

BOOK REVIEW AND COMMENTARY

Messay Kebede,* RADICALISM AND CULTURAL DISLOCATION IN ETHIOPIA, 1960 – 1974, Rochester, NY: Rochester University Press, 2008. [PP 235] [US \$75]

By Tecola W. Hagos

PART ONE

I. Introduction

It is quite puzzling that a rigidly autocratic and legendary “Dynasty” of great antiquity that draws its legitimacy from over three thousand years of mythical origin in an ancient traditional society could be toppled in a blink of an eye and be replaced by a militant radical Marxist-Leninist generation/group the World had ever known next to Cambodia’s genocidal Pol Pot and his Khmer Rouge. How could a traditional people, mostly Orthodox Christians, up to seventy percent of the population, turn their back on their own accepted “Divine” order of imperial dynastic system for a “Godless” Military Regime run by individuals literally scraps of society? How did such calamity happen to the “People” of Ethiopia some thirty five years ago?

Messay Kebede in his new book, the subject of this review, is providing us valuable answers to such questions I have asked above. There is no doubt in my mind that Messay Kebede is one of the few Ethiopians whose dedication to their profession and whose contribution to the great reservoir of human knowledge is monumental. I suggest that one should consider it a singular mission to read Messay’s recent book if one wants to understand and acquire a depth of knowledge about the evolution or development (processes) of Ethiopia’s puzzling revolution and the overthrow of its *Ancien Régime*. I feel privileged in writing this review and commentary on Messay’s latest master work, his book RADICALISM AND CULTURAL DISLOCATION IN ETHIOPIA, 1960 – 1974. I am wholly captured by the beauty of Messay’s writing (language), and fascinated with his original theories offered as foundations to explain even some of the most bizarre activities of Ethiopian elites during the fourteen years of turmoil of the 1960s and 1970s—the timeframe of Messay’s book.

I am used to writing more than I need to, often enough expressing myself in more ways than necessary. By contrast Messay writes with equanimity, but with elegance. I am even tempted to say that he is Spartan or laconic at times. To wit, consider the following succinct sentence illustrative of both elegance and pointed expression: “The students who revolted were not the remedy for Haile Selassie’s bankruptcy; they were rather its exasperated expression.” [Messay, 69] In such a short sentence, he expressed a point of view better than others attempting to express similar views in a couple of pages.

Messay’s book is deceptively short, a mere two hundred pages of text and thirty five pages of valuable and extensive endnotes, bibliography, and index. It is packed and packed some more with serious scholarly writing. The book is extremely well written, and at times pure poetry and a pleasure to read just for its sheer eloquence. In terms of

content, it is not a book for the faint hearted; it is demanding of full attention and extensive prior reading of a wide range of subject matter and Ethiopian history. I have not been so immersed and rewarded with a book in a long time as I was/am with Messay's book. This review is not simple accolade to encourage a fellow Ethiopian in his work; in Part Two of this review, I have pointed out what I consider to be serious flaws and oversights in Messay's book. Nevertheless, I am extremely proud of Messay Kebede for his exemplary scholarship, insights, courage, and originality.

It may indeed be foolhardy on my part to attempt in a book review to capture all of the complexity of Messay Kebede. In Messay what we have is a person who is very hard working, brilliant and profound—a person who thinks and writes in layers and not in linear manner. The book I am reviewing is not an isolated event, but a work that clearly shows cognitive continuity, extension, and refinement on Ethiopia's social conditions, from Messay's earlier books and articles, for example, from his remarkable book Survival and Modernization—Ethiopia's Enigmatic Present: A Philosophical Discourse, (Lawrenceville NJ: Red Sea Press, 1999). He brought into his writing a three dimensional perspective to little understood Ethiopian students revolutionary zeal with such monumental effects on our lives. Thus, my review of Messay's book would only be considered as a starting point, for one has to read the book itself to benefit oneself to a great depth.

Bear with me, and I must ask your indulgence and tolerance reading this review and comment, for I have inserted my own life story and private thoughts intermingled with my review of Messay's book. Although I may sound self absorbed and narcissistic in doing that, there is a purpose in making such extensive references to my own life and experiences in reviewing Messay. It is true that Messay in his book covers a time period that I lived through with most of the characters and through most of the events that are the subject matter of his book. I hope you will let me off the hook if I beat up myself first for focusing on some incidents in my life in this review. Thus, I share with you a quotation on narcissism of the highest order—a comment about President Theodore Roosevelt by a relative: "When Theodore attends a wedding he wants to be the bride and when he attends a funeral he wants to be the corpse." After all, Messay's wonderful book is our biography.

I strongly suggest, even insist, that Ethiopians, friends of Ethiopia, government officials, and others make time to read this great book, in order to understand Ethiopia and Ethiopians. For the Ethiopian student anywhere in the World, I recommend that he or she take extensive notes at the time of reading the book with a dictionary and an encyclopedia nearby.

II. Timeline and Relevance

The first question I ask when reading a book is how much I would be able to learn from such a book, especially when a book is a serious work dealing with subject matters dear to me. The question of scholarship and relevance is understood in my query. Some books are overwhelming in their scope and depth that I keep as a referential text, while others are read and promptly tossed aside to collect dust. I

cannot emphasize enough how relevant and timely this book by Messay is to us Ethiopians and to those who are genuinely interested in our future.

Messay's book is about a crucial time in the lives of thousands of Ethiopians [quite a few departed souls, and a few more now fast aging] who were either in college in Ethiopia or elsewhere in the World and/or young graduates starting out in their professional careers during the tumultuous period of 1960 to 1974. To some extent it is a biography of a generation of Ethiopians who shared in the process of Haile Selassie's "modernization" of an ancient and highly self indulgent society that finally was caught and swept along like many other young nations by Marxist-Leninist ideology—the deluge of the 1974 military takeover. I suppose the book is no less a journey of discovery and reflections for Messay as well. This is one of the few books written by Ethiopians addressing the Ethiopian Students Movement as a generic subject. It is invaluable and a jewel of great worth.

I have read two seminal works by two individuals who participated in the 1970s Ethiopian revolution from opposing camps: Kiflu Tadesse's The Generation, Part I (1993) and The Generation, Part II (1998), and Tesfaye Mekonnen's Yederese Lebaletariku (1992). These are books essentially recording the process of change resulting in the overthrow of the Ethiopian Aristocracy and the infighting that took place by different political organizations and the Ethiopian military forces for power that resulted in the most horrible atrocities in the thousands of years of the history of Ethiopia. There is no doubt that both books were partisan efforts to highlight their respective organization in the best possible role during the struggle for progressive and fundamental changes in Ethiopia. In a way both writers (books) are apologists attempting to minimize the destructive role played during the period of the skirmish for political power in the wake of the overthrow of the ageing Emperor.

By a fair estimate of international observers, such as the Human Rights Watch, (Alex de Waal, Evil days : thirty years of war and famine in Ethiopia, New York: [Human Rights Watch](#), 1991) close to half a million Ethiopians lost their lives from the time the program of annihilation that culminated in the orgies of murders of the Red Terror was implemented starting in early September of 1976 to the end of 1978 to the end of Mengistu's regime in 1991. In the heat of the Red Terror alone over a hundred thousand Ethiopians were murdered in a span of a fortnight. In the two books mentioned above, we read, for example, Kiflu Tadesse pushing the date of the beginning of the Red Terror to early 1976 implicating Meison Members as co-planners and executors with the Derg during the Red Terror, whereas Tesfaye Mekonnen tries to exonerate Meison by claiming that the Red Terror took place much later than is claimed by Kiflu Tadesse, sometimes in November of 1977, a time that is calibrated to show that Meison had already parted company with the bloodthirsty Mengistu and his Military butchers. I do not want to revisit such criminal behavior of well known political figures, and some still actively seeking power as members of this or that political organization including the EPRP, TPLF, EPLF, OLF et cetera.

The two books I mentioned above narrate the existential aspect of our suffering, often as innocent bystanders and/or as ignorant pawns, while undergoing an upheaval of social change with the worst form of violence and of biblical proportions. Messay's book is providing us with acutely missing literature on important aspects of the period prior to the deluge, the build-up to the revolution in question—mainly giving us both theoretical content and hermeneutics enriching our understanding of our traumatic period where millions of us truly suffered and still continue to suffer.

Messay's reference to a number of authorities to augment his ideas is very impressive, indeed, which attests to his first rate scholarship. However, I find such references more of an obstruction, like potholes on a paved street, rather than being helpful—they tend to interrupt what otherwise is a smooth ride. Even if I accept the references to Ethiopian authors, especially Aleqa Asres Yenesew and Addis Hiwet as relevant and on point, nevertheless, I am not enthusiastic about Messay's extensive references to non-Ethiopian authorities. First and foremost, Messay does not need validation for his views from such cited authorities because he is the "authority." There is no need in this case to cite far less knowledgeable individuals to strengthen one's arguments. If it is not for characteristic Ethiopian humility, Messay does not need to cite anybody to support his views. He has presented his views in great depth and profundity, shaped by his first rate schooling and years of experience as educator and researcher. His views are presented to us, to say the least, elegantly and clearly, well reasoned, and grounded in Ethiopia's reality.

III. Critical theories and hermeneutics

Messay seems obsessively inclined in providing theoretical foundation on the chaotic activities of the Ethiopian elite, and in particular those engaged in social engineering in the 1960s and 70s. I have a distinct feeling that Messay in another life would have been an architect, for it seems in his intellectual makeup to see structures or rational interrelationships in between groups, episodes far remote, and even unlikely events as a matter of course. Whether it is the limited radical but highly volatile behavior or activities of students at Haile Selassie I University or the more sedate no less transformative massive European and American social dissonance during and after the Vietnam war, for Messay both are worthy of looking closely and giving theoretical basis. It is in this sense of finding motives, patterns, rational, even in the most chaotic of situations that distinguishes Messay from most thinkers and writers on the baffling history of the people of Ethiopia of our time.

There seems to be some similarities between Messay and some famous socio-political theorists, such as Samuel Huntington and Theda Skocpol (both of Harvard) in considering and grounding social phenomenon in what they call "historical institutionalism" in its expanded form to explain the dynamism in the informal, the revolutionary, or the unruly. Messay devoted his attention precisely to understanding such realities of "Modern" life in Ethiopia through his first hand experience, as I critic him also from a first hand experience having undergone a similar route. This current trend in political science of studying all threads of activities in a society in socio-economic and political processes is distinctly different from the traditional approach of

focusing on the “state” and its functionaries “personalities” to understand socio-political developments. It is in this sense that I suggested the proximity of Messay’s approach in discussing and writing about the social dynamics of changes to that of the school of “historical institutionalism.” As a matter of fact, I see this trend of the “historical institutionalism” approach closely related to the approach adopted by philosophers of the “Modernists” as well, such as Jurgen Habermas. Hermeneutics is the handmaid of such thinkers although there had been challenges to such association as part of the midwifery of “critical theory.” I shall devote considerable time with Messay’s philosophical approach and lying of foundation in Part Two, section VII. Cause and Effect: Messay’s philosophical underpinning.

It is possible to summarize Messay’s primary often provocative points into several distinct premises using mostly my own phrasing and words, but along the way horribly simplifying Messay’s very complex ideas as follows:

- 1) Ethiopian University Students imposed themselves on Ethiopia as leaders for revolutionary political and economic changes in Ethiopia elbowing out both farmers and workers of Ethiopia. [Messay, 19-23]
- 2) Ethiopian “educated” elites rejected traditional Ethiopia’s Culture to the detriment of Ethiopia’s modernization. [Messay, 72-75, 99-102]
- 3) The Ethiopian Orthodox Christian Church had been sidestepped by Ethiopian University Students revolutionary leaders and by the majority of the students. [Messay, 59-60, 70-83]
- 4) Ethiopian Students movement was essentially Leninist as opposed to being Marxist. [Messay, 23-25, 95-97]
- 5) Ethiopian Students did not have meaningful connection with the people and communities of Ethiopia. Ethiopian students have arrogantly pushed aside traditionally trained Ethiopian scholars. [Messay, 59-60]
- 6) The revolutionary political philosophy pursued by Ethiopian students was not a consequence of economic hardship, but because of social alienation due to the education bubble created by Haile Selassie’s education policy. [Messay, 48-49, 95-97]
- 7) The radicalization of Ethiopian students was not due to rational or dialectical process but psychological of deeply felt feeling of guilt for rebelling against inapt “fathers.” [Messay, 143-148, 165-186]
- 8) Ethnicity as pursued currently by Ethiopian “educated” elites is reactionary to a failed revolutionary Marxism-Leninism attempted social changes. [Messay, 154-163]
- 9) Haile Selassie’s education system failed Ethiopia and is the cause of the radical revolution that destroyed his aristocratic Government and his Dynasty, and seriously harmed the economic and political development of Ethiopia. [Messay, 86-95]
- 10) The future of Ethiopia is dependent on how far we can reverse the present trend of elitism, and reintroduce our tradition and culture appropriately correcting what need to be changed in an effort to modernize Ethiopia with an “upgraded nationalism.” [Messay, 193-196]

What is interesting and often times original and profound is how Messay reasoned to reach such conclusions I summarized and simplified above. However, such summaries of Messay's ideas will not do justice to the subtlety of his reasoning. Often, I have come across surprisingly original and unambiguously constructed sentences that totally throw a different light to processes in the student movement of the period that I was also caught up in the sweep of the time as a student at Haile Selassie I University from 1964 to 1971. Messay's main thesis is developed on the basis of a particular form of psychologism of Freud's concepts of psychoanalysis—claims of suppressed and delayed responses due to feelings of guilt that Messay has identified in various forms, and the most obvious being the famous Oedipus Complex. "Western education was doing nothing less than reviving the Oedipal conflict." [Messay, 143] Messay saw such behavior of radicalism as characteristics of all individuals who had rebelled against their parents' failure to challenge the power structure, and thereafter developing shame and guilt for beating up on weak and inadequate parents. Such students overcompensated their paralyzing feeling of guilt by developing or sublimating into the most radical form of "self sacrifice" to be found in the ideology of Marxism-Leninism, an atonement of sort to serve the exploited and the poor masses of Ethiopia.

"The concept of political patricide best describes the phenomenon in that it points to the disturbance of generational succession by a desire seeking an improper dethronement, since what used to be an outcome of evolutionary transfer is thought of as a takeover. This positioning for social leadership through the impeachment of the older generation cannot fail to stir up guilt feelings... This culpatory stand aggravates the guilt feeling with the consequence that the accusers welcome lofty ideals as a way of silencing their conscience." [Messay, 143]

By undertaking such a challenging journey, Messay is traveling down a more dangerous and risky academic route rather than traveling down the well-trodden wide avenue of dialectical materialism and using every fool's crutch "behaviorism" along the way. It is always problematic when one seeks and reads the motives of human beings from their manifest actions. Finding the psychological disposition of human beings introduces a dualist approach to understanding human history and society, which has been challenged since the time of Socrates and Plato. Ultimately, the reason I am skeptical of reading motives in understanding social changes, including revolutionary ones, is the fear of reaching such logical paradox of the type of "the ghost in the machine." In contradistinction to the Freudian approach of "Oedipus complex" adopted by Messay, I tend to think that rebellious activities are often driven by personal ambition for power and dominance, or at the very least the desire for self-actualization and fulfilling one's potentialities.

Sometimes Messay's analysis hits home too close for comfort. Although I knew very well some of the student leaders, I was never part of the insider-group. I participated in every demonstration and boycott organized by those same leaders, and I was arrested a few times by the Police. I even have old scares from beatings as a memento from the Police that is nothing to compare with those inflicted on students during

Mengistu's or Meles's administrations. Nevertheless, such proximity to student leaders and events at that time gave me also unique insights into the student leaders' humanity warts and all. For example, I went to the same elementary school with Berhane Meskel who was three grades my senior but whom I knew very well from such early age all the way throughout my years in college; Walleign was my classmate in W/o Seheen High School in Dessie in Tenth Grade before he went to the University Lab-School; Tilahun Gizaw was my roommate in my second or third year at the Law School. And from the more shady and subversive characters, I knew well, for example, Tekalegn (whose last name I never learned) the "Crocodile" who introduced me to the Soviet Union Government's answer to the American Library—a cavernous badly lit library full of socialist literature along with Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky!

Even though I was the "artist in residence" around campus at HSIU, with a studio (a large room with a private restroom and a shower—a rarity on that score alone) that the University provided generously for my use, none of the student leaders asked me to do something for them like cartoons or use my studio to copy subversive material. I was asked only once as the Editor of a student literary magazine called "Something" if I could put some of the radical students' articles in that magazine. The student leaders fully respected the literary aspect of our magazine, and some of the leaders were, in fact, very fond of the short stories and poems (decidedly bourgeois) that appeared in "Something" that really had very minimal political content except to reflect life as lived by simple folks. I kept that magazine independent from radical political entanglement for three years during the height of the students' radicalism from 1966 through 1969. I want to believe that the student leaders left me alone because they appreciated my creativity and art works—my studio was always open to everyone, and some of the students used to come in and just look at my paintings even when I am not around or chat with me now and then. It was also obvious that I did not care that much for the aristocracy as a system of government even though there were particular individuals in the Royal Family that I liked—I never painted Haile Selassie's portrait, although I had opportunities to get a "Royal" commission to do so.

Let us consider Messay's most poignant and probably his most controversial categorical assertion that the Ethiopian student movement was not a result of economic deprivation and social class antagonism extant in Ethiopia, but a consequence of the alienation of Ethiopian students from their own culture, tradition, and religion. He asserted in several of the Chapters of his book that Ethiopian students were isolated in a bubble of their schools, and were uprooted and alienated from society. In other words, Messay seems to believe that Ethiopian schools (from grade school to university colleges) functioned as insulations against the very society students were supposed to learn from progressively both technical and social skills that would have helped their integration and absorption as useful members of the community. I wanted to test Messay's explanation and theory on the student movement with some concrete applications. Thus, I asked myself, how true is such assumption as it applies to my situation and friends whom I know well enough during the 1960 to 1974 period to test Messay's thesis.

One may have to be very careful with generalized statements; for example, if I test my life-experience against Messay's explanation about Ethiopia's radical revolution staged by students, as a deeply seated reaction to the feeling of guilt felt by such students for rebelling against the inaptitude of their parents, such theory does not seem to apply to me and a few others. I grew up in a relatively economically adequate and prominent family in terms of pedigree. I was in constant battle with school-yard bullies defending neighborhood kids. Nevertheless, I grew up being highly insecure and extremely sensitive due to the tyrannical behavior of people close to me and also the brutality of most of my teachers at school. My short and slight frame did not help either. My family relationships speak to the fact of a typical dysfunctional family where the needs and well being of children and women are drastically subordinated to the needs and well being of the male members of the family, typical of all Ethiopian families at some level.

What was the most painful experience for me growing up was that I was not able to defend my very young siblings whose cries for help being mercilessly disciplined sunk right into my heart; I was unable to interfere, and no one explained to me that some form of discipline was necessary for the good of children to prepare them to do well in life as adults. Such explanation would have saved me from my hate and resentment of people close to me and my feeling of contempt against some of my teachers. This was not a case of the "Oedipus complex" that Messay cited at work, it was rather an issue of self-awareness, and a question of coming of age, and empowerment. The experience of those formative years were etched in my memory firmly that often while sitting in classes attending lectures at the Law School [HSIU] much later, I used to hear the cries for help of my siblings in my head rather than the lectures. On the outside, I looked fine with a bent for the bohemian sporting the first dreadlock and wearing sunglasses (in the dark!)—a "*Jolly-Jack*" proximo.

Moreover, I lived by a chivalrous code of conduct borrowed no doubt from my early readings of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table, Treasure Island, The Seven Voyages of Sinbad the Sailor, The Iliad (Helen of Troy) (Hector not Achilles was my hero) and several more of the classic books, all wonderfully illustrated books at a brand new modern elementary school, Memhir Akale Wolde Elementary School, with an extensive collection of books and periodicals that delighted me and set the tone of my moral content. The school had a set time for reading classes where students in each class go to the library and read books or leaf through magazines and periodicals. That was one class everyone loved.

At home, I learned much about Ethiopian history both oral and textual from an old family history book that reinforced such generalized sense of the heroic, as I grew up in a sort of polarized life. However, the reality around me of limited resources of many of the families in the neighborhood, the abject poverty of the families of some of my friends, the moral deprivation in down town Dessie with its rows of houses of ill-repute, the everyday meanness of simple folks, the brutality of teachers, et cetera somehow was countered with a sense of national pride. My interaction with our large

family members, with relatives visiting our home literally from all over Ethiopia expanded my cocoon of school environment and gave me an awareness of my identity as an Ethiopian of great history and worth at that tender age. I grew up admiring and imagining many Ethiopian heroes including those who fought bravely the Italians in a war that just ended seven years earlier before I was born leaving still open wounds in the families of most Ethiopians including mine. My maternal Grandfather was executed by an Italian Firing Squad in 1937.

Growing up into my teens did not sit well with me. For my first rebellion was against the very core of our family values, against Ethiopia's sacred culture, and a blatant defiance of society. In Tenth Grade, one day coming back home from school, I declared to my Mother that there was no God, that it was all fiction and made-up stories. To this day, I cannot understand how I reached such decision considering the fact at that time God was not some abstraction to me, but a real presence whom I felt all the time to a point that I could not even tell a white lie, as other kids do; and as a sign of my devotion, I used to draw and paint endlessly the Trinity. That was the end of my innocence at the age of fifteen. And it has nothing to do being in the education "bubble" of modern education, I would have been as heretical in a traditional school as I was in a modern school. To this day, I have not changed my mind about a spiritual journey cut short. However, I have refined my reasons for supporting the Ethiopian Orthodox Christian Church, and also have found an important role for religious institutions in general for Ethiopia,

My respect of the Ethiopian Church has become exceedingly deep over the years. And yet over the years, it has become very clear to me that my respect of religion is no where a substitute for profound faith and belief in the "divine." It is too late for me to undo that harm of my heresy at such young age—for I have eaten of the "forbidden fruit." I know now that the Genesis (Bible) "forbidden fruit" allegory was meant for Adam's own good, and not a Promethean interpretation that saw God trying to keep humankind ignorant and worshipful. The fact is that we, human beings, are no where ready to handle our naked reality. Thus, I concluded, rather painfully, that a person who is not afraid of God cannot be afraid or respectful of human institutions or human beings either. It is absolutely necessary for the good of society that those who lead ought to be individuals with some reasonable belief in the "Divine," a God or Gods (and Goddesses) and not fanatics or atheists.

I have delved into the details of my own private life just to show that the molding of the personality of an Ethiopian is a very complex process and very difficult to pin down to a couple of factors, such as the experiences Ethiopian children would go through in schools of whatever kind as one such molding process in shaping them/us into raving lunatics or revolutionaries. [Not much difference between the two!] I can give as examples many of my childhood friends who are conservative as they come to illustrate further the complexity and diversity of our Ethiopian personality. "*Yenat hod jigurgur*." For example, my good friend Zewge Fanta, with a charming habit of defending his friends (even me *l'enfant terrible*) in the Diaspora whenever his friends are attacked by third parties, who is well known through his occasional writings, is

from similar family background as mine and we share some of the student leaders as friends, and yet you could not find a more conservative individual than Zewge this side of the Atlantic Ocean—Zewge genuinely respects Ethiopia’s tradition and cultural values. Another close childhood friend is the distinguished art historian Essaye Gebremedhin, whose sophistication and dedication to Ethiopia seems a mismatch; an individual educated at the Sorbonne and who has traveled the world over, lived and worked most of his adult life in the United States and yet is conservative and highly critical of the student movement that he considered to be childish. I could name a number of other individuals who were in the “bubble” with me and all other students, but did not show any of the rebellion characteristics whether radical or mild of the student movement of the 1960s and 70s.

Of course, I have committed a fallacy of composition trying to prove a general statement by giving a couple of examples. I suggest we keep aside strict logical validation of our arguments and allow a degree of intuition in this complex discourse. I might as well add some more generalizations not yet substantiated by empirical data, however, very attractive alternate theory to Messay’s psychoanalysis. I suggest that one may think of being in school for Ethiopian children as a welcome relief of sort away from family squabbles and humiliating discipline, a distinctly existentialist approach. In a way, Ethiopian children learn to control their rage “*elikh*” while still quite young. Withholding of food along with sever beatings is used to enforce such destructive discipline in order to beat out the “individuality” from such children—an effective Pavlovian (conditioned reflexes) approach of behavior modification as further developed by Skinner. And as such our later rebellion in college may be just the venting off of years of accumulated rage and not something profound.

For most college students being in college is emancipatory due to the fact that it may be the first experience for such students to be treated with some respect as adults who are responsible for their own lives and not answerable to any parental authority. I may say that my approach in explaining or understanding the Ethiopian Students’ movement is close to or is slanted toward the “humanistic movement” or the “third force” of [Abraham Maslow](#), which is a motivational process reflective of the human effort or aspiration to satisfy certain needs of “self-actualization” of the individual’s inner potentialities and capacities. “Inner” in this reference does not point toward some structure like the “soul” as in religious claims, or the “id” and the “super ego” of Freud. It is understandable that Messay chose to reduce to a manageable size our monumental Ethiopian experience in terms of creating categories for easy labeling. Is his approach helpful to our understanding of our perennial problems of civil strife, poverty, famine, epidemics, ignorance, and fossilized social relationships? **Ω**

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Endnotes

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To be continued

BOOK REVIEW AND COMMENTARY

PART TWO

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V. The Ethiopian Orthodox Christian Church

VI. Ethiopian Tradition and Culture: a case for asceticism

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