Exploring the contributions of John G. Jackson to African historiography

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This thesis offers a comprehensive examination of the intellectual contributions of John Glover Jackson, an African American historian. Jackson, similar to many other African American scholars, is self trained in the field of African history. This self training is a crucial element in this presentation for it is an attempt to present the autodidact’s efforts and contributions as valid. This attempt reviews the archeological, anthropological, and cultural evidence presented by Jackson relating to his interpretations of man, God, and civilization.

The methodology utilized in this research consists mainly of examining secondary data. Primary materials include interviews, video recordings, and recorded lectures. Critiques of the scholarly content of these materials are included in the assessment of Jackson’s work. Iconographic, linguistic and ethnological evidence will be presented as
interpreted by Jackson.

The findings demonstrate that Jackson’s contributions were virtually ignored. The reasons for this disregard are several. The dissenting nature of his presentation, his atheist reasoning and his lack of diplomacy contributed to his neglect.

The results of this study carry wide reaching implications in the different fields of historical research. An Important finding, for example, is that formal university training is not an absolute prerequisite in the writing of history. Of greater significance is the evidence presented and the integrity of the historian’s scholarship.

The autodidact and the formally trained scholar have much to offer historiography. Neither can be ignored if honest scholastic advancements is intended. This exploring of the contributions of the self taught scholar, John G. Jackson, attempts to support such a conclusion.
EXPLORING THE CONTRIBUTIONS
OF JOHN G. JACKSON
TO AFRICAN HISTORIOGRAPHY

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

The continual debate connected with the achievements of Africa and Africans has resulted in an intensification of inquiries debunking the European interpretations of Africanity. John G. Jackson submits that African civilization was antecedent to and contemporaneous with European civilization. His writings suggest that Africa was responsible for much of the civilization in Europe. He also challenges ideas once taught as seminal in the area of world history. Thus it is our compelling duty to explore the central themes presented by Jackson. When asked in an interview did he have any regrets, Jackson responded by saying:

My books for the most part haven't reached the masses, basically because they can't and/or don't read. Yes! I have some regrets. White people have treated me better than Blacks. During a severe illness, my fellow Black Union workers didn't care enough to visit me in the hospital.¹

He continues to express his disappointment by adding, "plus more whites are reading some of my works more than

Blacks. If I had to do it all over I would not do it."² The interviewer, Adib Rashad, makes a point by suggesting that most self educated scholars worthy of mention had mentors who took significant roles in shaping their careers and contributions to African history. He posits this lack of mentors for African American young intellectuals as one reason why Jackson has been betrayed by our neglect. Perhaps Rashad’s "lame excuse" as he calls it, does involve some validity. Jackson in fact tell us: "After I arrived in New York, I met Hubert Harrison...He later introduced me to J.A. Rogers who taught me to study African History."³ This observation does not relieve the young African American intellectual of responsibility to uncover and recover history.

On October 14, 1993 this independent thinker passed away. A memorial service was held weeks later in Chicago, only then did the masses of African Americans become aware of his death. John H. Clarke, lecturing at Clark Atlanta University a few days after Jackson’s death, informed the audience of his passing. Many in the audience had not heard the name prior to Dr. Clarke’s mention. Few Africanists wrote about Jackson in his last days. Yemi Toure and John H. Clarke are a few. Since his death more, but not enough has been written about this astonishing scholar. It is a ironic that it took his death for African Americans to award him his due respect. It

²Ibid., 20.
³Ibid., 15.
is safe to conclude that Jackson did not abandon us; we abandoned him.

**Purpose of the Study**

This document proposes to recognize and critically examine the academic and intellectual contributions of John Glover Jackson, a self educated historian and scholar. This self trained scholar is recognized in the same regard as university trained scholars, for his contributions to scholarship are equal, in some cases superior. The quantity of his works is not as significant as the quality. All of his contributions focused on issues of extreme relevance to African people. The topics of much of his scholarship are controversial today just as they were one hundred years ago. Jackson’s contributions when examined, may be seen as a symbol of the great unacknowledged contributions of Africans to the world and its history. They also serve as a reminder of how far we still must travel to reclaim and restore history.

**History and the Autodidact**

A.C. Haddon in the early twentieth century suggested that it takes struggle in order for civilization to maintain itself. Scholars and scientists are those primarily responsible for the advances in society. The scholar, we are told, “consolidates and clarifies knowledge which has already
been acquired and hands it on to the scientist."⁴ If this is so, scholars and scientists are responsible for the technology and culture of society. If these scholars and scientists are biased in their assessment, they indoctrinate the society with their bias. The result is miseducation. Whether their interpretations are deliberate or unintentional is an issue for later discussion. Nevertheless this miseducation has moved one human group to identify its members as superior over the other. Is this superiority complex a result of bias or is the anti-African bias a result of the superiority complex? Scholars of African descent have sought to answer such an inquiry. Since European scholarship has ranked certain human beings higher than others, the lower ranked group has historically attempted to correct such representations of their identity. Challenging institutions and the history that is presented through these institutions constitute one method used to correct what is perceived as false history. Reexamining the elements of scholarship or, for that matter what makes a scholar, is a preponderant component of this attempt. The validity of methods, hypotheses and framework is challenged as rightly it should be. No scholarly contributions in the area of historiography should go unchallenged regardless of author or subject matter. The African World scholar and the subject of this paper, John

Jackson once stated:

When racists are confronted with the utter silliness of their propaganda, they never admit that they are wrong. They don't have to. When one controls the education system, radio, television, the press and practically all publishing houses, what chance does the opposition have?\(^5\)

Such observations are perhaps characteristic of most scholars who have not sought the university for training. It has been suggested that because of the university affiliation of some trained scholars, it is difficult for them to express dissenting views regarding already existing scholarship. Most university trained scholars, we are told, are suffering from "economic dependency and the Establishment's increasing monopoly on the world of grants as well as the publication and dissemination of material."\(^6\) The scholar responsible for this observation though university trained, was himself free of institutional restraints. He had been asked to leave both Howard University and Virginia State University for espousing and disseminating non-traditional views. The point being made by Nathan Hare is that the mere possession of a number of college degrees does not necessarily produce a scholar.

A scholar is one who contributes new insights to the already existing body of knowledge. The degree to which these new insights support or detract from that existing body of


knowledge should not be the determinant factor of that scholars' integrity. A body of opinion does exist that propounds the notion that Africa contributed nothing of worth to what is considered civilization. The challenge of the African World scholar is to denounce this view not simply because of its defamation of a people, but more importantly, because it is historically unfounded. The scholar must also provide the evidence to support the historical claims of a people once wronged by faulty scholarship. After all,

History does not furnish a case of the elevation of a people by ignoring the thought and aspiration of the people thus served.⁷

Oppressed people must have an extraordinary relationship with history. History is not simply a tool to incriminate perpetrators of malice or release the damned of responsibility. It is a tool which must provide evidence that will empower the powerless and humble the arrogant. Who presents and interprets that history is not as important as the interpretation itself.

The university trained scholar because of economic and political affiliation must reveal their dissatisfaction of academic institution with diplomacy. The public has little understanding of this reality and frequently makes hasty judgements relative to which African scholars are reliable.

The university trained and the self trained scholars'
goals in large measure are identical. It is their approaches that might differ. Of greater interest perhaps is the nature of the critique they level against each other. The audience outside of academia has a tendency to criticize university trained scholars as lacking specificity or having hidden agendas. They are usually accused of relying too frequently on European scholarship. The audience within academia accuse the self trained scholar of propaganda and opinion. Improper citation, unreliable sources and mere speculation are usually the issues that incriminate this brand of scholar. A past example of such is the criticism levelled against Joel Augustus Rogers. In spite of this, his life and achievements are still valuable to African World scholarship.

Rogers was born in Negril, Jamaica. While growing to manhood in Jamaica, Rogers developed an understanding of the class structure in his country and that race was an element of that structure. Rogers made the observation that there existed an African, Afro-European and European class. Privileges would be extended absolutely to the European, frequently to the Afro-European, but seldom to the African. Upon reaching the United States, he embarked on what is

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referred to as "in depth commitment to research and study of the achievements of persons of African descent."

W.E.B DuBois in 1965 opines:

I have learned much from J.A. Rogers. Rogers is an untrained American Negro writer who has done his work under great difficulty without funds and at much personal sacrifice. But no man living has revealed so many important facts about the Negro race as Rogers.

A boyhood friend of Rogers, Marcus Mosiah Garvey also possess the same consciousness of racialism while in Jamaica. He too, beyond primary school was self educated. He arrived in the United States for a brief stay in 1913. He returned some years later and became a proponent of what came to be described as "race pride". Garvey is credited with having created the largest mass movement among African people in America and the rest of the Western World. He created press vehicles through which young African American thinkers could appeal and inform the masses. Garvey created two newspapers, The Negro World and The Daily Negro Times. These two publications were vehicles which helped to launch the public careers of many self trained as well as university trained researchers. Among the self trained scholars was Arthur A. Schomburg.

Schomburg, born in Puerto Rico, assiduously collected materials on Africans in Africa, the United States and

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elsewhere. Later, his collection would be sold to the Public Library System in New York City. As a result of this transaction, the Schomburg Collection of Negro Literature and History was instituted. Presently the Schomburg Center in Harlem stands as a shining example of the abundance of information available to the world regarding African people.

To the list of self trained scholars must be added the name, Hubert H. Harrison. Harrison, born in the Virgin Islands, was referred to as a walking encyclopedia. He advocated socialism and African nationalism in his career. When Harrison subsequently concluded that a number of socialists themselves were racists, he adopted African nationalism. He would become an associate of Marcus Garvey and create the Liberty League. This alliance, unfortunately, did not last. Both Garvey and Harrison had strong authoritarian personalities. One source opines that both possessed "dictator qualities" and because of this their collaboration was short lived. One could only ponder in deep regret what would have resulted from this alliance had these two uncompromising achievers collaborated for a longer span of time. Nevertheless, Harrison's contributions were significant. At the age of twenty one he was writing book reviews for the New York Times. He is also the author of


\[14\] Ibid.
three books, all of which were profound inquiries into the circumstances of African people. Harrison made the valid observation that:

Those who have knowledge must come down from their snares [sic] and give it to the common people. Theirs is the great duty to simplify and make clear, to light the lamps of knowledge that eyes of their race may see...This is the Task of the Talented Tenth.\(^\text{15}\)

This task of which Harrison speaks was exhibited throughout his life. Without doubt Hubert Harrison was one of the more scintillating scholars to which more study must be given.

Added to the list of the self trained scholars is Edward Blyden. A nationalist with a high school diploma, Blyden became a harsh critic of European institutions, especially Christianity. The observation that Christianity is a European institution is not a popular view to most scholars, but Blyden does not hide his sentiments. Though Blyden was a missionary and clergyman, he had little reserve in his criticism of the church and its impact on Africans. Blyden advocated that Africans could adopt and derive greater benefit from Islam than Christianity.\(^\text{16}\) He also stressed the necessity that Africans in America and elsewhere recognize and appreciate the utility of their cultural heritage. Blyden also urged that a portion of the Africans in the United States, should return to

\(^{15}\text{Hubert Harrison, When Africa Awakes: The inside story of the stirrings and strivings of The New Negro in the Western World (New York City: The Porros Press, 1920), 128.}\)

\(^{16}\text{Edward Blyden, Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race (Edinburgh: University Press, 1887), xiv.}\)
Africa preferably, to Liberia. His desire for repatriation became reality in some regions in Liberia and Sierra Leone. Needless to say, his views were met with hostility by some African Americans and European American alike. Nonetheless, this opposition did little or nothing to end the efforts of Blyden to provide intellectual, spiritual, political, religious and economic emancipation for African People. In a work titled Black Spokesmen: Selected Published Writings of Edward W. Blyden, the editor, Hollis Lynch says of Blyden: "Whatever reservations his black contemporaries had of him, they honored and boasted of him as an international intellectual and literary figure."17

It would be misleading to suggest that all the self trained scholars of notable mention immigrated from the West Indies. It would be a fair statement however, to say that the majority of them arrived from the Caribbean. Richard B. Moore's life and works supports this assertion. Born in Barbados, he was educated to the level of a high school graduate. Moore emigrated to the United States where he involved himself in the unrelenting struggle for the emancipation of African people. Like Hubert Harrison and others, he espoused socialism as a way of life and liberation. He held membership in many organizations, among them, The African Blood Brothers and The Communist Party.

Like most African liberators of his epoch, Moore was engaged in campaigns against Italy's invasion of Ethiopia. He was also the creator of the Frederick Douglass Book Center in 1942. This center would be the intellectual mecca and many young scholars would use this center as a catalyst to launch their academic careers. This center according to Keith E. Baird: "became not only an emporium for books on the African world but also a meeting place for Caribbean and African-American nationalist intellectuals." Moore's other accomplishments are many. He was a Pan Africanist, Pan Caribbean nationalist, scholar, organizer, and political activist. A proper summary is presented by Baird, who states:

Judged within the context of the struggle of the people of the Caribbean area for self determination, his [Moore's] place is properly in the forefront of the pantheon of its freedom fighters.  

John Henrik Clarke, quotes Moore's opinion regarding the treatment of African history by hostile European scholars:

This widespread, and well nigh successful endeavor, maintained through some five centuries, to erase African history from the general record, is a fact which of itself should be quite conclusive to thinking and open minds.


19 Ibid., 89.

Richard B. Moore fought with tenacity to correct the effects of this endeavor.

The list of self trained historians is lengthy and steadily increasing. For the purpose of establishing the value of the self trained scholar to African historiography we have identified a few outstanding figures. Those not identified in this presentation are nonetheless as valuable as those to whom reference has been made. It is impossible because of the scope of this paper to give the space deserved to the issue of self training. All the scholars mentioned have made genuine attempts to present African World history whether grim or glorious. Self educated and university trained scholars alike have expended great efforts to bring us honest scholarship. Our position is that self educated scholars have been denied due recognition based on contribution and effort. In the company of the formally trained African scholars, these self taught scholars are responsible for much of the intellectual challenges presented.

As W.E.B. DuBois indicates:

> We realize that history is too often what we want it to be and what we are determined men [people] shall believe rather than a grim record of what has taken place in the past.\(^2\)

Numerous self trained scholars have attempted to present the history of African American peoples. Without emotionalism and special favor re-examination and appreciation of those all but

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forgotten African scholars is timely and appropriate.

Positive and favorable presentations of African history are often criticized as romanticism. This is not simply a case of European scholarship versus African scholarship. Within both communities, intellectual dissension is common. Vincent Harding adding to the assessment of the dilemma of African historiography, contends:

Our fathers in Negro History (and Negro Politics) do not understand us. After their long struggle to be accepted by the keepers of the American scholarly establishment, they painfully watch us demand the keys.

Harding, at the time of this article was convinced that many elder African historians were obstacles in way of the intellectual emancipation of the African. Elliot Skinner presents a succinct and quite reasonable synopsis of the problem. He reveals that:

The problem for the black scholar was that the academically and powerful whites were the judges of what was scholarship and what was propagandistic. And since they had the power to determine who had access to Africa, who could obtain scholarly works about Africa or who could publish books about Africa, they often excluded all blacks who were viewed as "hopelessly romantic" and certainly not objective about Africa.

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We cannot safely suggest that Skinner's accurate observation does not apply at this late date. Yet another penetrating observation is made by Earl E. Thorpe.

Thorpe proposes that establishing a glorious and wonderful past is not necessary for ethnic achievement. Achievement, he asserts, is based on high levels of technological and cultural developments.25 John Jackson’s contribution to African historiography diminishes any such claim by demonstrating the past itself contains high levels of technological and cultural developments. This connection, we learn through Jackson, results in high achievement necessary to build and maintain civilizations. However, in all fairness, the biased views of the problem in African historiography should be given much more consideration than this paper, because of its scope can offer. Nevertheless, when Olaudah Equiano with deep concern for his people suggests that African Americans are almost a nation of dancers, musicians and poets, Jackson shows through his scholarship that African people are, were and will always be much more.

Biographical Sketch of John G. Jackson

John Glover Jackson was born on April 1, 1907, in Aiken South Carolina, a small county with a population of less than

fifty thousand residents. Jackson attended the Schofield School in Aiken. At this school, he pursued an interest in creative writing. Jackson’s needs were not met at this institution so he relocated to Augusta, Georgia. In Georgia, he attended Haynes Institute. Perhaps still not satisfied with his facilities, he this time moved to New York City. In 1922, he enrolled in Stuyvesant High School. In New York many resources were available to him. Beyond the cultural amenities, New York offered Jackson teachers who were willing to aid his quest as a creative writer. Credit must also be given to the intellectual ferment that was taking place at the time. The cultural awareness of that period along with Jackson’s profound interest in African history catapulted him into serious study. Upon leaving Stuyvesant High school with honors, Jackson worked as a redcap in Grand Central Station. As in the case of many, this occupation was not his preference, but the income was necessary. Arthur Schomburg for example, worked in a mail room on Wall Street.

The late twenties and early thirties saw Jackson forming an alliance with Willis N. Huggins. Huggins had received training in geography history and French in Europe, returned to America and entered Fordham University where in 1932 he

26 Thirteenth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1910. Vol III, Population 1910

received his doctoral degree. With the research assistance of J.A. Rogers, Huggins travelled to various parts of the world collecting material for an upcoming publication. In collaboration with John Jackson, Huggins published a text entitled, *A Guide To The Study of African History*.

Jackson lived in New York City for fifty years. He frequently lectured for The Association for the Advancement of Atheism over a period of twenty five years. His views made him intellectually extraordinary for it was quite rare to encounter a person of African background denying the existence of a Creator.

Jackson was a member and contributor to the Rationalist Press Association in London. He also contributed to a magazine called *The Truth Seeker*. Beginning in 1971, he lectured in the Black Studies Department at Rutgers University for approximately two years. From 1973 to 1977 he was a Visiting Professor in the University of New York. After leaving New York for Chicago, he taught at Northeast Illinois University. Throughout his career he gave tribute to J.A. Rogers and Willis Huggins.

Willis Huggins and a list of other interested intellectuals held classes relating to African history in various locations in New York City. Ultimately, the YMCA in Harlem became the more frequented location. John Henrik Clarke credits these classes as aiding him tremendously in his study of history. He records that the Harlem History Club was
responsible for two of the earlier books of Huggins and Jackson. He also relates that it was the intellectual fountain to which many future African leaders came to drink. Willis Huggins had a profound and lasting effect on Jackson.

It was in Huggins that Jackson saw the embodiment of a brilliant brave and courageous Black savant. One who was an indefatigable worker in the heat of the day, as well as the serious devotee to seeking of knowledge in the cold of the evening.\(^28\)

Jackson later wrote for Marcus Garvey’s *Negro World*. This publication had readership in America, Africa, the Caribbean, South America and parts of Europe.\(^29\) It is significant to note that in Jackson’s earliest writings we encounter evidence of his superior scholarship. In an article published in the *Negro World* in April 1925 titled, “Was Jesus Christ a Negro”, he challenges the notion of a European Jesus. Jackson presents evidence by other scholars and seldom uses his opinion to state his thesis. This observation is valid in all of his writings.

Jackson subsequently took to the lecture circuit, often in the company of Willis Huggins. In 1934 these two scholars expanded *A Guide To The Study of African History* to *An Introduction to the Study of African Civilization: With Main Currents In Ethiopian History*. Jackson was also the author of several small publications. Though small in size the contents


\(^{29}\)Ibid., 3.
of these works were significant in their contributions to African World history. Included are the following publications: *The African Origin of The Myths and Legends of the Garden of Eden* (1933), *Christianity Before Christ* (1938), *Ethiopia and the Origin of Civilization* (1939) and *Pagan Origins of the Christ Myth* (1941). All of these publications would be amalgamated into major works after the untimely death of his mentor Willis Huggins. These works are *Introduction to African Civilization* followed by *Man, God, and Civilization*. Twenty years later Jackson produced *Ages of Gold and Silver*. We are told however that the public did not respond well to his contributions. In 1971 and twenty two years later in 1993 we were informed that, "he [Jackson] is seriously considering giving up his 50 years of writing and research and in his own words: "I cannot to go any further in debt.""\(^{30}\) This lack of support is conspicuous when one attempts to find such book reviews of his works, *The Black Scholar* was one among a few publications found which reviewed one of his books. Currently increased emphasis has been given to Jackson's contributions resulting from the rise of Afrocentricity. With the resurgence of African centered thought and education, Jackson's contributions have been brought back to life from the cemetery of neglect.

\(^{30}\)Ibid., 3.
Africa as the ancestral home of humankind has long been debated and is presently responsible for much disagreement among and between archeologists and anthropologists. John Jackson had much to contribute to this debate. In the first chapter of *Introduction to African Civilization*, Jackson points to several writers who believed the earth was created recently. A variety of theories are also examined. For example, the Big Bang theory proposed by Raymond Lyttleton. Lyttleton believes that huge stars scattered throughout space sometimes collide and explode. From one such explosion came a piece of debris that we now call earth.

Jackson’s assessment of the earth’s formation is somewhat similar, he opines that:

> Earth began its career as a fiery ball of gas circling around the sun, but gradually cooled by the intense cold of installer space until it became solid.31

He would continue by informing us that the earth began to shrink and deep valleys of water were collected. From these valley came the first life form called protoplasm. Then came

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protozoa (one celled animal), followed by many celled animals called metazoa, proceeded by mollusks, crustacea and insects. Many believe differently. More recently it has been forwarded that life itself was not created on this planet.

Observation of organic compounds in material and comets have led to the speculation that the raw materials for life fell to the earth from outer space.\textsuperscript{32}

Still others contend that life originated in warm springs thereby theorizing that any continent on the earth could have been the ancestral home. One cannot exclude those who still pay tribute to faith and not science. Since the sciences have not solved the mystery, faith has not been discarded.

Some people will always hold to the belief that it is a divine spark, not clever chemistry, that brings matter to life, and for all their fancy equipment, scientist have yet to produce anything in a test tube that would shake a Fundamentalist's faith.\textsuperscript{33}

Hypotheses are many, some more acceptable than others. They all nevertheless add to the pool of a possible solution to humanity's greatest mystery.

After what Jackson calls "eons", the new life forms spread over the planet. From these life forms, a lobe finned fish developed which gave rise to amphibians. From amphibians came reptiles. The reptiles split into two branches. One

\textsuperscript{32}Robert Wright, "Quest For the Mother Tongue," \textit{Atlantic Monthly} 267, (February 1991): 264.

branch evolved into birds and the other into mammals. Thus it is proposed by Jackson that these mammals eventually became monkeys, apes, and humans.

Charles Darwin's book *Descent of Man*, according to Jackson provided impressive evidence that human and ape had a common ancestor. Darwin believed that such an ancestor originated on the continent of Africa. The view to this day is still being disputed. Presently this search is not limited to archeologist and anthropologist in the field digging for bones. It has become far more complicated since the time Jackson gave his synopsis. The specialists trained in molecular biology and physics sit in laboratories with sophisticated equipment. These geneticists and paleoanthropologists call to question many former theories of origin. Though conclusions are various, they subscribe to the one central thesis that humans have a common ancestor. Debate relevant to origin is still abundant. Richard Leakey for instance, believed that there is no single center where modern human was born. Some researchers favor Asia and/or other designations in southern China. Nevertheless, Jackson discussed the variety of human kind that have evolved. *Australopithecus africanus* (southern ape of African), which Raymond Dart was credited for discovering, was one of the first in number of finds. *Plesianthropus transvaalensis, Paranthropus robustus* (robust near human), *Paranthropus crassidens* (coarse tooth near-human), *Telanthropus capensis,*
and Zinjanthropus boisei followed. Then came Homo habilis (human with ability), Homo erectus (human walking upright), and Homo sapiens all preceded by the now famous Lucy. There is a consensus in the belief that there was a split between the ancestral hominids and the chimpanzee. Lucy has been considered the link between chimpanzees and humans.

In the publication Newsweek, the crux of the matter surfaces. In an article titled, "The Search for Adam and Eve," the hypothesis that the first human ancestor was an African woman comes to light. A series of complex deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) tests were performed. The article inform us that mitochondrial DNA was a useful tool in the search for it was inherited exclusively from the mother. This exclusivity created pattern of distinction and linkage. This distinction was responsible for the tracing of an "ancestral mother." The evidence calls to question and in some cases reinforces biblical explanations of our existence. This issue will be further investigated in the chapter on Christianity and Christ.

The next issue following the genetic, anthropological and archeological study of origin is deciding humankind's path. Did humanity originate in Africa and populate the world? Did humanity develop simultaneously in different regions of the world? John G. Jackson informs us that:

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Until well into the present century, the scientist studying prehistoric times looked mainly to Asia as man's original home.35

He proceeds to support his view by calling attention to the works of Albert Churchward. Churchward, a well noted and respected anthropologists and archeologists according to Jackson, opined that humans appeared two million years ago in Central Africa and spread throughout the continent and possibly the world.

The African scholar Cheikh Anta Diop carries this suggestion further. He suggests Southern Africa as the birthplace of humanity. Diop also suggests (civilization) may have had two centers, Africa along the Great Lakes region and Europe proper.36 He designated these centers as the northern and southern cradles. The northern cradle was a cold and desolate environment which created a hostile social environment. The descendants of these early northern inhabitants populated Greece and Europe. The more favorable southern cradle, because of its abundance of food sources, is responsible for the birth of Egypt which consequently civilized the world.37 Jackson does not mention the "two cradle" theory but emphatically states in many of his writings that Africa was responsible for civilization.

35 Jackson, Introduction to African Civilization, 41.


37 Ibid., 112.
Jackson implicitly states his verdict, a verdict that is gaining momentum as the evidence presents itself:

We have traced the birthplace of man back to the African Continent, and have presented evidence that this momentous event occurred about two million years ago. There is also an impressive body of evidence pointing to Africa as the home of the world's first civilization. The evidence Jackson references contains the challenge to many people to change their view of the origin of humanity. A more important implication of African origin is the premise that with origin comes civilization.

Africa may have been the cradle of humanity, it may be argued, but not necessarily the cradle of civilization. Since a distinction between civilization and the origin of humanity has been presented, civilization must be examined.

_Africa and the Origin of Civilization._

First we shall attempt to examine Jackson’s discussion of the matter of civilization. Jackson begins by connecting the iron age with Central Africa. This iron age was a product of the high level of technology and an element of genuine civilization. This capacity to smelt iron was valuable. According to many writers, Europe was still using crude stone tools thereby, could not have been responsible for civilization. This technology elevated humanity to a state

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38Jackson, _Introduction to African Civilization_, 58.

of self sufficiency and less dependency on nature. Consequently, the environment could be manipulated with the use of iron tools. Jackson informs us that the pyramids were built in Egypt using such tools.

Next he suggests that another prerequisite of civilization is possessing ability to supply its own food. He states:

The establishment of agriculture on a large scale and the extensive development of animal husbandry, together with the acquisition of tools enabled ancient people to settle permanently in villages; and these innovations induced a marked division of labor between the sexes.\textsuperscript{40}

These items, Jackson believes, contribute to the formation of what should be considered civilization. The fact that these cultural elements are found in Egypt leads to the deduction that Egypt was in fact civilized. Egypt is located in Africa and this circumstance leads to the conclusion that Egypt was inhabited by Africans. However, such a proposition did not stand unchallenged. The inhabitants of Africa, considered backwards by many European scholars, in their opinion, could not possible have been responsible for the splendiferous civilization of Egypt. Carlton Coon, for example, in his book titled \textit{The Origin of Races}, repeatedly makes comparisons between the European and the "negro." Europeans come from Europe. It is not quite clear where "negroes" originated. The Twa people were referred to as "pygmies", meaning small,

\textsuperscript{40}John G. Jackson, \textit{Man, God, and Civilization} (New York: Citadel Press, 1972), 181.
instead of being identified as Africans or for that matter by the designation by which they identified themselves. Another historian, Thomas Buckle, suggests that civilization started in Greece and Rome and travelled northward, supporting the notion that nothing of value existed south of Greece. Professor Arnold J. Toynbee informs us that of the twenty one civilizations he believed to exist:

The Black race has not helped to create any civilization while the Polynesian white race has helped to create one civilization, the Brown race two, the yellow race three, the red race and Nordic white race, four apiece, the Alpine white race, nine, and the Mediterranean white race ten.\(^4^1\)

While any honest scholar today would find these statements outrageous, it was certainly popular opinion in the recent past. It would not be a dubious or diabolical observation to suggest that these views still occupy the minds of many.\(^4^2\)

According to Jackson, the proponents of such scholarship are to be held accountable. Evidence to contradict these biased opinions was available in abundance. The paucity of research on the African origin of civilization, supports the conclusion that racism pervaded much of what constituted scholarship less than one hundred years ago. Chancellor Williams, an African World historian, declares that racism was so obvious in most of the anthropological findings that one


may wonder how, if they hoped to maintain the fact of being scientific, it could escape their notice.\textsuperscript{43}

Were these scholars aware of such assumptions or was faulty scholarship intentional? Jackson believes that there were deliberate errors. He states:

So much propaganda of a racist nature has entered into the writings of some of the best modern scholars that the reader, or student must constantly be on the watch for it.\textsuperscript{44}

To advance his thesis of Africa as the center of civilization, Jackson presents the contribution of some European classicists as evidence. He initiates this lesson of history with Herodotus, who has been called father of history. Herodotus wrote accounts of what he saw in Egypt. According to Jackson, Herodotus spent years traveling through Africa, Egypt included. Professor A.C. Haddon tells us that the writings of Herodotus are a veritable storehouse of information from the highest civilization down to the veriest savagery, and his work has lost none of its freshness or value through lapse of time. As a matter of fact, modern investigations, carried out in the areas treated by him, more frequently confirm and amplify rather than refute his statements.\textsuperscript{45}

The Histories translated by Aubrey De Selincourt is a comprehensive translation of the historical records of


\textsuperscript{44}Jackson, Man, God, and Civilization, 193.

Herodotus. De Selincourt informs us that Herodotus travelled through Egypt as well as Russia and wrote records of the information he gathered. However, some writers and historians believe that Herodotus' writings were meant for public lectures and lack historic accuracy. This suggests that he may have included only what he considered the public would appreciate. If this analysis is accepted, the conclusion would be to dismiss him as a reliable source. Another opinion of Herodotus is advanced by George Rawlinson who states:

he tells us plainly what he saw and what he heard; allows us to look into his heart, where there is nothing that he needs to hide, and to become sharers alike in his religious sentiments, his political opinion, and his feeling of sympathy or antipathy towards the various persons or races that he is led to mention.46

Rawlinson suggests that Herodotus recorded exactly what he saw. A divergent view of Rawlinson and De Selincourt warns us that "to claim Herodotus as an ancestor, a practitioner of scientific history dependent on verifiable written chronicles is to commit a gross solecism."47 We must at this point acknowledge that there is major emphasis placed on the discussion of the validity of Herodotus. He is one of the few "eye witnesses" thus his record has much impact. An overwhelming number of scholars who favor an African Egypt declare Herodotus as a legitimate source. St. Clair Drake, in

volume one of his book, *Black Folk Here and There*, informs us that Herodotus divided the inhabitants of Egypt into categories which he designates as Eastern and Western inhabitants. He used "red" and "black" in his description of these inhabitants. In fact, according to Drake the word "Ethiopian" would come to mean "black African". Jackson gives us a complete explanation. "In Greek, the word for burnt was "Ethios" and the word for face was "ops"; thus "ethios" plus "ops" became Ethiopians."48

He continues by informing us that Herodotus designated Sudan, Egypt, Arabia, Palestine, Western Asia and India as being inhabited by Ethiopians. Concluding that Herodotus’ many descriptions of the Egyptian as dark skinned people with wooly hair is a confirmation of Ethiopian and Egyptian being one in the same.

Other Greeks also knew of the Ethiopians. Diodorus Siculus, Plutarch and Manetho, according to Jackson, recorded and identified the early Egyptian. According to Jackson, Manetho was commissioned in the third century by Pharaoh Ptolemy Philadelphus to write the history of Egypt from the earliest times up to his day. Though a large portion of this history was lost, enough was recovered to trace the Egyptian kingdoms and their rulers. There still remains disagreement however, about the accuracy of these dates. This chronology is used in disputes relating to mass movements such as

48Jackson, *Man, God, and Civilization*, 188.
"exodus" and invasions of outsiders. These problems, we are told, comes into being when scholars examine the invasion of the much talked about Hyksos in Egypt.\(^49\)

The arrival and presence of the Hyksos is used to support the idea that high culture was a gift to Egypt and not necessarily a product of Egypt\(^50\). Diodorus Siculus, who lived in the first century, wrote a world history in forty books. Jackson refers us to Book III for a detailed account of the Ethiopian origin of Egyptian culture forwarded by Siculus.

Many confirmations of Africa as the center of civilization are made based on the accounts written by the Greeks. Jackson states clearly that the Greeks recognized the high level of civilization in Africa. Reinforcements of such claims are provided by William Leo Hansberry in a text titled *Africa and Africans as seen by Classical Writers*.

Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Hesiod and many others are to be added to the list of Greeks who presented the evidence of an African Egypt. Some Greeks were naturalist and historians, while others were writers and poets. The recorded accounts of Greeks with such diverse backgrounds in agreement projects the case beyond the scope of mere speculation. It must be noted that the word "Ethiopian" became a description


for dark skinned people regardless of region and location. In many cases, the word was used as an adjective, as opposed to a noun.

The center for civilization has been given many designations and locations in Africa, some examples are Ethiopia, Nubia, Sudan, Kush and Egypt. Egypt, it seems, has been designated as the more generic and frequently used designation. However, the issue is not Egypt, the issue of debate revolves around who were the Egyptians and to what race did they belong. According to Jackson, the issue of "race" itself is a European invention. Though he concedes that there are phenotypical differences, they cross all nations. In fact, Jackson dedicated Introduction to African Civilization to "everybody with an African ancestry - the whole human race." Though Jackson does not prescribe to the concept of race, he nevertheless uses the concept to fortify the case of an African Egypt.

Identifying the Africanity of the Egyptians

Much physical evidence about the Egyptians is available. The issue of skin color seems to be a preoccupation of many, Jackson included. Not simply ethnological profiles, but phenotypical profiles seems to be significant. This evidence is presented by many twentieth century writers who are reinterpreting history, some will be introduced in this examination. It is worthy to note, according to Jackson, these people called Egyptians did not identify themselves as
such. The name, we are informed, was a designation of the Greeks. The first Greek visitors labelled this land Hekaptah (land of the temples of Ptah). From Hekaptah derived Aeguptos which Latinized became Aegyptus. From the latter derived the English word Egypt.\textsuperscript{51} He continues by informing the reader that these people referred to their land as Khem, Kemet, Kimit, Kamit or KMT. KMT, "the etymological origin of the well known root kamit has proliferated modern anthropological literature."\textsuperscript{52} The designations are great in number and vary in many instances.

Cultural data from statues identified as a product of totemism is also another means of identifying these Egyptians. Totemism according to Jackson, is best described as a primitive system that aligns "clans" with particular objects. These were usually animals or plants. Man made objects were never totems. These objects were used to symbolize particular beliefs and ideas. In early Egyptian culture, the hippopotamus, beetle, and crocodile are examples of totemism. It is noteworthy that some writers have erroneously interpreted totemism as plant or animal worship. This type of interpretation added to designating non Europeans as backward idol worshippers. Nevertheless, totemism is another method used to identify cultural patterns relating to religion and

\textsuperscript{51}Jackson, \textit{Man, God, and Civilization}, 153.

spirituality.

A linguistic connection also proves the case according to Jackson. He is accused, however, of listing "look alike etymologies without listing other uses of these words." This criticism is not limited to Jackson. Martin Bernal and Cheikh Anta Diop are accused of doing much the same.

The scholar, Cheikh Anta Diop, compared the African language of walaf(wolof) with the early Egyptian vocabulary. The similarities are remarkable and not coincidental according to Diop. Professor T. Obenga, noted for his extensive work in linguistics, challenged those who believed the evidence to coincidental. He proposed that his study produced enough evidence. Feminine gender usage and the similarities of whole words was enough to support Diop's analysis. During the 1960's, a group of scholars convinced The United Nations Educational Cultural Scientific Organization (UNESCO) to sponsor the publication of a comprehensive history of Africa. This gathering of the minds produced a nine volume work. Obenga and Diop were present at the UNESCO conference in 1974. Their opposition was said to comprised of fourteen of their colleagues, none of whom came as prepared for the conference as Diop and Obenga. St. Clair Drake tells us that the two

African scholars had one proponent, a Sudanese. Both insisted that linguistic continuity was too abundant to be invalid. Thus we see the observations of Jackson confirmed by African scholars trained in their respective fields.

Jackson continues his claim by pointing to the work of Gerald Massey. Massey, we can accurately say had a profound effect on Jackson's scholarship. In Massey's *A Book of Beginnings*, Jackson indicates that there is a "long list of English words, still in use today, that seem to be of ancient Egyptian origin." He continues by informing us that it would be absurd that African religious symbols reached Europe and the Americas, but language did not. One symbol that Jackson references is the black madonna and child. Found in Italy and other parts of Europe, past Popes and populations are said to have worshipped these (black) figures. The large statues of gods with African features in the early Americas is also an example according to Jackson.

Beyond the evidence of language, other cultural elements are used in the attempt to satisfy the claim of an African Egypt. Art and literature is another such element. The supposition that art and literature must be functionally interrelated is especially relative to the African. Hieroglyphics (Mdw Ntr) attest to such an observation. As one


Images are obtained through ideas and ideas stem from human experiences, perception of nature, environment, culture and other ideas and abstractions of ideas.\textsuperscript{56}

This assessment made by Claude L. Clark, if accepted, carries us to the issue at hand. Issues peripheral to the questions: Did the Egyptians represent themselves "literally" as they were? Did they exaggerate certain features such as pigment, cheekbones, lips, and nose as is suggested by opponents of an African Egypt? Jackson's opponents argued that these features were exaggerated to represent rulership or deity status. Therefore, it is mere coincidence that these features are phenotypical characteristics of African people. The Egyptians, whoever they were, produced many different shades of their likeness in Mdw Ntr. Some figures were beige, some were red, and some were black. Those who would never accept the Africanity of these Egyptians say that Egypt was closer to a multi-cultural population than a homogenous African haven. Those in opposition to this multi-cultural thesis, Jackson included, have other explanations. The shades are exact, we are told. The African was depicted as black, the Arab and Semite red, and the European white or beige. This observation proposes that these paintings depict Egypt after it was invaded by foreigners. Another reason for opposition was provided by assessing the earliest rulers. Pharaoh Narmer,

Zoser, Ahmose-Nefertari, Amenhotep I, Rameses II and Menuhotep I, to name a few, were all African by phenotypical designations. Another writer tells us that these depictions were deliberate. The white subjects depicted are prisoners, slaves or visitors. From this interaction a mixed race came into existence.  

Perhaps Basil Davidson has the best summary of this academic situation. He asserts:

None of this rather fruitless argument as to the skin color of the Ancient Egyptians before the arrival of the Arabs in the seventh century A.D. would have arisen without the eruption of modern European racism during the 1830s.

He adds:

It became important to the racists, then and since, to deny Egypt's African identity, Egypt's black identity so that they could deny to Africa any capacity to build a great civilization. We should dismiss all that.

This dismissal should not be based on its racial connotation and implication, but based on its lack of scholastic integrity.

Opposition to Jackson's Theory of African Origins

There is without doubt pertinacious opposition relating to African origins of humanity and civilization. Such conflict cannot be ignored if we are to be true to the industry of scholarship. Most, if not all of Jackson's


59Ibid., 50.
interpretations have been scrutinized. The scrutiny does not explicitly point to Jackson because of his autodidactic status. Others that proposed these same views prior to and consequent to Jackson, who were in large measure university trained, received most of the opposition. One such target is Martin Bernal. The contributions of this scholar are scrutinized with great fervor. The majority of articles disputing or supporting his case made mention that he is a European. A clear indication that racialism still influences scholarship.

Jackson since the mid-nineteen hundreds, has been making the same synopsis of Africa's contribution to Greek civilization. Cheikh Anta Diop, George G.M. James, Chancellor Williams are no exception. More recently, Ivan Van Sertima, Maulana Karenga, Molefi Asante, Asa Hilliard and others have expressed much of what Bernal is now propounding. The very racism that Bernal states is responsible for false history is responsible for his popularity. Antithetically, some African scholars welcomed his contributions with resplendence and without any major scrutiny. Jackson's Introduction to African Civilization did not receive as much scrutiny as Bernal's Black Athena, though it contained analogous assessments of African origins and contributions. The same can be said for Cheikh Anta Diop's The African Origin of Civilization: Myth or Reality and Civilization or Barbarism. These two publications have received attention lately but the reviews
are overwhelmingly against Diop's conclusions.\textsuperscript{60} The opposition against Afrocentricity and the multi-cultural curriculum frequently name these texts in their assault against academic reform. The central argument of those in opposition is that "influence" is not synonymous with origin, they note:

it cannot be too much emphasized to show influence is not to show origin. One people or culture may introduce its ideas or its symbols or its artifacts to another people or culture, but the difference between the peoples and cultures remains.\textsuperscript{61}

Most in opposition to African origin concede that there was influence but are stubborn to accept anything more than influence as contribution. They concede that there was "influence" and "contact", but see no obligation to use the words "origin", "African" and "civilization" in the same sentence.

Next there exists an exaggerated problem with the word "root". Allegorically speaking, if these biased scholars viewed civilization as a tree, it is difficult in their hearts to view Africa as a branch on that tree much less the root of that tree; at best Africa is seen as a leaf on that tree. Pardon could be granted were these sentiments proposed by the uninformed. It appears to be more of a political issue than an academic one. Insisting on an African root, it is noted, is


preposterous and inappropriate.

By and large, classicists accept the idea of cultural contact among the Greeks, Egyptians, and Phoenicians and even some level of Egyptian and Semitic influence on Greek culture, but most say that to characterize such influence as the "roots" or "origin" of Greek civilization is to overstate the case.\(^6^2\)

Thus, some classicist concede that humanity started in African yet they are not convinced that what they call civilization originated in Africa also. We are made aware that since Greek civilization was so magnificent, it is only natural that African American people want to claim it for themselves just as others have.

It is inevitable, therefore, that the black peoples in the English speaking countries of this continent, as they develop a sense of their own identity, would want to show that they had a stake in the cultural legacy of ancient Greece.\(^6^3\)

The lengths that persons will go to deny the root of trees that grew before they knew of trees, is interminable. If their assessments are inaccurate, time and honest scholarship will be the extirpator of this school of reasoning. When greater numbers of scholars, regardless of racial classification, step forward, the truth shall become manifest.

Africa and Christianity

Perhaps before one speaks of Christianity, the industry


of religion itself must be discussed. Most conventional definitions of religion exhibit basic similarities. The awareness, worship, and identification of an entity responsible for existence or the direction of our existence are principle elements in religion. Though this definition is somewhat recalcitrant, it is useful. Jackson believes that human thought in its evolution has passed through three ages: The Age of magic, the Age of religion, and the Age of science. He credits such an observation to Sir J.G. Frazer, author of a text titled: The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion. Jackson believes that in magic resides a fundamental law, the law of sympathy. This law encompasses homeopathic magic and contagious magic. Homeopathic magic is based on similarity; contagious magic is based on contact. From this law of sympathetic magic one can, according to Jackson, perform practical magic. From the practical comes positive magic (sorcery) or a negative magic (tabu). 64

Contagious magic is based on the judgement that objects which had contact with each other would maintain a connection. Through these objects the spirit, mind and body could be reached. For example, the body relics of an individual such as hair, blood, nail and clothing, extracted from that person maintained a connection. Thus we frequently encounter body relics being used in early religious rituals to affect an individual's behavior.

64Jackson, Man, God, and Civilization, 75.
Jackson states his position on magic to support the idea that magic was an earlier belief system responsible for some elements in religion. Jackson opined that early man was too busy struggling to exist consequently, all rituals were based solely on life and death. According to Jackson: “The earliest element of religion seems to have been the idea of the soul. This conception of the soul was based on certain speculations concerning the meaning of shadows and dreams.”65 Consequently a progression towards God and nature developed. Jackson states that religious evolution has progressed via these necessary steps: (1) belief in shadow or soul, (2a) animism and fetishism, (2b) ancestor worship, (3a) deification of sun, moon, etc., (3b) deified ancestors, (4) polytheism, (5) monotheism, and, (6) atheism. Jackson credits Joseph McCabe for advancing such opinions.66 As science explains historical biblical events, definitions and existential notions of God have and will continue to be cross examined making atheism a viable solution.

Religion has led the allegiances of many members of the human race for ages, because it promised mankind power over the outside world; but this promise religion could not realize. However science has achieved that control over the hostile forces of nature which religion sought but was not able to bring about.67

Christianity examined by science, in most cases, revealed that

65Ibid., 74.


67Jackson, Man, God, and Civilization, 148.
this religion has myths and allegory at its root.

A myth is an account of deeds expressed usually in primitive thought to explain god, environment or condition. One could safely conclude that religion has myth as one of its main ingredients. One overwhelming example of such is the mythology of the Osirian cult. This divine drama has as its player Osiris, Isis, Set, and Horus. There are many versions of this drama. Some myths have Osiris as the husband of his sister Isis and the father of Horus. The variety of interpretations are important to religion for it exhibits the essence of myths, they change to suit the culture. This is an important conclusion for the same is said of Christianity. In fact, Jackson goes as far as supporting the idea that events in Christianity have their roots in myths which existed in Egypt. Jackson refers to these sources as pagan creeds.

Nevertheless, the two central themes of Christianity are the atonement and the fall of man. Both themes, it is argued, are found in other cultures that and preceded and succeeded Christianity. He tells us that: "The myth of the fall of man is based on the attempts of primitive man to explain the origin of death."\(^{68}\)

The famous biblical drama of Adam and Eve is considered to be incomplete, according to Jackson. In most cases the stories read as follows: God placed Adam and Eve in a garden containing two trees. The Tree of Life and the Tree of Death.

\(^{68}\)Ibid., 118.
The choice was available to eat from either tree. Eating from the tree of life would render the pair immortal, eating from the tree of death brought mortality. A serpent was sent by God to inform the pair to eat from the tree of life. The serpent, perhaps with bad memory, brought the wrong message. The pair thus ate from the wrong tree and were asked to evacuate the garden. Other stories of the fall of man are quite similar. A hare was given the task by the moon to tell man of his new status of immortality. The hare having bad memory, made an error and informed man of his mortality, thus depriving man of his gift of immortality.

The same story is told of a dog, a tortoise, and a hare. Thus Jackson believes that the Biblical serpent in the garden myth is not aboriginal, but one of a myriad to explain the fall of Man.

Stories of the perverted message are quite common in the simpler cultures of Africa, and are based on a widespread belief that the gods intended to make man immortal, but the benevolent plan came to naught due to error or malice on the part of the messenger chosen to deliver the good news.69

Another prodigious element in the proposal of Jackson relative to African origins of Christianity is the existence and experiences of a savior. Jackson believes that Atonement was quite common among the nations of antiquity. The Reverend Charles H. Vail, author of *The World's Saviors*, has recorded the birth of fifteen such saviors. These events are

69Ibid., 120.
identified as the immaculate conception. These miracle births were similar to that of Jesus Christ. Jackson states: "Gods and heroes, born of virgins, were quite common in olden times and the source of most, if not all of these divinities, seem to have been Egypt." The Annunciation, the Immaculate Conception, the birth of a savior and the adoration are engraved in the walls of the temple of Luxor in Egypt of Africa. We are informed that the Egyptian savior Horus is born of a virgin mother, Isis. The similarity of Mary the virgin and Isis is apparent.

Along with Reverend Charles H. Vail fifteen reported saviors we learn of Arthur Findley's thirty savior gods. From Findley's list we can examine the many similar life experiences of at least five, according to Jackson. To demonstrate similarity, Jackson elects the savior Bel of Babylonian as subject. The story of Bel is found on a tablet believed to be two thousand years older then the recorded story of Christ. Bel is taken prisoner and led away to a mountain with two other persons. The people are in turmoil, Bel's clothes are carried off and he then disappears. A weeping woman is present at the gate of the burial; soon thereafter he is brought back to life.

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70Ibid., 123.


72Ibid., 220-21.
The Savior Krishna's life is comparable to that of both Jesus and Bel. Krishna was raised by foster parents. His mother Devaki is a virgin. A king, King Kansa, is ordered to kill all male children. Krishna's father Nanda, is warned that he must go to Egypt to escape. The similarities between Jesus and Krishna are numerous. All that can be said of Krishna could be said of many other savior gods. The biblical Jesus Christ have suffered the fate of many other saviors. The conception, crucifixion and resurrection are remarkably similar, according to Jackson. The emphasis however is not on the number of saviors but the implication of their likeness. One should accept the Christian doctrine of saviorism as one of many similar doctrines, not the primary one responsible for origination of the others. Jesus Christ is of no lesser or greater importance than any other cultures deities or saviors according to Jackson. As one writer puts it:

We are forced with the inescapable realization that if Jesus actually lived in the flesh in the first century A.D., and if he had been able to read the documents of Old Egypt, he would have been amazed to find his own biography already substantially written some four or five thousand years previous.73

Jackson relates that there is overwhelming historical evidence to argue the case that the biblical Jesus Christ may not have existed. Just as most myths were personifications of nature, so too was Jesus Christ. In all manifestation of the Jesus

73Alvin Kuhn, A Rebirth for Christianity (Wheaton: Theosophical Publication House, 1970), 40.
story, there exist some natural phenomena. One example is his birth date which corresponds to the winter solstice, a celebration of the sun’s return. Jackson informs us that most events related to Jesus are pure allegory. Jesus the "son" of man is indeed the "sun" of man. It is opined that the phenomena relating to the sun were transposed to a human named Jesus. The synopsis, according to Jackson, is that Jesus may have been more myth than man, he boldly states: "the liberal Christian apologist finds out, much to his chagrin, that practically nothing is known about the historical Jesus."74 A bold statement which he frequently reinforces without apology.

Another writer considered an authority by Jackson on the subject is Gerald Massey. Massey, a social reformist, poet and Egyptologist had this to say relating to the question: "The personal existence of Jesus as Jehoshua Ben Pandera can be established beyond a doubt."75 Massey’s conclusion is that Jesus, the man, existed. Jesus, the biblical character, perhaps did not. We are informed by another scholar regarding the identity of Jesus Christ. Dr. Charles Finch presents a similar verdict.

Outside the Gospels themselves, there is no authentic independent record or witness to the actual existence of Jesus or the events described in the Gospel for nearly a


century after the received date of his putative crucifixion.\textsuperscript{76}

The Jehoshua of which Gerald Massey speaks has several versions to his biography. This individual is identified as Jehoshua, Jeschu and Joshua. Jeschu ben Pandera is the identity most alluded to. Ben Pandera, we are told, means son of the Panther. This is an essential point for we are told that the panther was used as a symbol of strength. Many high priests and nobility of Egypt wore relics and symbols of panthers as an outward sign of status. This verdict if accepted, leaves us with two possible deductions. Jesus came from a family of nobility and was a student in Egypt and learned under Egyptian high priests who wore panther skins. If so, all his miracles may have been the result of acquaintances with Egyptian scholars who were trained in medicine. To reinforce this point we are told that Jeschu Ben Pandera came under the instruction of an Essene, Ben Perachia, and learned mystic sciences. He consequently travelled throughout Palestine teaching and healing. Corresponding with the experience of Jesus Christ, Jeschu Ben Pandera "was arrested by Jewish authorities, tried, convicted of practicing "magic" and hanged on that account on the Passover at Lydda in 70 B.C. when he was 50 years of age."\textsuperscript{77}

Jackson asks us to consider two denouements. Would not

\textsuperscript{76}Charles Finch, \textit{Echoes of The Old Darkland} (Georgia: Khenti Inc., 1991), 208.

\textsuperscript{77}Ibid., 210.
some of his contemporaries write about his existence? And why would a person of such notoriety be omitted from written history? According to Jackson, these two points must be examined before we surrender ourselves to mere speculation. The account of Jesus in the gospels needs cross examination. To counter Jesus' mention in the Gospels, Jackson tells us that "these gospels are replete with inaccuracies and contradiction is obvious to all who read with a discerning eye." These Gospels which Jackson criticizes are attributed to Mark, Luke, Matthew, and John. Jackson points out the inconsistencies of their accounts. There exists disparity relative to Jesus' birth. Each gospel gives different dates of the birth of Jesus Christ. Accordingly, if his birth is inconsistent, so too is his death. The hour of the crucifixion is likewise uncertain. The record of who or how many visited the tomb is also disparaging. The location of Jesus' departure is another perplexity according to Jackson. All these contradictions lead Jackson to conclude that the epic of Christ should be no more or less valuable than Krishna, Osiris, Budda and the countless other recorded saviors. The representations of Jesus Christ leads to greater challenges for man, according to Jackson. Jesus is claimed to be the son of Man, the son of God and, God himself. According


79Ibid., 12. Also see Pagan Origins of the Christ Myth, 7-12. Man, God, and Civilization, Chapter VII.
to Jackson we haven’t mastered the concept of man or God, especially the latter.

Jackson believes that religion in general is built on faith and this faith is humankind’s excuse for its shortcomings. Advances made by humanity are not the result of prayer, but practical science. Science and God are juxtaposed. Science incites worshippers of Jesus and religion undermines science. According to Jackson, man is convinced he did not create himself, thus God was responsible. If so, he asked; why are we not as able to ask as a child would; “Who created God?” Jackson believes that in order to explain how the universe was created, humans created God.

The many epithets relating to God need clarification, opines Jackson. Understanding the definitions of “atheist”, “agnostic”, “theist”, and deist enable us to delete the “supernaturalism” and replace it with practical emotionless knowledge. Agnostics profess that there is no proof of God’s existence. Atheist deny the existence of a “personal god”. Deist speak to the recognition of a natural (nature) god.80 Jackson makes the case that popular religion has made it so that if one expresses such ideas, they pay a price. Christianity became politicized and is used to advance specific political ideas for specific people. If that were not the case, Jackson argues, why would the heretics not be left alone and free from tyranny when they express their

80 Ibid., 155.
malcontentment with religion?

The point is made by Jackson that the more intelligent man becomes, the more likely the risk that he will discard the idea of the devil. He will realize he is the master of the evil that affects him. There will be little need to identify a devil. After this exclusion of the devil, man is left with his God. God becomes responsible for the good. But, if evil occurs and God is good, why did he not prevent evil? God then is to blame for good and evil. Eventually God comes into question. Jackson points to several well known or educated persons that held this view, Mark Twain and the philanthropist Andrew Carnegie are a few mentioned. Conclusively, Jackson asserts that man should be more interested in principles than in principals of religion. Sacerdotalists have no place in the understanding of God. Of greater importance is the admission that we are no closer than any other man or nation in our personal or philosophical understanding of God. Hence atheism resides in us all. One comes to term with his being when he understands that he does not understand. According to Jackson, many proponents of Christianity through ignorance, arrogance, and faith are reluctant to relinquish this doctrine. Fittingly, we leave this topic with an observation by Massey, who opines: "It is a sad farce for you to pray for God to work a miracle...when you are doing all you can to

81 Ibid., 157.
prevent it."

\footnote{Gerald Massey Lectures, introduction by Sibyl Ferguson, (New York: Samuel Weiser, 1974), vi.}
CHAPTER 3

The African Legacy in Europe

After examining the information of the achievement on the African continent, Jackson points out that Africa contributed much to Europe when Europe contributed little to the world. After the rule of Rome, Europe entered into its dark ages. Religious crusades, wars and invasions swept through parts of Europe. One bright light of this era was the invasion of Africans from West Africa. These Africans were called Moors. Though debate exists relative to the "race" of these invaders, Jackson is satisfied that they are African. He tells us that the word "Moor" literally means "black", concluding that the Moorish people were African people. Elsewhere, he informs us that "the recivilization of Europe was brought about mainly by Moors, also a people of African origin." The words "blackamoor", "almoravides", "almohades" and "moor" are used interchangeably in many historical accounts. A standard dictionary tells us that "blackamoor" translated to a dark complexioned person.

Another text gives greater detail as to the origin of one

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83 Jackson, Introduction to African Civ., 188.
84 Jackson, Man, God, and Civilization, 303.
of these designations; the example is as follows. A preacher, Abdullah ibn Yasin, sought refuge and constructed a monastery. The word "rabit" is an Arabic word for a monetary unit. Ibn Yasin gained popularity and maintained over one thousand followers. His followers became known as al-Murabitun (people of the rabit). The Spanish usage translates to Almoravids. Most texts believe these invaders to be a mixture of Africans, Arabs and Berbers. Since the question of civilization surfaces again, the "race" of these persons is awarded relevance. Some writers identify no difference between Muslims, Arabs and Moors. Many refer to them simply as Mohammedans. One of the few issues agreed on perhaps is that these invaders contributed much to European culture or the lack thereof.

The account of the legacy according to Jackson, is as follows.

The Romans established a group of five provinces in North Africa called Africa Romana. Long after the rise and flourishing of Egypt, Rome became the new center of civilization. This civilization did not endure. Slavery, corruption of government and invasions led to the swift decline of Rome. One invasion of particular significance, according to Jackson, is attributed to a people called the Vandals. A Roman official invited the Vandals to "settle" in

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North Africa (Africa Romana). Jackson cites J.C. De Graft-Johnson's assessment of the invitation. De Graft-Johnson tells us that a Roman official, fearing conquest by Empress Placidia sought the protection of the Vandals. The Vandals invaded Africa and set up a system which may be likened to apartheid in South Africa. They removed the inhabitants from valuable land and developed a military rule similar to their forms of government in Europe. Their leader, King Genseric, seized the wealthiest African nobles and made them slaves to his sons. The Africans were inflicted with exorbitant taxes and were treated harshly by these intruders. This group of Europeans destroyed all in their path when they invaded Africa. Emperor Justinian "reconquered" Africa Romana but the Africans did not fare any better.

Approximately forty years later, the Prophet Mohammed was born. Jackson chronicles the great Moorish civilization and the experiences of the prophet simultaneously. According to Islamic belief, the angel Gabriel brought Mohammed the Koran and he began to spread the word of Allah in Mecca. His message was not well received and he was forced to flee to Medina and the Arabian peninsula. However, many persons practicing traditional African religions would be converted to Islam. Consequently, Islam flourished and spread throughout

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87 Jackson, *Intro.*, 165.
Africa, sometimes by force. In 633 A.D. the Prophet Mohammed died. Mohammed's death created dissension among the adherents of Islam. Some believed the successor should be his son, others believed elections should be held. From this dissension, several groups developed. Nonetheless, all these groups continued to wage war against "infidels" in the name of Islam. An example is the Arab invasion of Egypt in 640 C.E. The Arabs' treatment of the Africans was just as harsh as that inflicted by Romans and Vandals. The Africans resisted, but the might of the invaders was far too great. The last of the resistance came with Dahia al Kahina. She resisted until her death in 705.

Musa ibn Nusair an Arab general invaded Spain with the help of Count Julian. "So an army of twelve thousand Africans was recruited and placed under the leadership of the Moorish general, Tarik." Jackson implicitly makes the point that it is understand that these soldiers and their general were Africans. The Moors settled on Spain after falling short of France. The failed attempt at France worked to Spain's benefit. Under Moorish rule in that country, aqueducts, street lamps, street pavements and monumental architecture were erected. The manufacture of brass, iron, copper and gold instruments were common. Sashes, carpets, fine glass,

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89Jackson, Intro., 174.
pottery, and jewelry made Spain famous in all of Europe. Cordova according to Jackson, had the splendor of any metropolitan city "hundreds of years before there were paved streets in Paris or a street lamp in London." He continues to relate, "there were 900 public baths, a large number of private ones, at the time when the rest of Europe considered bathing as extremely wicked and to be avoided as much as possible." In the area of education we are told that the majority of African Spain was literate. At the same time ninety percent of the rest of Europe including royalty, were unable to read. Great libraries were built which held information on every aspect of the human experience. Knowledge of mathematics, navigation, astronomy and literary works from other parts of the world were held in these libraries.

According to Jackson, circumnavigation was taught by the Moors long before Magellan was born. Magellan is credited as having recognized the world was flat. Jackson provides support for this observation by citing Lady Lugard in her text entitled, A Tropical Dependency. Lugard accepts the observations of a Moorish scientist named El Idrisu, which is worthy of repetition. El Idrisu states:

the opinion of philosophers, learned men, and those skilled in observation of the heavenly bodies, is that the world is round as a sphere, of which the waters are

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90Ibid., 175.

91Ibid., 177-79.
adherent and maintained upon its surface.\textsuperscript{92} Moorish Spain, we are told, promoted personal and social morality. Dress and conduct were consistent with the level of advancements in that civilization.

While Moorish civilization was thriving, these Moorish invaders were penetrating deeper into Europe. Yusef I of Morocco crossed into Europe. Joined by the kings of Almeria, Badajoz, Granada and Seville, they marched into battle against King Alphonso VI and his Christian army. The Moors were victorious. Morocco would later be seized by other African Muslims (Almohades) in 1147 after it was taken from Yusef I. These other African Muslims returned it to its glory, according to Jackson. Prior to the Moorish invasions, the Christians contributed to their own downfall by dissension at all levels in their political relations. The Moors followed that bad example and suffered a similar fate.

While Christian Europe was on the move, the Mongols in 1258 invaded Baghdad, a Muslim stronghold. Christian Europe became more unified with the marriage of Ferdinand and Isabella. This marriage joined in peace the formerly hostile royal houses of Aragon and Castile.

The nautical technology that the Moors brought to Spain was adopted by Christian Europe and exploration was initiated. Amerigo Vespucci, Hernando Cortez and a number of others went in search of a new world. The trade routes between Africa and

\textsuperscript{92}Jackson, \textit{Intro.}, 182.
Europe established by the Moors, aided Portugal in her quest for economic opportunities. The Emperor Sunni Ali died after having created powerful West Africa states. His death also contributed to the weakening of these African empires. His successor Muhammad Toure could not repel the invading Arabs and Europeans penetrating from the north. Jackson tells us that through migration and expulsion, over a million Africans returned from Spain to northern and western Africa.93 This expulsion was a setback not only for Africa, but for the world, according to Jackson:

the richest and most fertile valleys languished and were deserted, most of the popular cities which had filled every district of Andalusia fell into ruinous decay, and beggars, friars and bandits took the place of scholars, merchants and knights.94

Much emphasis is placed on the contributions of the Moors in Spain. Jackson gathers much of his information from The Story of the Moors in Spain by Stanley Lane-Poole. Jackson asserts that the story of the Moors serves notice to historians who propagate African falsehoods and European flattery. Though the Moors invaded Europe, Jackson proposes that the invasion elevated Europe from its dark ages. This very gift of civilization would be used by some European to colonize Africa and in many instances lead to much of its destruction.

93Ibid., 188.
94Ibid., 192.
Destruction of African Civilization

Oswald Splengler, in his book titled *The Decline of the West*, informs us that nations are analogous to individuals. Nations are born and evolve through steps of infancy, youth, maturity, senility and eventually die or decay. Egyptian civilization declined, Asian civilization declined, Greek and Roman civilization declined. We make such a note to suggest that all civilizations are vulnerable to decline. The concern however is whether African civilization declined through a natural progression of the steps listed above or through outside interference. A safe response would be to suggest that both were responsible for the fate of African civilization.

In what John Henrik Clarke calls the second coming of Europe, we see the Portuguese, Dutch, Spanish, French, Italian and British unleash their explorers not only in Africa but throughout the world. In Jamaica, the Spanish and the British unleashed their explorers. Pedro Alvarez Cabral claimed Brazil for Portugal. In Surinam at least five European countries warred over ownership of the indigenous people and their land. Colonization in Australia, South America, Central America and many other regions took place between the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries. After centuries of religion and political wars between and among European states, the tradition of conflict spread to non-European nations. While the Europeans quarrelled over who will have ownership of
these colonies the inhabitants were culturally and politically oppressed. Their social and economic development was arrested by these invaders. In most cases the pattern of interference was quite similar. The explorers arrived, next the missionaries, and finally, the soldiers to protect their European citizens from the original inhabitants, now defined as savages.

Jackson begins his discourse on the matter by focusing on the destruction of institutions. The libraries, churches and schools of the colonized are usually first to be targeted, usually by missionaries. Ironically it is the learned religious and pious, who arrived first to "civilize the savages". Jackson focuses on the travesty of the Christian church and its impact on parts of Africa after the time of Julius Caesar. Jackson states: "The leaders of the primitive Christian church were, for the most part, ignorant and bigoted religious fanatics who embarked on a course of promoting faith and destroying knowledge."95 They, according to Jackson, were responsible for the demolition of the remains of the Library of Alexandria. The Romans had previously destroyed much of the library. One story among many relating to the tragedies produced by the Christian church is offered by John William Draper. Draper tells of a learned woman Hypatia, who conducted an academy in Alexandria. She was murdered because she taught geometry and the philosophies of Plato and

95Jackson, Intro., 298.
Aristotle. The Christian church did not agree with her teachings. A mob headed by Bishop Cyril, stripped her naked. Next she was dragged into a church and murdered with a club. Her corpse was cut to pieces and thrown into a fire. Consequently, teaching philosophy was prohibited. This point is valuable to persons who opine that philosophy could not have originated in Greece for it was prohibited by the Greek themselves. Many of the professors of the high sciences were rewarded with death or were exiled.

Much of the similar hostile and oppressive behavior towards the Africans is chronicled up to and including the fifteenth century. Jackson presents his case again by examining the Portuguese. The Portuguese, finally free from their encounter with the Moors, launched an assault on West Africa. Christianity accompanied the invasion. The church sanctioned much of the tragedies that followed. It was religion that helped Europe advance out of her dark ages, yet it is religion that aided and executed the African slave trade. According to Jackson: "Since the Christian Bible is a slavemaster's handbook, then slavery has divine sanction. Christian apologists have found this disturbing, but it is in

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It is submitted that this African slave-trade resulted from previous bondage of non-European people. The indigenous people of Peru and Mexico erroneously called Indians, were forced to work in mines. They could not endure the labor so the Europeans had to find another human resource. Bartolome de las Casas, the Bishop of Chiapa, suggested the import of twelve African slaves for every Spanish gentleman. The first were shipped from New Guinea to Haiti in 1510.99 Individuals such as John Hawkins and others working for Queen Elizabeth I, became notable and were considered quite pious for their ventures. Hawkins, with his eight ships, terrorized the Africans and the native inhabitants of the Americas. Jackson


99Jackson, Intro., 305.
reports that by 1795 one of every four ships leaving Liverpool was engaged in the slave-trade. Many European citizens invested heavily in this harvest of humans. The irony is that while slavery was in full swing the age of reason was upon Europe. This age is said to have been Europe’s renaissance of thought, ideas, creativity, intellect, ethical and moral pursuits. Yet slavery was endorsed. With their version of Christianity they believed themselves to be saving the savages without souls. To illustrate the blatant disregard for Africans by Europeans during the slave trade, Jackson cites several cases. The following are a few examples:

A captain is brought before an English court, charged with throwing one hundred and thirty two African overboard. The issue was not the death of these Africans but who should be responsible for the loss of income.\(^{100}\) Jackson shares another tragic event with us. A slaving ship with African men, women and children travelled towards America. The captain realizing that their capture took place on a Sunday turned the ship around and headed back to the African coast. He turned the captives loose only to capture them again on a weekday. Jackson, in sarcasm, states; "God approved of his slave activities, but frowned upon desecration of the Sabbath Day."\(^{101}\) Jackson continues by making note that over one-hundred million African lives were lost. Some say that these

\(^{100}\)Ibid., 308.

\(^{101}\)Ibid., 309.
figures are exaggerated. Argument of that point will not be taken up here; one African is one too great a number.

The relatively serene and harmonious cultural dynamics of their traditional societies, according to Jackson, made the Africans vulnerable to outsiders.

Among Africans, society has a matriarchal basis. The cultivation of peaceful pursuits is a way of life; egalitarianism between the sexes is practiced; the fundamental approach to life is hedonistic; religious beliefs are idealistic in form; and the concept of sin is conspicuous by its absence.102

Ali Mazrui, another critic of European colonization, informs us that many of these African communities had no formal government as understood in European terms. There existed little need for such formal codes. The states were divided into small communities. These communities would send an elder to represent them to discuss any community matters.103 Some members of the council of elders would consequently be endowed "chief" by outsiders. This new level of authority in some cases would create inter-communal and intra-communal disputes. Some conflicts resulted in the taking of prisoners. These prisoners were made to labor for the community. Many such African officials or "chiefs", supplied the Europeans with some of their human cargo. Whether these rulers knew of the diabolical uses of these captured Africans is open to debate. Many, in defense of the African who participated in

102Ibid., 313.

the slave trade, believed that these officials did not understand the system of slavery. There is sufficient evidence to support the conclusion that many African rulers were well aware of their diabolical roles since they traded Africans for power. This power was transmitted through the barrel of a gun, thereby creating formal military forces similar to the Europeans' army. A scholar on the subject tells us in no uncertain terms:

Many Africans become immersed in the horrors of the trade, knew what they were doing and in the pursuit of guns and riches became as brutal as the whites in dealing with their own kind.\textsuperscript{104} These guns would be used against neighbors in disputes. The more Africans captured, the more guns were obtained. More guns guaranteed more captives. The cycle continued well into the seventeenth century.

Post-slavery Africa suffered a fate just as harsh. The abolition of slavery did not destroy the capitalist structure that had its origin with the serfs, landlords and nobles in Europe. African domination by Europeans came via indirect rule. The removal of European government from Africa had less impact than the Africans might have expected, for the economic and religious institutions remained. The belief that withdrawal of the colonial powers from Africa would drive the Africans back to their presumed barbarism and savagery did readily dissipate. The theory of a dual mandate served the

\textsuperscript{104}Chancellor Williams, \textit{Destruction of Black Civilization} (Chicago: Third World Press, 1987), 268.
specific purpose. This quotation regarding Lord Lugard confirms the philosophy of dual mandates:

The governing power in his view owed a responsibility both to the indigenous races and to the world at large; the colonizers should educate their charges and at the same time develop the economic potential of the colonies for the benefit of all mankind.105

Though this mandate was proposed by the British it was adopted by other European colonial powers. The point is made that no one asked the Africans their opinion regarding their fate. The arrogance that started from feudalism moved to capitalism and is one of the larger elements of imperialism. Another writer thus gives us an alternative view of this dual mandate. He writes:

This was not an educational process for the African but an estranging one, for the further the colony developed, the further it developed along European lines and the further away from the African bystanders on the sidelines.106

An equally significant synopsis is offered to us, by Ali Mazrui. Mazrui proposes that Africans have acquired European tastes, but lack the technological means to satisfy their craving for them.107 More insulting is the economic state of Africa. Raw material provided by Africa and Africans is exported to parts of Europe and returned to Africa as finished

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goods. These finished goods are sold to the African people and the profits are realized in Europe. Thus the criticism of Jackson's optimism regarding African independence advanced by Odeyo Ayaga in 1973, at the time a professor at Temple University, reflects the sentiments of many who believe that African independence is a farce. Based on the evidence provided, we can accept Ayaga's critique. We must add however, that at the period when Jackson was writing this analysis of the state of Africa, implications of African independence had a positive outlook.

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108 Ayaga, Odeyo, Introduction to African Civilization, book review in Black World 8, (August 1973), 75. Ayaga criticized Jackson for "encouraging" the notion that the independent states are truly "independent" with genuine committed leadership.
CHAPTER 4

Concluding Reflections

An African American scholar, once asked: "What in truth is going to be the future of black folk? Are they going to die out gradually, with only traces of their blood to remind the world of their former existence?"\textsuperscript{109} W.E.B. DuBois, a university trained scholar, urged Africans in American to learn of their glorious past. He also insisted that African American need not simply see the world through the eyes of others but understand that much that the world has to offer is due to the accomplishment of past African civilizations. Jackson, a self trained scholar, urged the same. Alain Locke, in a book titled \textit{The New Negro}, insisted that African American art and literature were not and have never been inferior to Europe's. Jackson opined as much and insisted on emphasizing the same sentiment. A new intellectual movement brought us the Harlem Renaissance. Forty years later another movement identified as the Black Power Movement came into being. Approximately thirty years later there is another movement defined as Afrocentrism. Jackson lived and contributed scholarship throughout all these movements. Though the birth

\footnote{DuBois, \textit{The World and Africa}, 221.}
of Afrocentricity has been designated to the late twentieth century, the proper interpretation of history provides us with a convincing argument to delay such a swift conclusion. Identifying this movement one hundred years ago would be more accurate. According to the definition provided by Asante; "if you are an African American, placing yourself at the center of your own analysis so that you are grounded in a historical and cultural context is to be Afrocentric."\textsuperscript{110}

Without doubt, Jackson puts Africa at the center of dialogue. His writings gives support to the purpose of Afrocentricity. He challenges Eurocentricity and its impact on world affairs. Jackson through his writings and lectures has created vehicles through which African Americans and others are provided with alternative interpretations on subject matters that affect them and to which they are subjects. Assertions and observations made by Jackson more than fifty years ago are at the apex of much debate in the areas of religion, anthropology, archaeology and world history.

Jackson's contributions are limited only by the reality that much of his presentations are based on the primary research of others. The implication is that his presentations are only as valid as his sources. The range of sources made it difficult for opponents to contest merely on the basis that

he was an autodidact. The sources range from first hand accounts to experts in the various areas of study. Though he is an autodidact, the majority of the sources that aided his iconoclastic analysis were university trained scholars and even, most frequently, European and European America scholars. It is submitted that in order to dispel falsehoods and misrepresentations, Africans must conduct their own research. This is a difficult task no doubt, since much that is discovered becomes private property or the property of academic agencies that can afford the research. Be that as it may, Jackson accomplishes the difficult task of extracting the essence of accurate African history from the biased efforts of some European scholars.

Throughout the course of his life, Jackson stressed that Africans should diminish their dependence on religion. In his later years socialist tendencies became more visible. He repeatedly declared that workers should organize a labor party and submit their own candidates and set a platform focused on labor. Jackson observed that the rich knew that religion pacified the masses and used it to their advantage. It is more than a coincidence, according to Jackson, that churches are spared taxation by the government. This tactic, he observed, enables the church to thrive, thereby managing, and more important, tranquilizes the poor masses. A text titled The Rich and The Super-Rich, written by Ferdinand Lundberg, supports Jackson’s analysis. Somehow his atheist reasoning
always found their way into his discourse.

Recently Chancellor Williams passed away. He was soon after followed by John G. Jackson. Many African elder historians, who are living, are late in age. John H. Clarke is approaching eighty years of age. Yosef Ben-Jochannan is seventy five years of age. John Hope Franklin is eighty years of age. The reality that these elders will not always be in our midst has prompted a sense of urgency in some intellectual circles. The contributions of these giants are so numerous and valuable that the younger generations will not be able to fill the void when they are taken from among us.111 Added to this crisis is the activity of some self appointed young intellectuals who are accused of pursuing hidden agendas and show no loyalty to Africans and African scholarship.112

As scholars debate about history, its accuracy and purpose, it becomes obvious that Jackson’s contributions were virtually ignored. His works are seldom introduced in these very important debates. The reasons are several. The dissenting nature of his presentation, his atheist reasoning, and his forthrightness may have contributed to his neglect. In his own words:

It certainly looks as though civilization has no future. I hope I am wrong; but I tell things as I see them. In


lectures at various colleges and universities all over the country I have expressed similar unpleasant opinions. Many listeners have told me that I should be more diplomatic, for the truth, bluntly expressed, turns off many people. But I must tell the truth as I see it.\textsuperscript{113} Jackson used the word "cantankerous" to describe himself. Many of his personal friends, among them, his protege John H. Clarke were in agreement. A lifelong friend, Larry Crowe, reflecting on the life of Jackson stated:

In his last days, John G. Jackson—never satisfied—was as cantankerous as ever, but he was given the deference he had earned. To those committed to the rescue and restoration of Kemetic wisdom, his life's work provides valuable clues and insight with which to continue the African World History Project. John Glover Jackson will live as long as his works are read and studied.\textsuperscript{114}

The fundamental questions raised by this independent scholar cross all nationalities and boundaries. Though his focus was primarily African people, questions relative to human existence and destiny, are not exclusive to one group of people. History itself will reveal the significance of one of our less regarded, yet more important African World scholar, John Glover Jackson, who insisted that if we are human, we began by being African.

\textsuperscript{113}John G. Jackson,\textit{ Ages of Gold and Silver} (Texas: American Atheist Press, 1990), 331.


