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JON ABBINK, African Studies Centre, Leiden and Vrije Universiteit,  
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by Alessandro Bausi

in cooperation with

Bairu Tafla, Ulrich Braukämper, Ludwig Gerhardt,  
Hilke Meyer-Bahlburg and Siegbert Uhlig

## Bibliographical abbreviations used in this volume

- AE* *Annales d'Éthiopie*, Paris 1955ff.
- ÄthFor* Äthiopistische Forschungen, 1–35, ed. by E. HAMMERSCHMIDT, 36–40, ed. by S. UHLIG (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner (1–34), 1977–1992; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz (35–40), 1994–1995).
- AethFor* Aethiopistische Forschungen, 41–73, ed. by S. UHLIG (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1998–2011); 74–75, ed. by A. BAUSI and S. UHLIG (*ibid.*, 2011f.); 76ff. ed. by A. BAUSI (*ibid.*, 2012ff.).
- AION* *Annali dell'Università degli studi di Napoli 'L'Orientale'*, Napoli: Università di Napoli 'L'Orientale' (former Istituto Universitario Orientale di Napoli), 1929ff.
- BSOAS* *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* (London, 1917ff.).
- CSCO* Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium, 1903ff.
- EAE* S. UHLIG, ed., *Encyclopaedia Aethiopica*, I: A–C; II: D–Ha; III: He–N; in cooperation with A. BAUSI, eds, IV: O–X (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2010); A. BAUSI in cooperation with S. UHLIG, eds, V: Y–Z, *Supplementa, Addenda et Corrigenda, Maps, Index* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2003, 2005, 2007, 2010, 2014).
- EMML* Ethiopian Manuscript Microfilm Library, Addis Ababa.
- JAH* *The Journal of African History*, Cambridge 1960ff.
- JES* *Journal of Ethiopian Studies*, Addis Ababa 1963ff.
- OrChr* *Oriens Christianus*, Leipzig–Roma–Wiesbaden 1901ff.
- PdP* *La Parola del Passato. Rivista di studi classici*, Napoli 1946ff.
- PICES 8* TADDESE BEYENE, ed., *Proceedings of the Eighth International Conference of Ethiopian Studies, University of Addis Ababa (26–30 November) 1984*, I–II (Addis Ababa: Institute of Ethiopian Studies–Frankfurt am Main: Frobenius Institut, Johann Wolfgang Goethe Universität, 1988–1989).
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- PO* *Patrologia Orientalis*, 1903ff.
- RIÉ* É. BERNAND, A.J. DREWES, and R. SCHNEIDER, *Recueil des inscriptions de l'Éthiopie des périodes pré-axoumite et axoumite*, I: *Les documents*, II: *Les planches* (Paris: (Académie des inscriptions et belle-lettres) Diffusion de Boccard, 1991).
- RRALm* *Rendiconti della Reale Accademia dei Lincei, Classe di scienze morali, storiche e filologiche*, Roma, 1892ff.
- RSE* *Rassegna di Studi Etiopici*, Roma, 1941–1981, Roma–Napoli, 1983ff.
- SAe* *Scriptores Aethiopici*.

- ‘Prolusione’, in Paolo Nicelli, ed., *L’Africa, l’Oriente mediterraneo e l’Europa. Tradizioni e culture a confronto*, Africana Ambrosiana, 1 (Roma–Milano: Bulzoni–Accademia Ambrosiana, 2015), 90–96 (introductory speech to the section on Ethiopian studies).

### In memoriam Donald Nathan Levine (1931–2015)

JON ABBINK, African Studies Centre, Leiden and  
Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam

#### Life

A towering figure in sociology and in Ethiopian Studies passed away in 2015. On 4 April, the American sociologist Donald N. Levine succumbed to a long illness. He was 83. Busy until the day of his death, he was working on a book on the role of dialogue in social theory. Levine was one of the most prominent scholars in the field of Ethiopian studies since its inception in the late 1950s, and his stature is matched by few. He was a man of many trades, a ground-breaking sociologist, a good fieldworker, a leading dynamic intellectual, and a deeply committed, humane person. He had a matchless career in teaching and university administration, next to his great academic work in sociological theory and Ethiopian Studies. Few readers of these pages will know the full extent and impact of his sociological work, and indeed it sometimes seemed that the man had several parallel careers that did not ‘interact’ (and how he found the sheer time for it, no one knows). However, they did. Don was a ‘global scholar’ before the word was invented. He used his Ethiopian field material to rethink broad sociological questions and his deep sociological and historical insights to offer ever-original and penetrating analyses of Ethiopian society. Also, he implicitly—and sometimes more explicitly—offered measured and constructive critical advice on broad matters related to policy choices regarding Ethiopia to be made by authorities, international organizations, etc. This advice was usually sensible, rational and inspiring. Levine understood the country as no other and remained committed to it throughout his career. In several respects, Donald Levine was a founding father and an ever inspirational figure. His importance in Ethiopian studies and sociology will be felt for a long time. On the news of his death, there was an unusual feeling of distress among Ethiopianists, fuelled by thoughts like ‘how can Ethiopian Studies ever be the same again’ with Don Levine no longer around. This In Memoriam offers a brief review of his achievements and his importance in the central fields of his endeavours.

## Career

A fixed point in Levine's career was the University of Chicago (UoC), where he studied to receive his degrees in Sociology (BA in 1950, MA in 1954, PhD in 1957), worked for over four decades, and developed innovative and inspiring curricula and courses, notably for under-graduates, whom he taught for many years. He joined the teaching staff of the University in 1962. Before that date he had been teaching at the University College of Addis Ababa (1959–60) where, after the attempted *coup d'état*, he published an article criticizing Emperor Haile Selassie that almost cost him his job. He returned several times to Ethiopia in later years (1976, 1992, 2004, 2005, and 2006) for research, interviews, and lecturing. In total he spent almost five years in the country, although in the *Därg* period and the post-1991 era his time there was limited.

In Chicago, Levine's educational work and the service he gave to the UoC were quite staggering. Notable was his continued teaching of classical sociological theory to *first-year students* in the Department of Sociology for almost five decades. He gave more than three dozen different courses over the years, ranging from 'Culture and Freedom' to 'Philosophical Anthropology'. From 1985 until his death, he held the 'Peter B. Ritzma' Chair of Sociology at UoC, since 2004 as emeritus. Between 1982 and 1987 he was also 'Dean of the College' at the University, and according to colleagues, he served with great distinction. Levine initiated several new programs, e.g. the African Civilization and the Public Policy concentration program, as well as a 'concentration program' in Environmental Studies. As Dean he was involved in the reexamination of the College curriculum, which led to various reforms and new opportunities for students, foreign language learning, and an expansion of the 'Common Core' from one to two years.<sup>1</sup> He also contributed to extra-curricular activities and facilities at UoC, of great benefit to students. In a *UChicago News* obituary, Susan Allen<sup>2</sup> noted Levine's belief in 'education without boundaries', and that '... education should both benefit body and mind'.

Besides great appreciation at UoC, Levine received public recognition in Ethiopia in November 2004, when Addis Ababa University (AAU) accorded him an honorary doctorate.

<sup>1</sup> See the Wikipedia entry: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Donald\\_N.\\_Levine](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Donald_N._Levine); last access: June 10, 2015.

<sup>2</sup> S. Allen, 'Donald Levine, sociologist and former dean of the College, 1931–2015' (April 9, 2015), at: <http://news.uchicago.edu/article/2015/04/09/donald-levine-sociologist-and-former-dean-college-1931-2015>; last access: April 15, 2015.

## Work

Don Levine's scholarly work spans half a century: as a theorist, field researcher, university teacher at AAU; and professor, educator and dean at the University of Chicago. Levine's research projects included, apart from Ethiopian Studies: general social theory, modernization theory, transnational processes, the forms, functions and dynamics of dialogue, the sociology of morality, and conflict theory and aikido.

He was also active throughout the years in providing expert assistance to various government bodies, in community service on behalf of Ethiopians at home and abroad, and as a public commentator and advisor. He was on the editorial boards of a number of major academic journals such as *American Journal of Sociology*, *Journal of Classical Sociology*, *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences*, and *Theory, Culture and Society*.

In the field of Ethiopian Studies, next to his many articles, he published three books: the highly influential *Wax and Gold: Tradition and Innovation in Ethiopian Culture* (1965) which has become an important reference book; the provocative synthesis *Greater Ethiopia: The Evolution of a Multiethnic Society* (1974, 2000<sup>2</sup>; and published in Amharic in 2001); and *Interpreting Ethiopia: Observations of Five Decades* (2014), a collection of 37 of his seminal papers and chapters on the country published since 1959.

Although his work cannot be evaluated in detail here, Levine's contributions have been very influential and have inspired a large number of studies and debates in several fields of Ethiopian Studies. His 1965 *Wax and Gold* book shaped debates on cultural values, national character, modernization and tradition, political culture in Ethiopia, and pleaded for change. On p. 216 of this book he basically predicted the Ethiopian revolution. The book was also the subject of discussion at a lively panel session at the African Studies Association in Philadelphia, USA, under the title 'Revisiting *Wax And Gold*' (1 December 2012). His work *Greater Ethiopia* gave a new impetus to debates on the essentially multicultural nature of the Ethiopian state, as a result of interacting politico-cultural traditions, as well as ethnological field research into lesser known peoples/ethnic groups. Evident in his last collection, *Interpreting Ethiopia*, is Levine's broad scope and sincere interest in socio-political issues and the challenges of national dialogue and integration. It contains many seminal essays and discerning commentaries on Ethiopian society.

In 1978, Levine was instrumental in organizing the *Fifth International Conference of Ethiopian Studies* at the University of Chicago. He also supervised a number of Ethiopian students.

As Andrew DeCort said in his insightful overview of Levine's work in the collection *Interpreting Ethiopia: Observations from Five Decades* (Foreword, p. xv) Levine's ethical concerns in his work were strong: '... indeed, the fundamental question of the sources and implications of ethical order and moral anarchy in Ethiopia is a pressing inheritance in Levine's lifework' (p. xvi).

Don Levine loved Ethiopia beyond his scholarly engagement—as evident, among other things, from his Ethiopian nickname, 'Gash Liben'. He remained committed to the country despite its perpetual and often deeply irritating problems that its government(s) caused for the common people, for the universities and for independent academic life. Levine was not only an academic on Ethiopia but was also socially engaged and committed to the country's progress. He was in frequent dialogue with political leaders, knowing many of them personally, and gave advice and written commentaries, usually frank, appropriate and to the point. He was also a co-founder of the 'Aikido Ethiopia Project'<sup>3</sup> and of a Youth Centre in the city of Awassa, which he regularly visited and continued supporting. In addition, he was active in the community life of Ethiopian Americans in the US, honoured, among others, with the 2000 Special Community Service Award of the Ethiopian Community Association of Chicago.

In sociology, Levine started in social theory, with a 1957 dissertation entitled *Simmel and Parsons: Two Approaches to the Study of Society* (reissued in 1980 by Arno Press in New York). He developed into one of the world's foremost experts on the highly original German sociologist Georg B. Simmel (1858–1918), after he had become familiar with his work during an exchange year at the Goethe University of Frankfurt in 1952–1953. In fact, his first published paper (in 1959) was on Simmel. Levine translated and edited an influential collection of his chapters and papers: *Georg Simmel on Individuality and Social Forms* (1971), and continued to write articles on Simmel throughout his career. In 2011, he was one of the editors of Simmel's last work, *Lebensanschauung*, and also co-translated it as *The View of Life: Four Metaphysical Essays* (published by the University of Chicago Press).

In 1985 Levine published another surprising work, his subtle and very readable *The Flight from Ambiguity: Essays in Social and Cultural Theory* (1985), where his take on ambiguity in culture was partly inspired by his work in Mänz, Ethiopia (see chapters 2 and 3). This was followed in 1995 by *Visions of the Sociological Tradition*, a brilliant book and his best, trying

<sup>3</sup> He also wrote and lectured about aikido; see a collection of his articles: *Aiki Waza Michi Shirube* (= *Aikido Practice is a Signpost to the Way*), 2011, second ed. 2013 (available online: [www.donlevine.com/uploads/1/1/3/8/11384462/aiki-waza.pdf](http://www.donlevine.com/uploads/1/1/3/8/11384462/aiki-waza.pdf); last access: December 1, 2015).

to have the various sociological traditions speak to each other. In 2006 he published *Powers of the Mind: The Reinvention of Liberal Learning in America* (2006), a rich and very engaging study on the values of academic education and *Bildung*, based on his experiences at the University of Chicago. His last book in general and theoretical sociology—although it contained some chapters on Ethiopian society as well—was *Social Theory as a Vocation – Genres of Theory Work in Sociology* (2014), with a clear reference to Max Weber in the title. Based largely on earlier published studies, it is an exceptional work of synthesis and broad scope, revisiting core themes in sociology as well as a number of key authors in the discipline (not only Simmel, but also Comte, Weber, Durkheim and the Americans R. Park, R. Merton and T. Parsons).

In some ways it seemed that Levine pursued two different lines of academic work or career. While there are interactions, his work on Ethiopia stood somewhat apart from his broader sociological work. For instance, Georg Simmel's sociology seems to have only tangential relevance to the understanding of Ethiopia, because it was a typical general sociology project that emerged in and spoke to pre-World War I Europe as a society in transition, rather than to multi-ethnic, non-Western societies.

And, perhaps surprisingly, there was a third field in which Don Levine was active: *aikido*, a Japanese martial art. He took up the practice of aikido in 1979 as a beginner, but went on to become an instructor at the University of Chicago Aikido Club in the late 1980s. In 2003 he was promoted to the rank of *yondan*: the fourth degree black belt. He also connected aikido to academic activity and in 1986 began teaching a credit course on 'Conflict theory and aikido', convinced of its aggression-neutralizing techniques and its potential to help people understand and manage social conflict by combining texts from a number of disciplines with regular training. In this field he edited the *Aiki Thought* papers and a collection of essays (see note 3).

Levine received several awards: the Quantrell Award for Excellence in Teaching in 1971 and the Amoco Award for Excellence in Teaching in 1996. He was also elected Chair of the Theory Section of the American Sociological Association in 1997, and for two decades served as editor of the *Heritage of Sociology* series, published by University of Chicago Press.

### Impact and legacy

On Ethiopian society, Levine constantly examined the problems and preconditions of social cohesion and cultural meaning, revealing a concern with harmony and the need to integrate the disparate views and traditions of the peoples of Ethiopia into a wider whole. This was based on a broad and solid understanding of the empirical dimensions of social and ethnic group differ-

ences, and what would now be called ‘multiculturalism’. In his first book *Wax and Gold* he tackled the issue of the encounter of ‘tradition’ and ‘modernity’ in terms that have remained with us, despite the fact that the too ‘psychological’ slant in the book’s analysis of Amharic-speaking highland culture has been criticized. It is nevertheless still influential, even ‘classic’.

His book *Greater Ethiopia* is the best expression of the search for underlying cohesion between the cultural entities that make up Ethiopia. Some critics said that he was too normative here and under-estimated the persistent role of power (abuse) and force in Ethiopian history, even in peace time. Also the very term ‘Greater Ethiopia’ (incorrectly translated into Amharic as *Təlləqwa Ityopya*) was doubtful, because it somehow assumed what was to be demonstrated, and it was often criticized as denying the basic contingency of the presence of the many peoples within the political borders of the modern, post-Mənilək state. For example, the Añwaa or the Ñaṇatom have little if anything in common with Amhara or Təgray, nor the Gumuz or Dizi with the Ogaden-Somali or °Afar, let alone that they knew much of each other’s existence before the Ethiopian ethno-federation came into existence after 1991. Also, Oromo intellectuals criticized the depiction of aspects of Oromo history in this work.

In sociology, his work was highly original in the theoretical and empirical sense. Coupled with his long record of exemplary teaching and educational inspiration, his career in sociology can be said to have been exceptionally fruitful.

In 2004 Levine was honoured by former students and colleagues with a ‘Festschrift’ edited by Charles Camic and Hans Joas: *The Dialogical Turn: Essays in Honor of Donald N. Levine*. Here a dominant concern with *dialogue* as an academic interest and a human social value became evident. To reiterate, his 1995 book *Visions of the Sociological Tradition* is marked by this effort to inter-relate the various strands in sociology in order to enhance dialogue between these intellectual perspectives. In his later years Levine devoted more and more theoretical and practical attention to this theme of dialogue, which he came to call his ‘lifelong script’.<sup>4</sup>

Levine’s voluminous works remain eminently readable and stimulating.<sup>5</sup> He provides a wealth of ideas, reflections and interesting details, and often framed specific problems (e.g. regarding Ethiopia) in wider, general terms

<sup>4</sup> As evident from the fascinating quotes and links on [www.donlevine.com/dialog-blog](http://www.donlevine.com/dialog-blog).

<sup>5</sup> Levine’s website was: <http://www.donlevine.com> (last access: April 10, 2015). A list of virtually all his publications can be found in his online Curriculum Vitae: <http://sociology.uchicago.edu/people/cv/levine.pdf> (last access: April 10, 2015); see also: <http://donlevine.com/aikido>.



that could speak to broader, universal issues. Immersion in his writings pays off in that it gives the reader a solid grounding in sociological theory, in Ethiopian studies, and shows many stimulating suggestions and insights. We also remain deeply in Levine's debt for his reintroduction of Georg Simmel, one of the most fascinating sociologists of the twentieth century.

Don Levine was original, unconventional and unique. I would say he was the quintessential intellectual—as a researcher, teacher and administrator: adventurous, surprising, open, and stimulating. He was a quite brilliant scholar. His indefatigable emphasis on the values of learning, on good education and originality of mind meant that he was seen as something special by both his students and his colleagues. As noted above, one of the enduring lessons he gave us—Ethiopian Studies scholars in Ethiopia and abroad, politicians, development workers, civic activists, as well as anthropologist and sociologists—is that of the value of creative dialogue: making people from various traditions (scientific, ethnic, political, religious, and other) interact and search for common ground and shared discourse—i.e. for what may bring together or unite people. He embodied this in his outstanding career. Don Levine inspired all who met him, as a scholar and as a human being. His work and the academic, educational and human values underlying it form an impressive legacy that will continue to have a major impact.

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