Ethiopianism, Englishness, Britishness: Struggles over Imperial Belonging

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Introduction[1]

> This country is honoured by the emperor having taken up his residence here. Ten righteous men would have saved Sodom; I feel the emperor is one of the comparatively few who may save Britain (*New Times and Ethiopia News* 1937d).

These are the sentiments of one anonymous letter writer to Sylvia Pankhurst's *New Times and Ethiopian News,* on the seventh anniversary of Haile Selassie I's coronation as emperor of Ethiopia, which he spent in exile in Bath. In October 1935 Fascist Italy had violently invaded Ethiopia - fellow sovereign members of the League of Nations - as part of its colonial project for Africa. Yet subsequently the British government did nothing to support Ethiopia except to grant permission for its Emperor and his small retinue to live incognito in England. The response from the public was damning and questioned the very integrity of race and empire: "Can Britain look in the face of her many million coloured subjects and call herself a just nation?", considered one Una Brown (1937) in Pankhurst's newspaper as she reflected that "to preserve Ethiopia's freedom is to preserve Britain". More precisely, the British government's response to Italy's aggression severely tested Englishness and Britishness, entangled cultures of imperial belonging that, by the fin de siècle, had become central to maintaining the normative integrity of the empire in an era of increased imperial competition. In this article I examine the struggles over Englishness and Britishness which threatened to dissolve the complex lattice of imperial loyalties and racial exclusivities that constituted these cultures of belonging.

The subject matter of this historical episode speaks directly to the British provenance of the Cultural Studies tradition. Oftentimes the work of Stuart Hall et al are mobilized as part of a broader postcolonial approach to unpacking the relationship between citizenship, race and colonialism (see, for example, Sajed 2010). This can be a very productive practice. However, for the aims of this argument, the diverse approaches that are nowadays registered under "postcolonial studies" are too diffuse to make for an effective interlocutor. Instead, I want to speak specifically to the engagement by Cultural Studies with the imperial lineages of British citizenship. Long before the arrival of postcolonial studies, Hall and his colleagues had done much to establish the premise that the culturally mediated relationship between nation and belonging in Britain was congenitally colonial

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and hence necessarily racialised (Hall et al. 1978; Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies 1992; see also Baker Jr., Best, and Lindeborg 1996).

Indeed, following in the wake of Cultural Studies, a voluminous literature has excavated in some detail the colonial constitution of Englishness and Britishness (see Rush 2002; Langlands 1999; Baucom 1999; Wellings 2002; Bell 2014; Young 2008; Gikandi 2007; Lawrence 2003; Gorman 2006; Blackstone 2005). Through this scholarship we now know that "Englishness" came to denote an inclination towards liberty, respect for the law, fair play, compromise and impartiality – all of which were considered core competencies for enlightened imperial governance.[2] Englishness, a culture of belonging that owed much to the white Diaspora for its development, was racially exclusive for the most part. However, "Britishness", as enunciated by the Earl of Balfour at the height of the Italy/Ethiopia crisis in 1936 (Wellings 2002, 5–6), set aside such exclusivity so that even colonial subjects to the crown could, by vicarious association and at a secure distance from the metropolis, find a place off belonging in an empire normatively guided by the cultural competencies of Englishness.

Additional to this influence I would also suggest that the Cultural Studies tradition – and the political milieu in which it developed in the UK - has fostered a tendency to situate concerns for citizenship and belonging primarily in the post-war, post-colonial era via what might be called "narratives of settlement". In these narratives the chronology of settlement begins with the visceral and institutional racism met by non-white immigrant peoples of the commonwealth post World War Two, and the tempo of settlement is marked by the problem of integrating into and within UK society (see for example Favell 1998; Hansen 2002; Turner 2001, 12; Stevenson 2010, 286; Hampshire 2005). In these stories of immigration and settlement, Britishness comes to clash intimately with Englishness. However, by occluding a broader and deeper history of struggles over imperial belonging narratives of settlement tend to marginalize or occlude the self-conceptions of those for whom an equitable national settlement was not - and is not - always the sole reason for such struggles (see Lockward 2013). In other words, while these struggles might not necessarily eschew an inclusion into the polity in order to enjoy the full range of citizenship rights, such an inclusion does not mark the final resolution to the struggle over belonging.

In what follows I work with the self-conceptualised narratives of those struggling over Englishness and Britishness in the context of the Italy/Ethiopia war of 1935-1941. These narratives all share an orientation towards Ethiopia which has been termed "Ethiopianism" (see Shepperson 1953; Price 2003; Nelson 1994). I should make it clear that Ethiopianism was less so developed and/or enunciated by Ethiopians themselves – at home or abroad - but more so by peoples of African descent in British colonies (and in the United States). However, in this article I also introduce the differential use of Ethiopianism by white subjects of Britain who invested in Englishness. Unlike narratives of settlement, the tempos and chronologies of Ethiopianism are fundamentally global-colonial in their framing of the problem of belonging. That is to say, the question of settlement – whether within an empire or a nation – is never divorced analytically or prescriptively from the more fundamental colonial and racial ordering of the world. Therefore, rather than domestic integration, the tempos of Ethiopianism are determined by the pursuit of African redemption; and instead of a

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2   On the relationship between race and competency see Grovogui 2001.

post-war point of departure, the chronologies are structured around the enslavement, colonisation and prospective liberation of African peoples. The benefit of undertaking an historical examination of the Italy/Ethiopia conflict is to bring into sharper relief struggles over imperial belonging wherein the moral and political compass of protagonists is oriented to rearrangements that exceed an equitable national settlement.

The archive that I use to explore these hermeneutical struggles over imperial belonging consists primarily of Sylvia Pankhurst's papers, her newspaper *New Times and Ethiopia News,* as well as the wider British newspaper press of the era. I proceed by first clarifying the different but conjoined challenges to Englishness and Britishness that resulted from the conduct of the British government vis-à-vis Italian aggression towards Ethiopia in the lead up to World War Two. I argue that this conduct severely undermined the racially exclusive competencies of imperial governance that framed Englishness. At the same time I argue that the government's conduct also severely undermined the inclusivist pretensions of Britishness by demonstrating to Black subjects of the British empire the abiding differential treatment of peoples based on race which underwrote its cultures of imperial belonging. Subsequently I explore two related responses to these challenges: what I shall term "Euri-centric Ethiopianism" and "Afri-centric Ethiopianism". While both responses entangled the fate of Englishness and Britishness with the deliverance of justice for Ethiopia they differed in terms of their broader commitment to the liberation struggles of African peoples worldwide. I finish with an extended conclusion that, by looking at the emergence of and reaction to the RasTafari movement in the UK in the 1970s, brings forward the Ethiopianist narrative to suggest continuities in struggles over imperial belonging pre- and post-war/empire.

In making this argument I acknowledge the seminal importance of the British cultural studies tradition in exposing the conjoined nature of national belonging, colonial legacies and their racial schemas. Nevertheless, I do believe that this tradition became entrapped by the wider obsessions over post-war settlement. Perhaps these obsessions even demonstrate a subtle attempt to domesticate the influential narratives of Ethiopianism mobilized by some African-Caribbeans resident in the UK from the 1960s onwards to address the strictures of race and nation. This might seem a strange critique given that the most influential work arising out of the cultural studies tradition has been Paul Gilroy's global-diasporic investigation of the *Black Atlantic.* However, I find Simon Gikandi's recent suggestion quite provocative when he proposes that Gilroy turned from a cultural study of British nationalism to the modernity of North America in order to find clues as to how a Black minority (African-Americans) could become acknowledged, albeit begrudgingly, as citizens through their cultural production (Gikandi 2014, 242). In this respect, the *Black Atlantic* could be seen as a critical pedagogy of settlement. Ultimately, then, I wish to suggest that there are narratives other than that of settlement that frame struggles over belonging through abiding global racial and colonial coordinates (see also Yuval-Davis 2004). Their imperial genealogies are far longer, deeper and complex than those that make up the problematique of national citizenship. They survive, and will not disappear anytime soon.

Englishness, Britishness and the Italian/Ethiopian war

From the very start of the Italy/Ethiopia war the competencies of the British government to diplomatically lead on a just and enlightened settlement were put under question by the British public. Strong public support for Ethiopia is evident in the United Kingdom as early as the summer of

1935 when Mussolini began amassing an invasion force from its Eritrean colony. At this point the League of Nations Union, a London-based civic group, organised a "Peace Ballot" wherein 11,559,165 respondents voted positively for a policy of peace and disarmament through the League, with approximately 6,750,000 voting specifically for military sanctions against Italian aggression (Howell 2006, 67; *Morpeth Herald and Reporter* 1935).

Initially the British government also expressed support for Ethiopia and the principles of the League of Nations to which Ethiopia, Italy and Britain were all full members. Foremost amongst these principles were the observance of treaties, the practice of open and just relations between members, and the obligation not to resort to war. Yet in the aftermath of the Italian invasion in October 1935, and subsequent aerial bombardment of civilians with poison gas, the British government did nothing substantial to support Ethiopia via the League's principles. Instead, the government preferred to enact a policy of appeasement towards Mussolini. In December 1935 details of a secret pact were made public wherein Britain and France had proposed to grant Italy significant territories in Ethiopia. The public outcry over rewarding fascist aggression was so vociferous that it forced the resignation of Samuel Hoare, Foreign Secretary and British author of the pact.

Responses to the Italian invasion were shaped by – and responded to - a particular nineteenth century innovation of "standard of civilization" jurisprudence. By the early twentieth century the putative existence of domestic slavery provided the measure for European powers to determine the legality and morality of intervention into and colonization of various African polities. This new standard of civilization articulated intimately with nineteenth century abolitionist ideology that presented British imperial governance as a force for civilization superior even to other European powers (see for example Miers 1998; Heartfield 2015). In this respect, the abolition tradition was assumed to demonstrate the normatively unparalleled record of Englishness on the world stage.

But Ethiopia presented a conundrum in this respect (Allain 2006): although slave-trading and slavery was practiced in its porous borders, especially in those western and southern areas recently incorporated into its empire during the reign of Menelik II, half of its peoples practiced a Christianity more ancient than that established in Britain; and Christianity was, of course, one of the hallmarks of (European) civilization. Moreover, Selassie I was both an avowed Christian and social reformer who actively pursued the eradication of slavery in his lands. It was for these reasons that support for Ethiopia in Britain could not be decided by way of a stark racial binary of white civilized European and black savage African, but rather, through a convoluted interrogation of the degree to which Ethiopia was sufficiently tackling its domestic slavery. It was through this calculus that the degree of failure of Englishness on the contemporary world stage was assessed.

It must be acknowledged that some of the contemporary abolitionists adjudicated Ethiopia's status to be insufficiently civilized. For example, Lady Simon, a leading figure in the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery and Aborigines' Protection Society, and wife to a cabinet minister, accepted Mussolini's abolitionist rhetoric and, in Sylvia Pankhurst's assessment, took a "very hostile attitude towards Ethiopia" (S. Pankhurst 1939; Høgsbjerg 2014, 90). Meanwhile, John Harris, previously the long standing secretary of the Society, did not discount the utility of the grand development plans that Mussolini proclaimed for Ethiopia under Italian colonialism (*The Western Morning News and Daily Gazette* 1935b). Various commentators shared Harris's diffidence, chiding Selassie I for not

having entirely wiped out slavery in his lands, and berating the League of Nations for admitting an un-civilized Ethiopia into its membership (see for example Allen 1935).

Nonetheless, it is fair to say that by far the dominant sentiment expressed by British publics was in affirmation of Ethiopia's civilized status and Selassie I's efforts at reform. In the run up to the Italian invasion, and in the succeeding years, various adventurers, travel writers and abolitionists regularly joined with their counterparts from the Ethiopian legation in London to speak publically on the specific nature of slavery in Ethiopia in contrast to its Atlantic predecessor (for example *Northern Daily Mail* 1935b; *Northern Daily Mail* 1935a). More importantly, members of the Ethiopian legation and its varied supporters – learned, philanthropic, political, aristocratic, commoner and otherwise – often pointed towards the anti-slavery bureaus, set up by Selassie I and tasked with substantively supporting emancipated persons, as evidence of significant reform. They all argued that it was Mussolini's colonial project itself that had interfered with and suspended these reform efforts (for example *The Western Morning News and Daily Gazette* 1935a; *Hastings and St. Leonards Observer* 1936; *The Nottingham Evening Post* 1936; *Aberdeen Press and Journal* 1935).

The majority public opinion therefore considered Ethiopia to be civilized – or civilizing – despite its African provenance. Ethiopian policies on the world stage could be said to even aspire to the example of Britain. The problem was that these publics' own government had given no substantive support to Ethiopia and effectively stood by while a fascist aggressor invaded and occupy. Why, then, was not Englishness and its competencies of justice, impartiality and fairplay being applied and demonstrated on the world stage at this critical juncture? And so, as Italian forces swept across the country in 1936, and Selassie I was forced to seek exile in England, the Friends of Abyssinia League of Service asked "shall we continue to abandon Abyssinia, or shall we keep our pledged word...? Shall we lower the honour of Britain throughout the world, or maintain our high tradition for justice and fair play?"(Friends of Abyssinia League of Service 1936) Similar sentiments were expressed in September 1937 by the Dean of Winchester who confirmed that "the real thing which moves English people is that Abyssinia has not had fair play" (*New Times and Ethiopia News* 1937c).

The normative impact upon Englishness by government (in)action is aptly demonstrated by a poetic witness to Selassie I's historic speech to the League of Nations in June 1936, wherein the exiled emperor challenged the nations present to defend the principle of collective security and meaningfully support Ethiopia's cause:

> ...Our English gestures were unable, as impotent as our looks, to speak to him of our wretchedness
> Yet it seemed that he sensed our homage
> Knew that the shame of England was our own shame .

In fact some commentators suggested that the competencies of Englishness were now being preserved by an African nation: One Isabel Bible from Devon lamented thus:

> I wonder how many people today feel hot shame mounting to their faces when they remember the GREAT BETRAYAL of 1936 in which England took such a leading part! ENGLAND, THE WORLD CHAMPION! The Guardian of freedom! HOW ART THOU FALLEN! BUT BE OF

GOOD CHEER, ETHIOPIA! OUT OF THY MARTYRDOM THOU SHALT RISE UP A QUEEN!" (*New Times and Ethiopia News* 1937b)

The intimacy of this relationship was signalled by Freda Collier, whose brother was a governor of the Bank of Ethiopia. Collier noted that England and Ethiopia shared the same patron saint – St George (*Sunday Post* 1935). And one poet even imagined that St George, the protector of Englishness, would perhaps now favour Ethiopia over England:

> What though beyond the seas a nation stand
> Called also by my name, untouched and bright?
> What do I care for any other land
> But her, but her, whose setting is my night?
> Let Ethiopia sink in blameless pride;
> But England is my own, and she has died (Snow 1937).

To these and many other observers, the British government's unprincipled response to the Italian invasion worked to undermine Englishness and its claims to racially superior competencies in imperial rule - claims that underwrote the very standard of civilization itself.

But so too did the British government's response undermine the integrity of Britishness, that other culture of belonging that offered a vicarious enfranchisement of subjects of African descent within the racial exclusivities of imperial rule. As one letter writer from Fareham put it perceptively on the eve of the Italian invasion, "[b]y going back on his word to Abyssinia, Mussolini is not only letting Italy down in the eyes of the world, he is letting the white man down in the eyes of the coloured peoples everywhere, he is letting civilization down"(Evans 1935). Two years later, notable public intellectuals and politicians such as Norman Angell, Stanley Jevons, Lloyd George and H.G. Wells wrote to the Times, warning once more of these repercussions and their impact upon the normative integrity of the British Empire (Angell et al. 1937).

They were not wrong. For the betrayal of Ethiopia was apprehended by many British subjects of African descent as an injustice personally done unto them by their own Empire. And in these apprehensions the racially exclusivist culture of Englishness was placed in opposition – rather than in extended association - with the more democratic culture of Britishness. One writer to the *New Times and Ethiopia News* from British Guiana warned in October 1936 that "It being always understood all over the world that an Englishman's word is his bond", yet they "had made a gentlemen's agreement to hold Ethiopia in a state of bondage! ... the coloured race are closely watching events" (C.A.B. 1937). Another "native of British Guiana", now resident in Bradford, wrote in the newspaper a year later that "Africans at home and abroad have come to regard England as their Mother Country, but of late the Mother has been sadly neglecting her African children and has done them a cruel wrong in allowing Ethiopia to be ravaged by Italy" (*New Times and Ethiopia News* 1937e)

These protestations continued and, as Europe mobilized for world war, began to articulate with a critique of the martial sacrifices that Empire required from its colonial subjects. In 1938 I.T.A. Wallace Johnson, a trade unionist and social reformer, organised a resolution by the West African Civil Liberties and National Defence League that, in light of its recent recognition of Italian sovereignty over Ethiopia, chided the British government for betraying "the confidence of the

African people in British equity and fair play" and promised no further enjoining of Armistice Day commemorations by members of the West African League (Wallace Johnson 1938).

Alternatively, martial sympathies were increasingly extended to Ethiopia. In 1936 Trinidadian Pan-Africanist George Padmore observed that "Blacks ... have rallied to the defence of Ethiopia, as though they were the subjects of the emperor, Haile Selassie. Everywhere one hears them proclaiming the slogan : 'Our flag is our Colour. An injury to one is an injury to all'" (Padmore 1969, 363). Across the Empire subjects of African descent, whilst still "proclaiming anew" loyalty to the crown, demanded the right to "pursue steadfastly, all lawful means towards ... restoration of the sovereignty and independence of that Black empire" (*New Times and Ethiopia News* 1937a). At this point in time Leonard Howell, a Jamaican preacher and organiser, now known colloquially as the "first Rasta", earned a number of years in Bellevue, the Kingston mental asylum, on account of his publically proclaimed service to Selassie I (on Howell see Lee 2003; Hill 2001).

In sum, Englishness and Britishness, as cultures of imperial belonging, were significantly undermined due to the British Government's conduct in the Italy/Ethiopia war. We shall now examine how an Ethiopian orientation was cultivated by white and Black subjects alike as a response to these challenges. But we shall also explore how these orientations differed significantly in terms of offering resolutions to the disturbance in imperial belonging.

Euri-centric and Afri-centric Ethiopianisms

The Ethiopianism cultivated predominantly by white residents in the UK − I will call it Euri-centric Ethiopianism - emerged from a set of travelogues by sojourners to the horn of Africa that were published at the time as books and/or serialised in newspapers, some being republished in the lead up to the war (for example Baum 1935). Many of these reports were ideologically consolidated into a critique of Italian colonialism through the notion of an expanded body in Christ. It is important to note that churches and church leaders of many denominations often staked a claim in the moral and spiritual leadership of the British Empire in the Christian pursuit of peace, fairness and justice. Oftentimes, church leaders would move a resolution amongst their congregation to express sympathy with the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church..

In this respect the white Christian body in Britain had to (once more) distance itself from the moral and spiritual authority of the Papacy which, as one letter writer from Plymouth put it, had warned all nations of the growing Communist threat yet had said not a word about the "wholesale murder in Abyssinia"(*The Western Morning News and Daily Gazette* 1936). Instead, white Christians would have to express solidarity with the "native African Christian church" (the Ethiopian Orthodox Church) that often operated as a site of resistance to Italian occupation and hence had become a target of attack by fascist forces. Indeed, the very Englishness of these Christians demanded such solidarity, as Isabel Fry, influential educationalist, argued: "In England for two hundred years we have had the blessings of complete religious toleration ... to forbid the free exercise of our religion is inevitably to penalise the noblest and most sincere part" (*New Times and Ethiopia News* 1937c).

But to link the redemption of Englishness to the fate of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church necessarily tested and complicated the civilizational hierarchies that placed African polities significantly below the European family of nations, and that positioned the competencies of

Africanicity firmly below those that composed Englishness. On the one hand, it had to be acknowledged that Ethiopian Christianity had a pedigree that was not shared by the Western church; as Acts 8: 26-40 suggested, the gospel reached Ethiopia before it reached Rome (*The Essex Chronicle* 1935). Selassie I himself claimed lineage to the Old Testament Queen of Sheba and King Solomon, and such intimate biblical connections were also recognized to carry weight amongst the non-aristocratic populace (*Western Daily Press and Bristol Mirror* 1935). In light of this biblical heritage white Christians often alluded to Psalms 68:31 - "Princes shall come out of Egypt; Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God". Rev Josephy Gilbert, for example, preached that "this ancient prophecy was being fulfilled in our own day ... Ethiopia to-day is stretching out her hands in earnest supplication to all justice loving people" (*North Devon Journal* 1935; see also, for example, *The Whitstable Times and Tankerton Press* 1935).

Yet on the other hand such hermeneutics by and large assumed that Ethiopians were stretching out their hands to white Christians - God's children - for salvation: "Ethiopia . . . is stretching out her hands unto God", proclaimed The Missionary Service Bureau and Ethiopian Prayer League; "will His people come to her aid regardless of personal sacrifice or inconvenience?" (R. Pankhurst 2003, 164) In this respect, the support that white Christians gave to Ethiopia was usually parsed through the civilizational supremacy that was encoded in Englishness. (Here, perhaps, it was the racial specificity of Englishness – as white – rather than its geographical specificity – a nation within the UK – that enabled commentators to partake of its particular sense of belonging.) Thus white Christians often mobilized established Orientalist tropes: Ethiopia's Christianity was ancient, yes; but it did not enjoy the progressive impulse of the Western Church, had therefore fallen into barbaric torpor, and currently provided a key institutional support for slavery (for example *Yorkshire Evening Post* 1935; *Western Daily Press and Bristol Mirror* 1936). And if abolition work exemplified a core competency of enlightened imperial governance, then this was a competency that Ethiopia's ancient religion was still struggling to cultivate.

Moreover, most of those who staked their Englishness to the redemption of Ethiopia at the same time applied a particular racial lens to Ethiopia's peoples that questioned their Africanicity. In the opinion of Hazel Napier, secretary general of the Friends of Abyssinia, there were a "great many different races in the Abyssinian empire." Indeed, for her – and for many others at the time – the etymology of Abyssinia resolved to Hebas or Habesh, "meaning to mix" (*The Essex Chronicle* 1935; *The Courier and Advertiser* 1935). Whilst Habesha does not necessarily connote a mixing of racial types per se, such commentators racialized the meaning of the term in order to dilute the "negroid" presence of Ethiopia. For one Miss Rouse, for example, Ethiopians "were more Semetic Jews, only in the past they had inter-married a lot with the negroes" (*The Courier* 1935). And for others who believed that Habesha resolved to a tribal name, this tribe originated not from the continent but South Arabia (*The Yorkshire Post* 1936; for a critique of this thesis see Bekerie 1997). In fact, some commentators proclaimed that "there are no negroes in the country, except as slaves" (*The Evening News* 1936).

So while Euri-centric Ethiopianists embraced an African polity in order to redeem Englishness, the intimacy of this embrace – the sharing, for example of the Christian St George – was enabled only on condition that Ethiopians be categorised as not properly African and certainly not

straightforwardly "negro" as was the vast majority of British subjects in the African and Caribbean colonies, and that the indigenous church of this Christian African polity was backward. Therefore principled support for Ethiopia nevertheless sought to uphold the jurisprudential tradition of the standard of civilization which protected the racial exclusivity of the competencies that made up Englishness. The effect, then, was to insulate support for Ethiopia from any deeper and broader commitment to African liberation, the tempo of which in any case was to be determined by white saviours.

Alternatively, the catechism for Psalms 68:31 articulated by Afri-centric Ethiopianism radically resituated and realigned the competencies of enlightened imperial governance: Ethiopia was to save herself with the aid of the Black subjects of the British empire (see in general Belgrave 1937; Mensah 1937; Shepperson 1953). This Pan-African interpretation built upon the sense of outrage that accompanied the revelation that those Black peoples who claimed Britishness were treated not as mutual subjects but rather as de facto aliens. "This cold hard inhuman attitude which the European powers have assumed towards Ethiopia," proclaimed C.C. Belgrave (1937), a "British West Indian Negro", in a letter headed with Psalms 68:31, "has taught us black men that somehow or other, there is a difference in justice. There is one kind of justice for white folk, and another kind for black".

Some of Britain's Black subjects even began to consider the Empire that they belonged to as a willing accomplice to Italy, united not necessarily by imperial interests but certainly through a white supremacist design for global order. Kwame Nkrumah's memory of his 1935 sojourn through the United Kingdom provides evidence of this feeling. Reading a placard proclaiming Mussolini's invasion of Ethiopia, the future leader of independent Ghana felt "as if the whole of London had suddenly declared war on me personally. For the next few minutes I could do nothing but glare at each impassive face wondering if those people could possibly realise the wickedness of colonialism" (Nkrumah 1957, 29).The feeling was far more widespread. For instance, vendors in the British Cameroons of Sylvia Pankhurst's pro-Ethiopia newspaper nevertheless found it increasingly hard to sell copies due to the fact that it was published in Britain and therefore perceived as anti-African (Ngongi 1939).

Such discrepancies and perceived discrepancies in treatment bolstered an established critique of Black belonging to Western polities and empires, the race consciousness of which had already been catalysed during the previous twenty years by Marcus Garvey and Amy Ashwood Garvey through their extremely influential Universal Negro Improvement Association. In this respect, as the imperial belonging promised associatively by Britishness rescinded, so race consciousness was re-mobilized around the defence of Ethiopia. Thus, in contrast to the diffidence of Euri-centric Ethiopianism, Afri-centric Ethiopianists in the Caribbean and African colonies situated Ethiopia firmly in the heart of Black Africa, as professed by a "Bantu voice" from Cape Town: "we sympathise with Ethiopia because she is in Africa, because she is black, because we believe her to be the Cradle of Blackdom. We say so with tremendous pride" (Citashe 1936). A statement from Theo Jean, a Trinidadian, expresses the dissolving effect of Ethiopianism on imperial belonging as Britishness was put aside for Pan-Africanism:

I claim Africa as my own because my fathers were born there. Because I happen to be born in lands known to be owned by Britain I am called a British subject; nevertheless the place of my

birth has not affected my stock. I am all African. Africans at home and abroad are my bone and my flesh, and when anything is done to cause hurt to my bone and my flesh I must publish it abroad ... Oh Britain; Britain! You have given us cause to make use of words to which you are no stranger; "if we had served our God as faithfully as we served you, He would not in our times of trouble have turned His back upon us" (Jean 1937).

But Afri-centric Ethiopianism was not just a phenomenon of the colonies; it also had a presence in the heart of British empire where, in the United Kingdom, it radicalized many Black subjects who – as would be the case for the Windrush generation - already faced issues to do with the "colour bar" and discriminatory work practices (Adi 2013, 278; Fryer 1992, 325–330). Certainly Afri-centric Ethiopianism was promoted by resident race radicals such as Garvey (at least, until he soured towards Selassie I in 1936). But even the League of Coloured Peoples, a group that lobbied for imperial reform from within their claim to Britishness, protested against the betrayal of Ethiopia, "the last part of Africa to have maintained its independence" (League of Coloured Peoples 1938, 2; see in general Rush 2002). In fact, as S.K.B. Asante (1974) identified, a clear line runs through the introduction to the United Kingdom of Afri-centric Ethiopianism in 1935 to the post-war anti-colonial Pan-Africanism that signalled the formal demise of empire in the African world.

The International African Friends of Abyssinia (IAFA) had its first public meeting in July of 1935 (Høgsbjerg 2014, 91), and was established by writers and activists of African descent including CLR James, Amy Ashwood Garvey, George Padmore, Jomo Kenyatta and Chris Braithwaite . In supporting the Ethiopian cause, CLR James was keen to tell the crowds at a pro-Ethiopia rally in Trafalgar Square on August 2nd 1935 that they were not animated by "anti-White feeling" but more by a "union of sentiment between black men ... all over the world" (*Nottingham Evening Post* 1935). By 1937 the IAFA had morphed into the International African Service Bureau (IASB), the aims of which, as the name suggests, were to support a broader movement of self-determination amongst peoples of African descent. Nonetheless, the IASB maintained its personal links to the Ethiopian legation in London as well as its ideological support of the Ethiopia cause in general (Ras Makonnen 1973, 120). In addressing the need for such an organization, the IASB (1937) explained that

...never since the emancipation of the slaves have Africans and other subject races been so awake to a realisation of the wrongs and injustices inflicted upon weak and defenceless peoples as since the brutal Italian fascist war against Abyssinia.

The newspaper of the IASB put the case more bluntly in 1939: "as the Ethiopian struggle has shown, all Negroes everywhere are beginning to see the necessity for international organization and the unification of their scattered efforts" (*International African Opinion* 1939)

Subsequently some of the figures active in the IASB re-grouped as the Pan-African Federation under whose auspices the 5th Pan-African Conference was held in Manchester one month after the cessation of hostilities in 1945. Attended by a number of future independence leaders the 8th resolution of the conference demanded the "withdrawal of the British Military Administration from Ethiopian soil' (Sherwood 2012, 109). For these intellectuals and future leaders, Britishness could no longer contain Pan-African designs. Afri-centric Ethiopianism had catalysed an anti-colonial politics that sought the very dissolution of British Empire. The sons and daughters of that dissolution would soon bring Ethiopianism back to the United Kingdom in the post-colonial era.

In sum, slavery emancipation and liberation framed the narratives of both Ethiopianisms, albeit in various ways. However, their tempos diverged significantly. The movement of Afri-centric Ethiopianism was determined by the self-deliverance/determination of African peoples – on the continent and in the Diaspora - against European colonial rule. In this movement the pretensions of Britishness towards imperial inclusivity were exposed as a (racist) sham. Alternatively, the tempo of Euri-centric Ethiopianism was driven by the salvation of Ethiopians by white Christians (and other white subjects of Britain). And in this movement the core competencies that made Englishness racially exclusive and culturally superior on the world stage were defended. In fine, Euri-centric and Afri-centric Ethiopianism vied to resolve in different ways the disparagement of Englishness and Britishness as cultures of imperial belonging. But only one erupted as a fundamental challenge to imperial belonging itself.

Finally, the stakes at play for both Ethiopianisms were manifested in the personage of Haile Selassie I. For Afri-centric Ethiopianists, Selassie I was, as I have already presented, the symbol and promise of Black and African independence. As the British government betrayed Ethiopia and revealed their racial prejudices and biases, many Black subjects turned away from any pretensions towards a shared imperial Britishness. Instead, they started to identify with Selassie I as his de facto Ethiopian/African subjects for whom they were quite willing to die for on the battlefield (see for example Wallace Johnson's testimony in *New Times and Ethiopia News* 1937c). Some, who would create a movement known by his Crown Prince name of Ras Tafari, even proclaimed Selassie I to be their God as well as King.

For Euri-centric Ethiopianists, Selassie I became the substitute incarnation of Englishness when those leaders who should have exemplified its core competencies had instead betrayed them. "Nobody ... could fail to be impressed by the quiet dignity and regal fortitude of Haile Selassie", commented one attendee to a reception at the Ethiopian Legation, "even in the most difficult circumstances, [he] displays just those qualities we like to regard as part of the public school tradition" (*Devon and Exeter Gazette* 1936). Additionally, Selassie I was said to embody that quintessentially English tradition of impartial and civilizing governance through the work of abolition (for example *Gloucestershire Echo* 1936). Meanwhile, Selassie I's troubling Africanicity could always be tempered by allusion to his "mixed" Semetic heritage and the - albeit "native" - Christian and Biblical provenance of his imperial authority.

By Way of Conclusion: Ethiopianism Past and Present

The struggles over imperial belonging that I have examined in this article began when the cultures that were supposed to provide the cognitive integrity of British empire were put into question by government (in)action over the Italian invasion of Ethiopia. These struggles were articulated by the protagonists themselves through diverse narratives of Ethiopianism that clashed over the question as to who could quicken African redemption from slavery and colonialism and to what extent. In the introduction I suggested that narratives of settlement run the risk of domesticating struggles over belonging that are framed, by the strugglers themselves, through global racial and colonial coordinates. I also suggested that in these self-conceptualizations the division between pre and post war, pre and post colonialism is not a categorical one, and so the moral and political compass is oriented towards rearrangements that exceed an equitable national settlement – colonial or postcolonial. I would therefore like to finish by sketching out a couple of

further points on an Ethiopianist narrative that join the struggles in the 1930s with those of the early 1980s and, ultimately, of today.

The demonization of African-Caribbean youth in 1970s England constituted one of the key political reference points of the Cultural Studies tradition. Many African-Caribbean families arrived in the United Kingdom still cleaving to a certain Britishness. Yet Britishness was never meant to intimately mingle with Englishness in the metropolis: what distinguished the two cultures of belonging was that the former was supposed to be practiced at a colonial distance. With the collapse of this distance mainstream media and academicians proselytized on the inability of recently-arrived African-Caribbean families to adapt to English culture, thereby producing "subnormal" or "socially deficient" children that threatened the future integrity of UK society (Carby 1999; Warmington 2014, 66). The environment was ripe for the creation of a moral panic surrounding Black "criminality", that is, the notion that Black culture was fundamentally alien to English mores (Gilroy 1982).

A loosely knitted but easily visible movement amongst Black youth took centre stage in this panic, especially in Birmingham. They knew themselves as RasTafari, but were described, disparagingly, as a "muggers' mafia" or a "black power movement on the warpath" (Cashmore 1979, 208). The movement had been inter-generationally transmitted through Caribbean family members and peers, the genealogies of which return us to Leonard Howell (the "first Rasta") and other Afri-centric Ethiopianists from the 1930s. In Britain, however, members of the movement took the Crown Prince title of Haile Selassie I (Ras Tafari) as a claim to African belonging that stood opposed to the racist exclusions of Englishness and one which would be realised by repatriation to Ethiopia.

Yet even sympathetic intellectual responses to RasTafari refused to take such self-conceptualisations seriously and mobilised, instead, a narrative of settlement that sought to domesticate the movement into, for example, a "subculture" that could be comfortably placed alongside other British subcultures of youthful rebellion (see Hebdige [1979] 2007; for a broad critique see Henry 2006). Len Garrison, an influential Black educationalist, did acknowledge the self-understanding of RasTafari as a Pan-African liberation movement in a path-breaking treatise on the subject. Yet Garrison still ultimately argued that any quest for an "African personality" would have to proceed through a process of settlement facilitated by an endorsement by the British public of "cultural plurality" (Garrison 1979, 39).

Garrison's treatise was prescient, written just before the dramatic uprisings of 1981 in Brixton and other urban areas heavily populated by African-Caribbean communities. In writing his famous report on these disturbances, Lord Scarman leaned upon the American sociology of Daniel Patrick Moynihan in order to locate the root of the problem in the dysfunctional Black family unit (Kushnick 1993, 18). In this respect, Scarman's report was framed very much by a narrative of settlement that took Englishness as the aspirational norm. But Scarman also consulted Garrison's treatise on RasTafari in preparation for his report, and he entered into a hesitant but somewhat receptive consultation with key RasTafari individuals and groups ("Note of a Meeting Between Lord Scarman and Rastafarian Representatives" 1981). Scarman was even determined that RasTafari should be allowed to have their say in public sessions (Kirby 2006, 614). True, Scarman might have been using the RasTafari movement to sidestep groups such as the Brixton Defence Campaign who were campaigning for the Black community to boycott the report; and true, too, Scarman was less concerned with entertaining the cause of repatriation and more focused upon facilitating integration

and settlement of RasTafari in Britain.[3] Yet it still remains a puzzle as to why Scarman would even enter into such a principled engagement with a group that so fundamentally disavowed Englishness and even Britishness.

I wish to suggest, though, that a residue of Euri-centric Ethiopianism informed Scarman's understanding of the struggle. He would have been 25 years old when the Italy/Ethiopia war erupted in 1935, and a year later he joined Middle Temple as a Harmsworth Law Scholar. Surveying Brixton in 1981, did Scarman recall another time when the gulf between white Englanders and Black Britons had been at least partially bridged by Ethiopianism? Is this why he could at least appreciate that the question of belonging exceeded that of national settlement?

On 1 August 2014 between five to six thousand people of predominantly African descent marched from Windrush Square, Brixton to Downing Street, London. The 1st of August marks emancipation day in the British Caribbean. The marchers delivered a petition of over 65,000 signatures for a parliamentary inquiry into reparations, part of which read:

> The lack of accountability by those responsible confirms the ongoing racism which creates disproportionate detriment to the offspring of the millions of individuals that were stolen from Afrika ... Today the offspring of the stolen Afrikans encounter direct and indirect racial discrimination daily (Rastafari Movement UK 2014).

RasTafari Movement UK organised the reparations march along with active support from a number of other Pan-African organisations and its members featured heavily in the demonstration. As the invocation of African identities in the petition suggests, reparation for the Movement is part of a broader and bolder agenda for repatriation to various sites on the African continent, including within Ethiopia. Afri-centric Ethiopianism lives on in the UK.

Nonetheless, despite peacefully disrupting central London on a Saturday afternoon, no news media (save one local Brixton paper) reported the demonstration. Perhaps even the liberal media could not quite conceive of a movement that was so strangely out of time and place in multicultural Britain, especially when Englishness/Britishness was now primarily threatened by Islam and Al Qaeda. This time, no Scarman has presented himself as a bridge-builder. Do our frameworks of citizenship and race similarly occlude the global constellations within which at least some contemporary struggles over postcolonial belonging still proceed?

By concluding in this manner I hope to demonstrate that narratives of settlement can, on the one hand, enlighten us to the struggle between rights claims and culturally-determined exclusions. But on the other hand they can obfuscate the way in which struggles over belonging so often work through tempos that race beyond the "national" and enact chronologies that precede and succeed settlement and re-settlement. For Britain's Black subjects, the inter-war struggle over settlement in the empire which implicated Britishness, and the post-Windrush struggle over settlement in the UK which implicated Englishness, are not necessarily separate stories divided by

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[3]   For learning of these qualifications I am indebted to Cecil Gutzmore, an original member of the Brixton Defence Committee, and Ras Gabre Wolde, a RasTafari participant in the discussions with Scarman.

world war and empire. They can, instead, be joined by an Ethiopianism that provides different cartographies of belonging leading, for some, to a Pan-African resolution of race and (post)-colonial rule.

I believe this acknowledgement is a crucial corrective to investigations of nation, culture and belonging that have framed struggle primarily though settlement. For I am arguing that sometimes struggles over belonging seek resolutions that are beyond those made possible by full citizenship. And I am making both an academic and political point. In postcolonial Britain, citizenship will always be partial if it requires enfranchisement to be parsed through cultural competency, even if the nation is painted multicultural. Let us admit, instead, that many cultures of belonging retain their longstanding racial-global coordinates and that the battleground for justice will remain similarly global in effect, affiliation and outcome. Let us also acknowledge at the same time that, at least in Britain, citizenship rights should never be framed or determined by cultural competencies at all, no matter how pluralistic the criteria might appear. Those who, in their struggles, dare to claim both citizenship rights and global justice are never easily contained.

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