Coffey (1974) said that "Benito
Mussolini's Italian conquest of Ethiopia was destined to become
the most important single factor in the destruction of the League of
Nations and the failure of collective security against aggression"
(p. xi). Due to Ethiopia's being the unjust victim of aggression, the
balance in the equation of civilization versus barbarism was re-
versed. According to Dugan and Lafore (1973), "After Mussolini
began the attack upon his empire, Haile Selassie came to represent
not barbarism but principle, not savagery but civilization" (p. 2).
In 1936, a few months after the Italian conquest of Ethiopia, Haile
Selassie (1976) stood in front of the League of Nations with the
passionate question, "What answer am I to take back to my people?"

(p. 312). His appeal fell on deaf ears. Three years later, Europe was immersed in the worst bloodbath in its history, World War II. The fire that started in Ethiopia ended up catching Europe at home.

The Ethiopian resistance against the Italian fascist occupation helped galvanize anticolonial movements in Africa. The blood of Ethiopian fighters was the ink that inspired in part the poetry of Negritude. Both in the struggle to head off European colonialism and in the persistent campaign to make Ethiopia ungovernable for the Italian fascist occupiers, Ethiopia became a symbol of unflinching defiance. Africans all over the world took this with an immense sense of pride.

Mussolini's invasion of Ethiopia brought about two significant turning points in the history of the relation between the "West" and the "rest of us." First, it was the last major European colonial conquest. Second, it was one of the largest and most deadly of all European colonial-military invasions ever undertaken since Columbus to occupy the land of "people of color." The Italian invasion heralded the beginning of the end of European global dominance. Another aspect of the invasion is that it unleashed trans-Atlantic pan-African nationalism; it was also the beginning of anticolonial African nationalism. The *UNESCO General History of Africa* takes the 1935 Italian invasion of Ethiopia as the beginning of the end of its eight-volume series, as a turning point in modern African history, as the beginning of African nationalism (see Mazrui, 1993).

As Venice began the adventures of European capitalism, Mussolini's Italy exhausted the colonial expansion of the West (in its 1935-1936 invasion of Ethiopia). In between Renaissance Venice and Mussolini's Italy was one *longe duree* of hibernation into insignificance. Italy is a case that does not fit. It started the adventure of Western capitalism, then left it for others to pursue.

THE PAN-AFRICAN IMAGE

Whereas Western scholarship predicated on the non-African status of Ethiopia, Africans have taken Ethiopia as the most beloved of their possessions, as the jewel and pride of Africa—indeed, of

people of African descent. As opposed to the Western image of Ethiopia, the pan-African construction of Ethiopian identity not only includes Ethiopia as part of Africa but made Ethiopia the quintessence of Africa. Ethiopia became the concentrated expression of Africa. Ethiopia carried the burden and suffering that was Africa. Ethiopia symbolized the hope and pride of Africa. The biblical Ethiopia "stretching its hands unto God" became the real Ethiopia invaded by Mussolini. It was in the historical context of Mussolini's invasion, and earlier the Ethiopian victory at Adwa, that the pan-African construction of the Ethiopian identity was formed. It was the feeling that the pride of Adwa, the pride of Africa, was to be erased by the second coming of Italy that galvanized a passionate pan-African defense of Ethiopia. Ethiopia has a unique place in the consciousness of Africans. It has been revered as the symbol of Black defiance of White domination. From London to Harlem, from Lagos to Kingston, from Accra to Cairo, the Italian fascist invasion of Ethiopia became a rallying ground of pan-African nationalism. For Jomo Kenyatta (cited in Asante, 1977), Ethiopia was the "sole remaining pride of Africans and Negroes in all parts of the world" (p. 16). Azikiwe (cited in Asante, 1977) saw Ethiopia as having the type of government that "the fathers of Africans established on this continent" (p. 16). For Thwaite (cited in Asante, 1977), Ethiopia was the "shrine enclosing the last sacred spark of African political freedom, the impregnable rock of black resistance against white invasion, a living symbol, an incarnation of African independence" (pp. 16-17). Hodgkin (1957) called Ethiopia "the living exemplar of an unconquered, historical African people" (p. 181). G. Padmore, J. Kenyatta, C.L.R. James, T. Ras Makonnen, W. Johnson, and S. Manning joined hands in support of Ethiopia's struggle against the invasion. James, together with others, founded the International African Friends of Abyssinia. December 14, 1935, was declared "Ethiopia Day" in Lagos, Nigeria. Advertisements such as "Ethiopia Defense Fund: Sons of Africa Show Your Love of Race Not by Talk But by Action" were posted. The women's section of the Lagos Ethiopia Defense Committee was called "Save Abyssinia Society." Many African American officers' groups such as the Brown Condor of Ethiopia and the

Black Eagle of Harlem joined the war alongside Ethiopians. (They did so despite the hurdles put up by the U.S. government against volunteers willing to fight for Ethiopia and later during the Spanish civil war.)

The fundamental organizing principles of Western Ethiopianist studies already discussed started as offshoots of Semitic studies, itself a branch of Orientalism. Its paradigmatic foundation was Semitic philology (see Dillman, 1974, p. 3). In Western Ethiopianist discourse, Ethiopians, or what Ullendorff (1960) called "the Abyssinians proper, the carriers of the historical civilization of Semitized Ethiopia" (p. 32), are seen as being fundamentally civilized as opposed to not only the rest of "Black" Africa, which was seen as barbaric and savage, but also the many peoples inside Ethiopia itself (e.g., the Oromo). What Western scholarship calls Abyssinia, from the Arabic *Habashi*, is confined to what I call the *Ethiopia of the Ge'ez civilization*,[3] defined by the Ge'ez script, and later in time by Judaic-Christian culture. Its core encompasses the area from Dabra Bizen in Eritrea to Dabra Libanos in Shawa, which forms one compact cultural entity. The chief protagonist of this civilizational universe consists of the Agaw-Amhara-Tigrean trinity. It is this trinity that has been referred to as historic Ethiopia or Abyssinia. *The Ethiopia that is the "anomaly and paradox of Africa" refers to the Ethiopia of the Ge'ez civilization.*

That Ethiopians are Semitic, not Negroid; civilized, not barbaric; beautiful, not ugly; and so on all are images of Orientalist Semiticism in the Western paradigm of knowledge. The Ethiopian is explained in superlative terms because the "Negro" is considered subhuman. Ethiopia is seen as the southwestern end of the Semitic world in Africa. Ethiopia is seen as the Christian Orient of "Black" Africa. It is quite revealing that more is written on Ethiopia in the *Journal of Semitic Studies* than in the *Journal of African History*.

The "anomaly and paradox of Africa" thesis ascribed to Ethiopia is predicated on the claim that Ethiopia is unique in Africa in general and in "Black" Africa in particular. From its millennial independence to the beauty of its people, from its Ge'ez script to its own brand of Christianity, from the legendary heroism of her warriors to being the living land of the Bible, in many spheres and

directions, Ethiopia has been perceived as outlandish to the general African scene. *Ethiopia is supposedly located in the wrong place.* Ethiopia is in Africa but not of Africa. Hence Jesman's paradox.

Recently, Mazrui (1984) wrote about the triple heritage of Ethiopia—Indigenous, Semitic, and Greco-Roman. He noted, "The whole cultural history of Africa is captured in the transition from the triple ancient personality of Ethiopia to the triple modern personality of Nigeria" (p. 13).[4]

In summary, Ethiopian history should be studied afresh and should no longer be grounded on racial or geographical paradigms. It is time that Ethiopian history is seen as part of African history. The "Hamites," condemned by Western Africanists to carry the burden of civilization into Africa, are long dead. The racism of the "White man's burden" should be buried alongside with that of the "Hamite man's burden." It is time that Ethiopianist scholarship, as a hangover from Orientalism, is given a decent burial. A political-economy approach to Ethiopian history, within the larger cosmos of African history, can be an alternative paradigm for the study of Ethiopian history. Africa has at last come out of the shadow of Hegel's "dark mantle of night."

NOTES

1. For a dissenting view on the geographical isolation paradigm, see Rubenson (1976, pp. 1-5).

2. The continued existence of a long, unified, and unbroken civilizational descent all the way from Menelik I to Haile Selassie has been the fundamental self-image of Ethiopian civilization itself. See Sergew Hable Selassie (1972) and Taddesse Tamrat (1972); see also Ullendorff (1988, p. 235).

3. For a detailed discussion of the concept of Ge'ez civilization, see Teshale Tibebu (1995).

4. For a critique of Mazrui's views, see Hailu Habtu (1984).

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