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Pen and Ink

SHIRIN SABRI

The work begins with ink made of the lamp's light,
from dark smoke caked on glass, that clear-edged clarity
drawn from bright flame; ink soot black, the paper, white.
There are other tints—perhaps saffron, the sweet familiarity
of her mother's rice; henna breathed from scented hair;
the tender walnut's bitter skin (sorrow's shade); swollen galls
that blight a budding leaf—all these, ground down to prepare
ink, to write. These, or heart's blood, if there is nothing else.

The pen is readied, hollowed; clogging debris
reamed with a long flight feather. The pliant reed lies
on the block, ready to be cut, smoothed, pared free
of its old self, flexed strength revealed. The nib cries,
trills across the sheet, tells of what is lost and sought,
scribes upon the page a soaring line, a point, a dot.

From the Editor's Desk

JOHN S. HATCHER

STILL THE MOST CHALLENGING ISSUE

When, in 1938, Shoghi Effendi emphatically underscored the necessity of resolving the problem of racism, he made it clear that he was not referring solely to American society, but even more explicitly to the American Bahá'í community: "As to racial prejudice, the corrosion of which, for well-nigh a century, has bitten into the fiber, and attacked the whole social structure of American society, it should be regarded as constituting the most vital and challenging issue confronting the Bahá'í community at the present stage of its evolution" (*Advent* 33–34).

Of course, a decade or so ago we might have thought that notable progress in race relations had been made, both among American Bahá'ís and in the wider society, and that this caution should no longer be of principal concern. But in recent years with the re-emergence of nationalism and racism—emboldened worldwide by concerns about massive migrations from countries in the grip of prolonged war and chronic poverty—whatever progress we might have thought we had accomplished seems to have come undone. Or maybe much of that progress was merely a chimera. Perhaps these

pernicious attitudes were simply lying low, temporarily cowed by public disapproval but just waiting for the right moment and some shift in political discourse to re-emerge, to give voice to their animus, and to demonstrate their bigotry through impassioned words and violent actions.

It is reasonable to assume that what might seem to be the reawakening of racism is really the increased awareness of what was already extant but merely awaiting a forum—such as social media—to become reorganized, and a resurgent nationalism resulting from massive immigration to create a wider audience for its message. In other words, we can presume racism was never really abolished but merely lying low and waiting for a shift in public sentiment. Consequently, it is clearer than ever that the solution to racism is not to ignore it—as if, starved of attention, it will go away when we simply don't talk about it and, instead, go about our lives as Bahá'ís and good citizens. Indeed, it becomes clear upon further consideration of Shoghi Effendi's discussion of this theme that all races must give vital attention to this "issue of paramount importance" until substantive change occurs. He notes that "the sacrifices it must impose, the care and vigilance it demands, the moral courage and fortitude it requires, the tact and sympathy it necessitates, invest this problem, which the American believers are still far from having satisfactorily resolved, with an urgency and importance that cannot be overestimated" (*Advent* 34).

To appreciate fully his emphasis on this issue, we need to realize that all other progress toward creating unified communities throughout the world is necessarily predicated on the recognition that—even as contemporary science confirms—race is a distinction of perception—a social construct not based on any essential difference. It is, as it were, a virulent social fiction capable of undermining and dismantling the very fabric and foundation of society. Every social and political experiment to the contrary—whether as gross as slavery, as unjust as apartheid, or as subtle but underhanded as prejudicial appropriations for healthcare, education, and other social programs—eventually crumbles under the weight of its own injustice. And why? Because spiritual verities are not merely personal and private axioms—they describe the laws of reality, which, when violated, reap material and social consequences.

From a more encompassing perspective, we can appreciate that Bahá'ís sincerely believe that this era in human history—the Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh—will usher in the maturation and subsequent unification of humankind so long prophesied by previous divine revelations. Consequently, Bahá'ís are the vanguard tasked with manifesting that maturity by rehearsing the practices for establishing a global framework at the personal and community levels. Or, in terms of the anthropological theory of the human race as having emerged out of Africa

to spread about the world—thereby acquiring various colors and features to adapt to Earth's different climes—our present mandate from Bahá'u'lláh signifies that our coming together for a family reunion portends our simultaneous re-emergence as a single race once again.

And it is rather logical that this idea of the racial harmony of humankind is not merely some poetic trope symbolizing the unity derived from mutual kindness and acceptance we hope to attain as a global civilization. It seems clear, rather, that as we commingle, intermarry, and, in time, scatter about the globe freely without the present nationalistic, territorial, and tribal constraints, we will over time quite literally obliterate the more obvious external distinctions that presently cause us to assign to those who are distinct from ourselves the various epithets and euphemisms symbolizing “the other.” And quite possibly this blending is a beginning expression of the apparent literalism with which ‘Abdu'l-Bahá prophesies that during the efflorescence of this age, “all men will adhere to one religion . . . will be blended into one race, and become a single people” (qtd. in Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By* 315). This same thought is reiterated in ‘Abdu'l-Bahá's prayer that “the perilous darkness of ignorant prejudice may vanish through the light of the Sun of Truth, this dreary world may become illumined, this material realm may absorb the rays of the world of spirit, these different colors may merge into one color and the

melody of praise may rise to the kingdom of Thy sanctity" (qtd. in *Bahá'í Prayers* 114).

Of course, we would do well in our vision of this utopian prophecy to appreciate that unity implies neither sameness nor, on the social level, a dystopian leveling of society where there is no distinction of appearances, capacities, skills, or other forms of differentiation, whether individually or collectively. On the contrary, there will always remain in society—however spiritually advanced it may become, however intellectually enlightened and similar in racial characteristics—the need for an infinite variety of personalities, capacities, and interests, even if we manage to eliminate the vast stratification derived from circumstantial conditions of appearance, wealth, or class.

Even as the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States recognizes that confronting racism—both within and without the Bahá'í community—is the *sine qua non* for the strategic advancement of the Bahá'í community in America and for the progress of American society as a whole, so the *Journal of Bahá'í Studies* in this issue, and in succeeding issues, is giving due attention to discourses about race and racism, as well as paying tribute to those African-American Bahá'í scholars and leaders who were at the forefront of making a difference by daring to confront and overcome those forces that might have stifled or deterred people of lesser caliber and courage.

Perhaps one of the most powerful statements about the impact of racism is found in an image used by 'Abdu'l-Bahá that is seemingly simple and easy to comprehend, but is packed with meaning. In writing to an African-American Bahá'í, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, employing a metaphor He elsewhere attributes to Bahá'u'lláh, says the following: "O thou who art pure in heart, sanctified in spirit, peerless in character, beauteous in face! Thy photograph hath been received revealing thy physical frame in the utmost grace and the best appearance. Thou art dark in countenance and bright in character. Thou art like unto the pupil of the eye which is dark in colour, yet it is the fount of light and the revealer of the contingent world" (*Selections* 114).

As 'Abdu'l-Bahá notes elsewhere, "the blackness of the pupil of the eye is due to its absorbing the rays of the sun, for if it were another colour—say, uniformly white—it would not absorb these rays" (*Some Answered Questions* 49:5). Of course, "light" in the Bahá'í scriptures almost invariably symbolizes knowledge or, more aptly, enlightenment. In this sense, people of color can be seen as providing guidance and insight for the body of humankind. And considering the history of suffering, deprivation, and injustice that African Americans have been made to endure—and are still experiencing—we can well appreciate how such a history produces a wariness and a wisdom that are coupled with a deep comprehension of the subtle underpinnings that must become the foundation for social justice and racial harmony.

Toward that end, we begin this issue with a most enlightened and enlightening discussion by Derik Smith, “Centering the ‘Pupil of the Eye’: Blackness, Modernity and the Revelation of Bahá’u’lláh.” In addition to providing expansive examination of this same metaphor, Smith does a superb job of dealing with both the history of the problem of racism and, in particular, how it has actually become exacerbated and consolidated in the modern age. He notes, “Indeed, it can be argued that blackness is nothing more, and nothing less, than the stigma that modernity has projected onto people deemed to be its most ‘antonymic and problematic others.’” He goes on to explain, “If blackness was conjured in modernity’s effort to fragment humanity, and marginalize those bearing its mark, Bahá’u’lláh’s metaphor alters the meaning of blackness, drawing it to the center of the body of humanity.” Smith then concludes by demonstrating that “Bahá’u’lláh’s specific and explicit refutation of one of modernity’s most hateful and divisive social ideologies [racism] is an instructive prescription addressed to all humanity.”

Following Smith’s excellent discourse is an article by Christopher Buck that introduces three particular talks by one of the major figures in African-American history, Alain Locke—a Bahá’í, a Rhodes Scholar, and a major force in bringing about the Harlem Renaissance. In “Alain Locke’s ‘Moral Imperatives for World Order’ Revisited,” Buck presents the speeches

delivered at a 1944 conference by this distinguished Bahá’í philosopher and demonstrates their relationship to, and possibly their influence by, Locke’s knowledge of Bahá’í teachings.

We have included two of the first in an ongoing series of life sketches about some of those stellar African-American scholars who blazed trails that guide us still. The two individuals we have chosen for this issue are Hand of the Cause of God Louis Gregory and Knight of Bahá’u’lláh Elsie Austin. We also include two powerful sonnets, “Pen and Ink” by Shirin Sabri and “Viburnum Lantana” by Gary Hogensen.

It is also with delight we feature for the first time in our cover art a poignant and thematically relevant work by Bahá’í artist Michèle Jubilee.

Centering the “Pupil of the Eye”: Blackness, Modernity, and the Revelation of Bahá’u’lláh

DERIK SMITH

Abstract

In the late nineteenth century, Bahá’u’lláh likened people of African descent to the “pupil of the eye” through which the “light of the spirit shineth forth.” This essay argues that the “pupil of the eye” metaphor is a deeply consequential, distinguishing feature of the transformative social and spiritual system laid out in Bahá’u’lláh’s Revelation. Studying the nexus of capitalism, race, and intellectual history, the essay historicizes Bahá’u’lláh’s elevating metaphor, arguing that it amounts to a forceful refutation of anti-blackness and thus a dismantling of one of modernity’s pivotal ideologies. Ultimately, the essay demonstrates that the unique integrity and coherence of Bahá’u’lláh’s system for the creation of universal unity and justice is especially manifest through analytical contemplation of the “pupil of the eye” metaphor.

Résumé

À la fin du XIX^e siècle, Bahá’u’lláh a comparé les personnes d’ascendance africaine à « la pupille de l’œil » par laquelle « la lumière de l’esprit » brille. L’auteur de cet essai soutient que la métaphore de la pupille

de l’œil est un élément profondément conséquent et distinctif du système transformateur social et spirituel énoncé dans les écrits de la Révélation de Bahá’u’lláh. Examinant le lien entre le capitalisme, la race et l’histoire intellectuelle, l’auteur met en contexte historique la métaphore transcendante de Bahá’u’lláh et soutient qu’il s’agit d’une réfutation énergique du racisme anti-noir, et donc d’un démantèlement d’une des idéologies centrales de la modernité. En conclusion, l’auteur démontre que l’intégrité et la cohérence uniques du système de Bahá’u’lláh pour la création de l’unité et de la justice universelles ressortent à la lumière d’une analyse approfondie de la métaphore de la pupille de l’œil.

Resumen

En los años posteriores del siglo diecinueve, Bahá’u’lláh comparó a las personas de descendencia africana a la “pupila del ojo” a través de la cual la “luz del espíritu brilla”. Este ensayo argumenta que la metáfora de la pupila del ojo es una característica profundamente consecencial y distintiva del sistema social y espiritualmente transformativo presentado en la Revelación de Bahá’u’lláh. Estudiando el nexo del capitalismo, la raza y la historia intelectual, el ensayo historiza la metáfora elevadora de Bahá’u’lláh y argumenta que se debe a una refutación contundente de anti-negrura, y por lo tanto desmantela una de las ideologías fundamentales de la modernidad. En última instancia, el ensayo demuestra que la integridad y la coherencia únicas del sistema de Bahá’u’lláh para la creación de la unidad y la justicia universal están especialmente manifiestas a través de la contemplación analítica de la metáfora de la pupila del ojo.

For twenty-first century organizers and intellectuals addressing issues of racial justice, best praxis often involves centering the experiences of those most marginalized by social power relations.¹ This challenging principle demands that any project of social transformation prioritizes the predicaments and perspectives of groups with the least amounts of cultural, social, and economic capital. Prioritizing consideration of such groups is of course antithetical to the mainstream of social thought and shakes the very foundation of hegemonic world order, which is stabilized by systemic *devaluation* of the most marginalized and the least capitalized. And because rhetorical and practical attempts to implement this principle predictably meet strong resistance, those now at the forefront of secular movements for racial justice in the United States and elsewhere are often adamant in their efforts to call attention to the most marginalized people—people who are often black. At first blush this adamancy can appear parochial, even ethnocentric. (Why must *black* lives matter? Why can't *all* lives matter?) However, the logic of advocacy implemented by many of these activists is

1 Bonnie and Clayton Taylor are among those “spiritual activists” who have devoted many years of service to the Bahá'í Faith and, through that living service, have courageously addressed issues of social and racial justice. This essay is “livicated” to the Taylors, to William “Billy” Roberts, and to my radiant parents, Magda and Alan Smith.

ultimately universalist. Angela Davis explains that, in this approach to social action, “universal freedom is an ideal best represented not by those who are already at the pinnacle of racial, gender and class hierarchies but rather by those whose lives are most defined by conditions of unfreedom” (xiv). With racial specificity, Alicia Garza succinctly unpacks the tactical logic of the Black Lives Matter movement that she helped to spark: “When Black people get free, everybody gets free” (“A Herstory”).

The strategies of social transformation offered by these racial justice activists do not perfectly mirror those being implemented by Bahá'ís throughout the world. However, the rationale of these initiatives that foreground the predicament of the most marginal ought to pique the interest of followers and students of the universal project of social and spiritual transformation laid out in the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh. Indeed, the explicit centering of black life called for by some twenty-first century social theorists and activists was anticipated by Bahá'u'lláh's nineteenth-century emphasis on the special spiritual station and capacity of black people. In His global Proclamation, pivoting on the principle of the “Oneness of Mankind,” Bahá'u'lláh accorded “colored people” a particularly hallowed and seemingly cynosural position in the figurative body of humanity.²

2 The “pupil of the eye” metaphor first appeared in the letters and talks of ‘Abdu’lBahá in the early decades of the

As most observers of race matters in the Bahá'í Faith know, Bahá'u'lláh declared that black people were appropriately comparable to the “black pupil of the eye” through which the “light of the spirit shineth forth” (Shoghi Effendi, *Advent* 37).³ This selection of metaphor, often referred to by Central Figures and Institutions of the Bahá'í Faith, effectively positions blackness at the epicenter of a “bold and universal” world-transformative project that involves nothing less than the “coming twentieth century when “colored people” was a respectable term for those who might today be described as “people of African descent.” With evolving conventions of language, the term “colored people” has fallen out of use and is now evocative of racial and linguistic politics associated with the mid-twentieth century and earlier. In this essay, people of African descent are sometimes referred to as “colored” in order to evoke the era in which the “pupil of the eye” metaphor first appeared. The essay also uses the term of contemporary parlance, “black people,” in reference to the collective that Bahá'u'lláh metaphorized as the “pupil of the eye.”

3 Although 'Abdu'l-Bahá appealed to the “pupil of the eye” metaphor in a variety of contexts, its most notable articulation is found in *The Advent of Divine Justice*, wherein Shoghi Effendi writes, “Bahá'u'lláh, 'Abdu'l-Bahá moreover has said, ‘once compared the colored people to the black pupil of the eye surrounded by the white. In this black pupil is seen the reflection of that which is before it, and through it the light of the spirit shineth forth’” (37).

of age of the entire human race” (Shoghi Effendi, *World Order* 43, 163). Explications by the Universal House of Justice clarify that “Bahá'u'lláh favored the black peoples by making a specific reference to them” through this metaphor (“Letter,” Ridván 153). Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation offers few, if any, analogous designations, which isolate and “favor” a racialized subset of humanity. Thus, this specific reference to black peoples constitutes a noteworthy moment in the “wondrous System” He elaborated in the nineteenth century (*Kitáb-i-Aqdas* ¶181).

Explanations of the importance and potential meaning of the “pupil of the eye” reference have been outlined by scholars who primarily have examined 'Abdu'l-Bahá's deployment of the metaphor as a means of building an egalitarian, interracial religious community in North America during the early twentieth century.⁴ This essay extends those explorations by proposing a number of interpretive possibilities organized around two interrelated claims. First, by giving black people a principal position in the figurative body of humanity, Bahá'u'lláh's metaphor is reflective of the material reality that black people were among the principal builders of global modernity—a reality that has been obscured in scholarly and lay discourse, but which is becoming increasingly prominent in the work of influential historians. Second, by favoring black people

4 See the important scholarship by Richard Thomas, Christopher Buck, and Bonnie J. Taylor.

through the “pupil of the eye” metaphor, Bahá'u'lláh produced a rupture in racial epistemology of the nineteenth century, one that distinguished the world-transformative project of His Revelation from social reformist movements of the era and was critical to the establishment of the “principle of the Oneness of Mankind—the pivot round which all the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh revolve” (Shoghi Effendi, *World Order* 42). Indeed, the special favoring accorded by the “pupil of the eye” metaphor is an indispensable element of a System meant to bring on the Oneness of Mankind in the context of a modern era riven by a *uniquely potent animus* directed at black people. That is to say, the anomalous nature of the metaphor—the fact that Bahá'u'lláh seems to have reserved this exceptional favoring for black people—highlights the particularly virulent role that anti-black ideology has played in the constitution of modern social and philosophical thought, and suggests that anti-blackness is a distinctively ominous impediment to human oneness.

Scholarly engagement with the implications of the “pupil of the eye” metaphor, and its function in the context of modernity, provokes a number of preliminary questions and caveats. To begin, very little is known about the specific circumstances, rhetorical context, or historical moment in which Bahá'u'lláh offered up the metaphor; in His Writings that have been translated into English thus far, the phrase does not appear. However,

‘Abdu'l-Bahá—who was Bahá'u'lláh’s “vicegerent on earth” and the appointed “Interpreter of His mind” (Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By* 245)—established that His Father used the metaphor. On that basis, the “pupil of the eye” designation is considered the Word of Bahá'u'lláh, an element of a Divine Revelation unfolded in the latter half of the nineteenth century.

When exactly in the latter half of the nineteenth century did Bahá'u'lláh offer the metaphor? During which period of His ministry? This has not yet been determined. Similarly, it is all but impossible to precisely delimit the human collective that Bahá'u'lláh intended to compare to the pupil of the eye. Who exactly are the “colored people” that Bahá'u'lláh esteems with the metaphor? It may be simply assumed that all people of African descent are honored by the designation—‘Abdu'l-Bahá evoked the metaphor when addressing African Americans; the Universal House of Justice has used it in communications with Bahá'ís on the continent of Africa. But if the spiritual reality of all African-descended people is described by the metaphor, what is it that binds this collectivity together? Is it a morphological, phenotypical similarity—the presence of visually perceptible markers that in certain geographical contexts once signified “coloredness” and now signify “blackness,” markers like melanin-endowed skin, specific hair-textures, or facial features? Or, is it a matter of genotype—does genetic composition determine whether or not one is

properly comparable to “the black pupil of the eye”? If Bahá'u'lláh's metaphor is meant to be understood as the articulation of a metaphysical truth about a certain group of people, these questions are worth considering. The rich body of scholarship that investigates the philosophical complexity of racial and cultural identity illuminates these types of questions, even if it does not answer them. Because “blackness” is a social construction that has no definitive biological reality, it can be difficult to say who is black and who is not, and it is equally difficult to define black culture. What experience or biology is shared by a wealthy black New Yorker with little melanin, a subsistence farmer in never-colonized Ethiopia, and an Afro-Iranian fisherman on the coast of the Persian Gulf? There is no immutable black essence transcending time and space. As Jamaican-British scholar Stuart Hall once put it when considering the slipperiness of black identity, “We cannot speak for very long, with any exactness, about ‘one experience, one identity’” (225). And yet, for several centuries now, blackness as a racial identifier has been deeply consequential in many social environments. As modernity has crept across the globe so too has anti-blackness, an evolving, protean thought regime that works to stigmatize those deemed black, wherever and whenever they have been found. Perhaps, then, what is most important about Bahá'u'lláh's metaphor is not the boundary of the collective that it describes, or the socio-cultural

practices of that collective, but rather the metaphor's absolute refutation of one of the most pernicious constructs of modernity.

If it is difficult to offer up a concrete, static definition of blackness, it is also hard to crisply define the phenomenon of “modernity” that has produced race and blackness. Political scientist Richard Iton furnishes a roughshod description of modernity that is as good as any by describing it as “that bundle of cultural, political, philosophical and technological iterations and reiterations of the Renaissance, the Enlightenment and the Industrial Revolution” that has shaped the material world in recent centuries (13). There are some aspects of this “bundle” worth underscoring when considering Bahá'u'lláh's “pupil of the eye” metaphor. One is that although modernity is often (simplistically) linked to the “West,” it has ramified throughout the world. As one scholar of Iranian history puts it, “The cataclysmic revolution of Western modernity has left virtually no part of the globe unaffected” (Vahdat xi). Whether or not Western modernity should be regarded as a cataclysm is not pertinent here; however, according to Iton and many other scholars of race, Western modernity has wrought devastation for some because it has always created “antonymic and problematic others,” groups of people stigmatized as unworthy of social and civic honor and protection (13). Indeed, it can be argued that blackness is nothing more, and nothing less, than the stigma that

modernity has projected onto people deemed to be its most “antonymic and problematic others.” This is not to say that blackness is always and everywhere a stigma, or that those who embrace black identity are embracing stigma—rather that, in the context of now-global modernity, blackness is inextricably bound to its origin as a racial classification meant to facilitate the exclusion of “others” from the protected community. Whatever else blackness may be, in the period since the emergence of modernity it has also been an antonym of the sacred community, the sign of the excluded “other.” Through the “pupil of the eye” metaphor, Bahá'u'lláh wrestles with and radically transforms the meaning of a major symbol of modernity. If modernity conjured blackness to fragment humanity and marginalize those bearing its mark, Bahá'u'lláh's metaphor alters the meaning of blackness, drawing it to the center of the body of humanity.

THE INSTRUMENTAL AND INSTRUCTIVE PURPOSES OF THE METAPHOR

For the most part, scholars have figured the “pupil of the eye” reference as a refutation of chauvinisms as well as a means by which Bahá'u'lláh conferred “new racial identity” to black people and furnished an “effective psychological antidote to the prevailing racial stereotypes” (Thomas 46; Buck 2). This is surely an important social function of a scriptural metaphor that imbues its *tenor*—black people—with

the qualities of its *vehicle*—the pupil of the eye—and consequently brings honor and esteem to a segment of humanity that was subject to some of the most dishonoring and stigmatizing discourses of modernity. However, before tracing out some of the implications of the purely instrumental purposes of Bahá'u'lláh's nineteenth-century metaphor, which affiliated black people with spiritual light rather than mortal darkness, it is important to recognize that the metaphor was not only an instrument that would elevate the social status of black people. The metaphor was also instructional: it was the articulation of some truth that the Manifestation of God wanted to teach the world. Indeed, the instrumental purpose of the metaphor—an elevated regard for black life—only gains traction if the instructional purpose of the metaphor is contemplated and accepted. But it must be acknowledged that the precise truth taught through the metaphor is difficult to pin down. It may be understood that black people are like the pupil of the eye, but how so? In what way?

The literal relationship between the vehicle and the tenor of the metaphor is apparent—black people have more melanin in the skin than other races and are thus darker than other peoples, just as the pupil is darker than other parts of the eye. The chromatic likeness shared by tenor and vehicle makes the metaphor resonant, but the figuration only becomes instructional when the physiological qualities of

the pupil are considered. By likening black people to a key apparatus in the physiological system that creates vision, Bahá'u'lláh may have been teaching the world about their perceptive powers. Christopher Buck has advanced this interpretation, suggesting that the metaphor implies that black people possess “insight into the human condition”—insight achieved because of collective suffering (4–5). If this is among the truths that Bahá'u'lláh conveyed through the “pupil of the eye” metaphor, it bears some similarity to well-known statements of W.E.B. Du Bois, one of the foremost American intellectuals of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, who in 1902 contended that black people in America were “gifted with a second-sight” (7). Du Bois elaborated this claim in his most well-known book, *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903), in which he attempted to describe the somewhat mystical essence of the African-American experience in his era. Thus, interpretations of the “pupil of the eye” metaphor that fix upon the spiritual perceptiveness of black people are in keeping with a tradition of African-American thought that was significantly advanced by Du Bois and that attempted to alchemize a history of oppression into a source of pride and inspiration. As he would put it elsewhere in his writings, “Among American Negroes there are sources of strength in common memories of suffering in the past” (*Dusk* 110). Du Bois, and many following him in

the twentieth century, deliberately encouraged racial pride among African Americans by suggesting that the race’s tormented history had conferred upon it a special insight and ability. Of course, recognizing tests and trials as strengthening and spiritually ennobling is not without precedent; any number of intellectual and spiritual traditions appeal to this framework as a mechanism for making sense of life’s difficulties. Speaking in the voice of Divinity, Bahá'u'lláh Himself declared that “with fire We test the gold” (*Hidden Words* 59), and in elaborating this formulation, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá explained that “[t]orment is the fire of test wherein pure gold shineth resplendently” (*Selections* 170). Interpretations of the “pupil of the eye” metaphor that link distinctive spiritual insight to black people because they have endured a history of torment take this formula, which can give positive meaning to horrible events, and apply it to the racial collective. In this interpretive framework, the instrumental purpose of the metaphor (elevating the social status of black people) is accomplished when the instructional purpose of the metaphor (teaching that black people have spiritual insight because of historical suffering) is understood. In its concentration on spiritual insight born out of hardship, this interpretation implicitly draws from a stream of African-American thought that flows from Du Bois and other early twentieth-century black historians who sought to make the

memory of slavery into a point of pride rather than a mark of shame.⁵

BUILDING MODERNITY

In recent years, historians have started to think about New World enslavement of Africans and African-descended people in ways that were intuited by Du Bois and his contemporaries and

5 It should be noted that there is a limitation to the applicability of an interpretive model suggesting that black people possess spiritual insight because of the history of enslavement or colonial oppression. The particular torment of race-based slavery does not figure in the history of large portions of Africa. Indeed, many millions of black people have no history of enslavement or colonization in their genealogical pasts—national territories such as Liberia and Ethiopia were never fully colonized by Western powers, yet the metaphysical implications of the “pupil of the eye” designation surely extend to black people bearing these somewhat anomalous histories. The most precise articulation of the interpretive model that highlights the spiritual insight of black people as a collective should not link that insight to any specific history or political experience, per se. However, as the argument below will unfold, in the modern world black people contend with the unique set of stigmas created by global anti-black ideology. This anti-blackness manifests in myriad social, political, economic, and cultural formations. Perhaps all black people are endowed with spiritual insight because each and all must contend with the “test” of anti-blackness.

that may lead toward new interpretations of the instructive meaning of the “pupil of the eye” metaphor. Just as Bahá'u'lláh's metaphor gives black people a central and vital role in the figurative body of humanity, a fresh form of historiography is showing that the story of modernity pivots on the contributions of black people. Indeed, an influential cadre of twenty-first century scholars, working in a sub-field dubbed New Histories of Capitalism (NHC), are persuasively demonstrating that the labor of enslaved black people was one of the primal catalytic forces in the emergence of human industrialization and global capitalism in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In a series of book-length histories with suggestive titles like *Empire of Cotton: A Global History* (2014), *The Half Has Never Been Told: Slavery and the Making of American Capitalism* (2014), and *Slavery's Capitalism: A New History of American Economic Development* (2016), these scholars are overturning a tradition of historiography that has downplayed the significance of slavery in the rise of European and American power in the world and the ensuing efflorescence of global material prosperity. For NHC historians, who follow in the footsteps of black scholars like the Trinidadian intellectual and political leader Eric Williams and his largely ignored *Capitalism and Slavery* (1944), the lives and labor of black people are not mere addendums to the narrative that would explain the so-called “Great Divergence” or “European Miracle” that occurred

in the run-up to the nineteenth century's Industrial Revolution and the resultant flourishing of technology and wealth that has since transformed human societies. Instead, in the chronicle of material development offered by the new histories of capitalism, black people are the protagonists. This compelling and recently invigorated narrative insists that the explosion of prosperity in the modern world is not simplistically attributable to European—and later American—innovation, culture, governance, or advanced legal and property rights systems; rather, it shows that the expropriative and exploitative New World plantation complex was at the heart of a transformative social and economic process that first allowed for the accumulation of vast wealth in European metropolises, and then sparked the Industrial Revolution, which in turn led to the exponential expansion of material development in the world. The network of agricultural plantations that first bloomed in the Caribbean basin of the 1500s and eventually spread throughout the Americas produced “European capital liberation” but was impossible without “African labor enslavement” (Beckles 777). For a variety of reasons, histories of global development have marginalized the invaluable role of African work in the creation of the modern world and its earth-girdling economy. But NHC scholarship (which reiterates marginalized arguments made long ago by black scholars like Du Bois and Williams) shows that the stolen labor of black people was

at the very center of the “process of global integration and the ‘takeoff’ that gave modern capitalism its fundamental structures of production and consumption” (Beckert and Rockman 8–9).

Among the primary proponents of the NHC movement is Harvard professor Sven Beckert, who argues that the cotton trade was the keystone of the first truly global market, which connected Africa, Europe, the Americas, and various parts of Asia in the eighteenth century, and that it served as “the launching pad for the broader Industrial Revolution” in the nineteenth century (xiv). In Beckert's telling, the center of the “cotton empire” moved from the East (in India) to the West (in Great Britain) only after Europeans were able to establish an economic dominance that was built on roughly three hundred years of colonial enterprise in the New World. This enterprise—mostly focused on sugar production—was history-altering and essential to the flowering of not just global capitalism but Western Enlightenment. It was also *totally dependent* on the labor of those people described by Bahá'u'lláh as the “pupil of the eye.” The massive, central role played by black people in the material development of the modern world is manifest in one stark figure that is important to NHC scholarship: between 1492 and 1807, four out of every five people who came from the Old World to the New World were African (Baptist 41). These 6.5 million people prepared the land, grew the crops, and built the

infrastructure that was a necessary precursor to the development of the nineteenth century's global cotton market—a market that grew in leaps and bounds because of the mechanized production of textile made from “white gold.” During Bahá'u'lláh's lifetime, the great majority of the world's most lucrative and arguably most consequential commodity was grown and harvested in the United States by black people.

In 1853, the pro-slavery trade journal *American Cotton Planter* published an editorial that was mostly about the economically “overshadowing dimensions” of the global cotton trade. The editorial was simultaneously nefarious and accurate. Its writer, a staunch slavery advocate, rightly insisted that the cultivation and manufacturing of cotton was the commercial bond that linked Great Britain and the United States, and that cotton granted these nations the most powerful and productive economies in the mid-nineteenth-century world. But most important to an assessment of the instructive purpose of Bahá'u'lláh's “pupil of the eye” metaphor was the editorialist's implicit acknowledgment that the operations of the burgeoning economic world order would not be possible without black people. While ignoring their humanity, and attempting to justify slavery's systematic robbery of their life and labor, the writer nevertheless emphasized black people's central role in the drama of the rapidly developing world economy. His unscrupulous defense of slavery

in the United States rested upon a keen valuation of the enormously productive power of black people who toiled in bondage. However distasteful it now appears, a weighty truth is felt in the lower frequencies of his claim that “slave-labor of the United States, has hitherto conferred, and is still conferring *inappreciable* blessings on mankind” (Croom 11, emphasis added). Continuing the theme, the editorialist argues “that in the dispensation of an All-wise Providence, the peculiar institution of the Southern States (slavery), contributes an indispensable support to human progress and prosperity” (11). Couched in an apologia for slavery in the United States, these arguments advance a core premise of NHC scholarship: the rise of modern capitalism and its world-transformative effects depended upon unfree black labor. Perhaps unexpectedly, these arguments also shed light on a viable interpretation of the instructional meaning of the “pupil of the eye” metaphor. By according black people a central and “indispensable” function in the figurative body of humanity, Bahá'u'lláh illustrated a material reality that was ruthlessly recognized by nineteenth-century capitalists in the American South, but was—and remains—“inappreciable” to most. That is to say, through the “pupil of the eye” metaphor, Bahá'u'lláh instructed humanity about a fundamental historical truth: black people played a central, indispensable role in the creation of the modern world and were precious contributors to the global prosperity that

must, someday, redound to the benefit of all peoples.

ANTI-BLACKNESS AND MODERNITY

Anti-black ideology became such a powerful and important part of modernity *precisely* because the stolen labor of black people was so central to the building of the post-1492 world. Social theories of the West, from those of Karl Marx to Pierre Bourdieu, teach that exploitative or unequal power relations always require justificatory narratives (see Bourdieu and Passeron, *Reproduction* 9–10). The massive human exploitation that was the predicate of New World modernity had to be reconciled with the moral frameworks of those who were doing the exploiting; as the lives and labors of millions of black people were robbed through enslavement, there arose a massive ideological apparatus that sought to justify the robbery. This multifaceted and thoroughgoing apparatus, which can be called anti-blackness, served to vigorously debase those “colored people” that Bahá'u'lláh would eventually uphold as the “pupil of the eye.”

The relatively unmitigated, centuries-long exploitation of African and African-descended people who were central to the emergence of modernity and global capitalism was justified through the development of an array of stigmas focused on dishonoring black bodies, cultures, minds, and even souls, with an intensity that matched the massive scale of the exploitation

that reflexively called forth the stigmas. From the sixteenth century onwards, many leaders of European and New World Christendom helped build anti-black ideology through scriptural hermeneutics and racialized theologies that attributed a special sinfulness, or even soullessness, to black people. But in the development of anti-black ideologies, the Christian clerics were also joined by their more secular-minded rivals—the intellectuals or *philosophes* who were the pioneers of Enlightenment thought. By the time Bahá'u'lláh offered up the “pupil of the eye” metaphor, centering and honoring black people, European and New World discourses of anti-blackness were certainly circulating in His milieu, which was also alive with its own anti-black ideology that justified the widespread enslavement of Africans in Qajar Persia, the Ottoman Empire, and elsewhere in the Islamic world. Recognizing the sharp distinction between Bahá'u'lláh's engagement with black life and that of the contextualizing thought regimes of His era produces a deepened appreciation for the novelty, independence, and internal coherence of the social theory woven into His Revelation. The instructive and instrumental purposes of the “pupil of the eye” metaphor contrast most sharply with the anti-black litany produced by the avant-garde humanists associated with the Western Enlightenment that flourished just before the opening of the Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh. Although the leading minds of this movement were committed to a “new

understanding of the human condition" (Pinker 8)—an understanding meant to bring on prosperity, ease of life, and social amelioration—these hugely creative thinkers were, without exception, promulgators of anti-blackness.

It is perhaps ironic that the architecture of modernity's racism—reliant on the pseudo-scientific construct of race—was designed even as the *philosophes* who were seminal to the Enlightenment simultaneously elevated the epistemic ideal of rationalism and putatively empiricist methods of inquiry. Emerging from these ideals and methods was much of the intellectual blueprint for conceptions of democracy, egalitarianism, justice, religious tolerance, and freedom of thought that are frequently associated with the Enlightenment and that are vital to the contemporary world order. But in the influential writings and heady salons of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Europe, seminal thinkers like Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Denis Diderot, Voltaire, and a legion of lesser-known intellectuals were simultaneously disseminating subjective ideas about race, most of which were characterized by intense anti-black sentiment dressed in the costumes of rational scientism. While these thinkers quarreled about the morality of the Atlantic slave trade and the enslavement of Africans in the European colonies of the New World, they were essentially unanimous in their low estimation of black humanity. As Voltaire, for example, sought to dismantle what he thought

to be irrational interpretations of the Genesis creation story, he concurrently built up the stigmatization of blackness. Writing on African people, Voltaire would quip, "Our wise men have said that man was created in the image of God. Now here is a lovely image of the Divine—a flat black nose with little or hardly any intelligence" (Cohen 88). This sarcastic attack on both African humanity and Christian clerical wisdom exemplifies the interconnection of Enlightenment scientism and anti-black rhetoric; Voltaire's effort to advance rational, secular inquiry about the origin of man was entwined with a subjective, degrading description of black people. Similarly, the transformational and widely disseminated compendium of knowledge known as the *Encyclopédie, ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers*—and sometimes considered the "first encyclopedia"—rationalized anti-blackness even as it disseminated Enlightenment ideals that were gaining traction among the educated classes of the seventeenth century. The editors of the *Encyclopédie*, Diderot and Jean Le Rond d'Alembert, explicitly set out to "change the way men think" and build a "war machine" of ideas that would subdue what they deemed to be outdated, ossified forms of thought (qtd. in Clark xvii). But as they advanced a steady revolution in Western intellectual history, they also helped legitimize anti-black chauvinism. The *Encyclopédie* is peppered with a variety of references to black people, which range from paternalistic to dehumanizing.

For example, in an entry titled “Negroes, character of Negroes in general,” the *Encyclopédie* declares that black Africans are “always vicious . . . mostly inclined to lasciviousness, vengeance, theft and lies” (Cohen 72). So it went: anti-black ideology was part and parcel of the Enlightenment project—a viral attachment that spread along with literacy and the social and civic ideas that reshaped Europe and the Atlantic and Mediterranean basins in the centuries before the advent of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh.

Of course, in the late eighteenth century and into the nineteenth century, as Bahá'u'lláh revealed a vision of global community that reserved a “favored” status for black people, the fire of Enlightenment-stoked racism continued to burn feverishly. Thomas Jefferson, for example, fueled anti-black sentiment in his *Notes on the State of Virginia*, which was read widely on both sides of the Atlantic and is often considered a compendium of his “most cherished ideas and interests” (Bernstein 67). In the book, he speculated that black people were “inferior to the whites in the endowments both of body and mind,” heaping a variety of disparagements on the race (qtd. in Bernstein 80). In the 1840s, G.W.F. Hegel—frequently thought of as the “greatest philosopher of the modern experience” (Dorrien 388)—insisted that “[t]he peculiarly African character is difficult to comprehend.” So difficult that, when it came to Africans, Hegel counseled that Europeans ought to “give up the principle

which naturally accompanies all our ideas,—the category of Universality” (97). Which is to say that one of the preeminent thinkers of modernity felt that black people were not quite human because “[i]n Negro life the characteristic point is the fact that consciousness has not yet attained to the realization of any substantial objective existence” (97). American president Abraham Lincoln seemed to doubt that people of African descent could ever attain the moral and civic capacity of whites. Despite hazarding a bloodbath war to end slavery in his nation, he predicted that the black race could never “be placed on an equality with the white race” in America (qtd. in Kendi 219). Jefferson, Hegel, and Lincoln are only a few representative figures on the long list of philosophical, political, and cultural luminaries who helped to stigmatize blackness while also building the foundations of modernity; almost without exception, the revered intellects of modern social thought contributed to a voluminous disparagement of black humanity and inculcated a common sense that relegated black life to the lightless basement of a hugely consequential racial hierarchy.

To underscore the potency of anti-black ideology, and thus throw into relief the anomalous quality of Bahá'u'lláh's refutation of such thinking, it is worth noting that in the nineteenth century even black champions of justice could produce rhetoric that implicitly debased black people. Although African-descended

populations produced a range of intellectual, artistic, and spiritual confutations of anti-blackness, important black thought-leaders could slip into formulations that tacitly reinforced prevailing ideas about black lack. For example, despite being hailed as among the fiercest black-authored condemnations of slavery and racism, David Walker's 1829 *Appeal to the Coloured Citizens of the World* emphasizes the material and spiritual *deficits* that oppression has yielded in a black race characterized as "the most wretched, degraded, and abject set of beings that ever lived since the world began" (6). And consider that in 1867, Sojourner Truth, the once-enslaved black woman who tirelessly advocated for the rights of black people and women in America, would publicly testify that "[w]hite women are a great deal smarter, and know more than colored women," and that black men do little more than "go about idle, strutting up and down" (qtd. in Kendi 242). It is not surprising that anti-blackness surfaces in the rhetorical flourishes of even black leaders of the nineteenth century; it only indicates the pervasiveness of the thought patterns that in that era degraded black life, culture, and capacity. Indeed, in order to be taken seriously, black thought-leaders often had to mouth such deprecations in order to gain legitimacy with many audiences. The point here is that a proper appreciation of Bahá'u'lláh's "pupil of the eye" metaphor is only accessible when that positive centering of the "colored people" of the world is considered

in relation to its nineteenth-century context, so thoroughly suffused in social thought that was axiomatically anti-black. Against this backdrop, Bahá'u'lláh's intervention in the era's racial discourse amounts to nothing less than an *epistemological rupture*—the introduction of a radical ideological conception that had hardly any precedent in the secular or religious thinking of His historical moment. Archivists would be hard-pressed to find a comparable elevation of "colored people" in the reams of philosophical and social writing about race produced in Bahá'u'lláh's lifetime.

THE NOVELTY AND NECESSITY OF THE "PUPIL OF THE EYE" DESIGNATION

The absolute refusal of anti-black ideology should be considered a distinguishing feature of Bahá'u'lláh's social teaching; it is a notable example of the coherence in what Bahá'u'lláh Himself described as the "wondrous System" laid out in His Revelation (*Kitáb-i-Aqdas* ¶181). This System was animated by one "fundamental purpose," underscored time and again in His voluminous Writings: it sought to "safeguard the interests and promote the unity of the human race, and to foster the spirit of love and fellowship amongst men" (*Gleanings* 215). The virulent anti-blackness of His world-historical moment was, of course, antithetical to the "spirit of love and fellowship" that Bahá'u'lláh aimed to promote through what some scholars have called His "reformist

movement" (Cole 136). But while scores of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century social reformers sought to advance the interests of the human race even as they endorsed ideologies that debased and relentlessly stigmatized black people, Bahá'u'lláh's favoring of "colored people" took hold of prevailing racial epistemology and turned it on its head. This was not reform; it was rupture—a rupture that was the prerequisite of any coherent program ultimately seeking "the unity of the human race." The widespread but tortured logic of social reformist movements that sought the betterment of humanity and simultaneously promoted or acquiesced to anti-black ideology operated in stark contrast to the logic of Bahá'u'lláh's mission. In itself, the specific refusal of anti-black ideology distinguishes Bahá'u'lláh's system from that of contemporaneous reform movements; it also speaks to the systemic integrity of the ethics of His Revelation, what Nader Saiedi describes as "the internal coherence of Bahá'u'lláh's system" (316).

Although it represents just one node in the expansive social and spiritual system activated in His Revelation, Bahá'u'lláh's especial promotion of the capacity of black people is an outsized marker of the novelty and philosophical independence of His System. Demonstrating this independence—"the creative, revolutionary, and unprecedented character of Bahá'u'lláh's spiritual and social vision"—is one of the central aims of Saiedi's ambitious study, *Logos and*

Civilization. In it, Saiedi effectively deconstructs and lays bare the shortcomings of a strand of scholarship that reduces Bahá'u'lláh's vision to a repackaging of millennial reformist ideas that, according to one commentator, were "in the air" during the late nineteenth century (Cole 68). Where Saiedi shows the unprecedented quality of Bahá'u'lláh's late nineteenth-century thought, scholars like Juan Cole have made efforts to drain it of originality and independence through a historicizing methodology that figures Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation as essentially a synthesis of European and Middle Eastern social reform discourse. To carry out his project, Cole selectively reconstructs the late nineteenth century ideological milieu which flowed about Bahá'u'lláh and searches for moments of "intertextuality" that align Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation with ideas that were prominent among progressive thinkers of His era (68). Cole's reconstruction of nineteenth-century social thought does not include any reference to the anti-black ideology that was endemic among European intellectuals and reformers of the era and that was particularly pivotal to the ideas of one figure whom Cole links to Bahá'u'lláh: the French political and social reformer Henri de Saint-Simon, whose beliefs about social justice (among other things) gained traction among European elites in the early nineteenth century.

While Cole focuses upon "particularly striking" parallels that apparently conjoin the "peace thought" of

Saint-Simon and Bahá'u'lláh (136), Saiedi rightly points out that, although somewhat progressive in his egalitarian principles, Saint-Simon was an advocate of European imperialism, which hinged on white supremacist beliefs. Saiedi contrasts Bahá'u'lláh's unqualified commitment to the unity of the entire human race with Saint-Simon's advocacy of race war in which "Europeans will unite their forces" to subdue indolent Asians and "bloodthirsty" Africans (qtd. in Saiedi 314). Demonstrating that the race discourse advanced by Bahá'u'lláh was fundamentally incompatible with that of Saint-Simon is one of the ways that Saiedi problematizes Cole's effort to equalize Bahá'u'lláh's teachings and that of European influencers whose ideas had filtered into the Ottoman intellectual context by the late nineteenth century. However innovative Saint-Simon was in his theorizing, he also subscribed to a run-of-the-mill racism that allowed him to simply excise black people from his conception of "mankind," declaring that "the Negro, because of his basic physical structure, is not susceptible, even with the same education, of rising to the intellectual level of Europeans" (qtd. in Swedberg 147-48).

Cole calls attention to another Western intellectual, the American historian John William Draper, whose work constituted a "plausible conduit" by which the North Atlantic ideals of the social contract and freedom of conscience found their way into Bahá'í texts (37). Noting that Draper's major

study, *A History of the Intellectual Development of Europe*, was available in the Middle East and was approvingly cited in an important Bahá'í treatise,⁶ Cole highlights the seeming resemblance between the Lockean and Jeffersonian theories of the state articulated by Draper and those found in political theory emerging from the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh. But these resemblances are rendered incidental in light of Bahá'u'lláh's definitive rejection of the racist premises that underlay eighteenth- and nineteenth-century North Atlantic social philosophy and that poisoned the work of even a progressive thinker like Draper, who in 1867 could declare that, "at the best," the American negro "will never be more than an overgrown child" (196). As race-conscious philosophers like Charles Mills have argued in recent decades, a legion of Enlightenment thinkers like Draper, Saint-Simon, Locke, and Jefferson built their putatively universal political philosophies on an almost invisible "Racial Contract." According to Mills and others, fair-minded analysis of seminal social contract theories of the Western Enlightenment reveals that they rest upon an "unacknowledged system," a racial contract which tacitly assumes that the rights and liberties guaranteed by the state to the citizen extend only to white people—"the people who count, the people who really are people" (3). Without exception, all the

6 'Abdu'l-Bahá makes reference to Draper's work in *The Secret of Divine Civilization*.

Western social philosophy that was potentially accessible to Bahá'u'lláh was also underwritten by this racial contract system, and yet His vision of spiritual polity bears no sign of it. Moreover, Bahá'u'lláh's System explicitly rejects the racial (and gender) contract that was latent in the theorizing reformers of the Enlightenment. The point here is that the chasm between Western political theory and Bahá'u'lláh's vision of social order is perhaps widest and deepest when the racially exclusionary logic of the former is contrasted with Bahá'u'lláh's thoroughgoing universalism—and His embrace of the "colored people" of the world in particular.

THE "PUPIL OF THE EYE"
AND THE AFTERLIVES OF SLAVERY

If the "pupil of the eye" designation operated as a radical refutation of the anti-blackness that was essential to the Western modernity that Bahá'u'lláh engaged in His Revelation, this intervention cannot be easily attributed to the intellectual or social mores of His Islamic context. Bahá'u'lláh's geographic and social environment was rife with its own forms of racism, which stigmatized black Africans, who constituted a significant portion of the slave population in nineteenth-century Persia and the Ottoman Empire. However, the virulent, pervasive anti-blackness that crystallized in the modern West differed from the anti-black sentiment that circulated in the Islamic East. The distinction

between anti-blackness in the proverbial West and East is sharpened by a social taxonomy offered by historians who distinguish between "slave societies" and "societies with slaves" (Berlin 8). While the anti-blackness of the West was the ideological handmaid of New World "slave societies" in which "slavery stood at the center of economic production" and was the engine of enormous wealth production, the anti-black sentiment of Bahá'u'lláh's Qajar and Ottoman contexts grew out of "societies with slaves." In these societies, "slaves were marginal to the central productive processes," the institution of slavery was somewhat porous, and enslaved or formerly-enslaved people could sometimes ascend the social hierarchy (Berlin 8). The New World slave societies that were almost totally parasitic in their dependence on black labor required a deeper, more urgent form of stigmatizing ideology than did the societies with slaves that could be found the Islamic world. Nevertheless, anti-black sentiment was certainly a feature of the elite Persian matrix in which Bahá'u'lláh was raised in the early nineteenth century. Not only were enslaved Africans—often castrated eunuchs—commonplace in the households of the Persian nobility of the era, but by the time of Bahá'u'lláh's birth, this class of Persians was also beginning to emulate certain European social, cultural and intellectual practices. It would be naïve to suggest that the well-established anti-blackness of Western modernity did not influence Qajar Persia and

the Ottoman territories into which Bahá'u'lláh was exiled.

Considering the presence of black participants in the Heroic Age of the Bahá'í Faith adds important texture to the “pupil of the eye” metaphor and deepens its humanity-unifying implications. From the Bahá'í perspective, Bahá'u'lláh's acclamation of “colored people” is vested with transcendent, divine authority; yet, that iconoclastic pronouncement should also be linked to Bahá'u'lláh's lived experience in His father's household that was populated by “many colored maids and servants” (‘Abdu'l-Bahá, qtd. in “Sterling Faithfulness” 38). In this domestic setting, Bahá'u'lláh's personal relationships with black people were keen and substantial. According to ‘Abdu'l-Bahá, when Bahá'u'lláh became the head of His family, He liberated all who were considered property in His father's household. However, one black man, Isfandiyyár, chose to remain with Bahá'u'lláh and remained His willing servant until death (*Promulgation* 426). Another black man, Mubarak, who was likely enslaved in the household of Bahá'u'lláh's sister, sought manumission from Bahá'u'lláh, and was subsequently addressed by Him in terms that laid bare His absolute rejection of the social institution of slavery in the 1850s. Offered in the voice of a mortal servant of God, Bahá'u'lláh's response to Mubarak suggests that the enslaved man's request reveals a tragic irony in the practice of slavery—Bahá'u'lláh declares, “Behold how one slave hath stood at the door of another, seeking

from him his freedom, and this despite the fact that his owner is himself but Thy thrall and Thy servant” (qtd. in Universal House of Justice, letter dated 2 September 2014). Asserting that all are “vassals” before God, Bahá'u'lláh reflects upon Mubarak's plea by posing a rhetorical question that exposes slavery as a moral absurdity and establishes a necessary plank in theological egalitarianism: “How, then, can this thrall claim for himself ownership of any other human being?” He then goes on to liberate Mubarak in no uncertain terms. Bahá'u'lláh's direct response to Mubarak—in which He equates His own earthly condition with that of a black man—represents not only a total disavowal of slavery, but also a powerfully illustrative demolition of racial hierarchy and a profound refutation of anti-black ideology. In its mid-nineteenth-century context, this was no small statement. As much as it was a brief against slavery, the tablet for Mubarak was, like the “pupil of the eye” metaphor, also a lesson in Bahá'u'lláh's curriculum on the oneness of humanity.

Yet, it is important to disentangle Bahá'u'lláh's abrogation of the institution of slavery from His stand against anti-black ideology, which is implicit in His tablet to Mubarak and rather explicit in His “pupil of the eye” metaphor. With the revelation of the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* in 1873, Bahá'u'lláh forbade the trade in slaves, and thus made known that in His Dispensation ownership of human beings was contrary to Divine Will. This law

was, of course, applicable to all humanity—it had no racial specificity; indeed, in nineteenth-century Qajar Persia and the Ottoman Empire, enslaved people hailed from a variety of racial and ethnic backgrounds. The abolition of legal slavery, which was a worldwide evolution in the organization of human society (inaugurated by Republic of Haiti in the late eighteenth century), did not address the racial ideologies that the institution of slavery produced. This is evident in the history of abolitionism in the United States. Many of those who were instrumental in ending slavery, like Abraham Lincoln, did not renounce anti-black ideology. Once it was unlinked from the institution of slavery, the acceptance and persistence of this ideology gave life to what some scholars have termed the “afterlives of slavery” (Sharpe 5). In these afterlives, anti-blackness was simply reconfigured so that the harm of social, civic, and economic marginalization was inflicted upon black people through evolved mechanisms that were sanctioned by the state, even if slavery was not. As one scholar puts it, “From this vantage point, emancipation appears less the grand event of liberation than a point of transition between modes of servitude and racial subjection” (Hartman 6). Intransigent anti-black racism ensured that in the aftermath of abolition—in the United States and in national contexts throughout the world—black people continued to suffer limited life chances and a host of social maladies. As New World

slavery gave life to unprecedented material prosperity, it also birthed a potent anti-blackness that could not be extinguished through “mere” abolition. But by producing the “pupil of the eye” metaphor, which gave favor to those targeted by anti-blackness, Bahá'u'lláh made it clear that any belief, institution, or social movement that was to be compatible with His Word could not abide by the insidious ideology that grew out of—and outlived—the New World permutation of institutionalized slavery.

The robust, pervasive quality of modernity’s anti-blackness makes it a serious impediment to the development of the loving, equitable, and just human society that is the ultimate aim of Bahá'u'lláh’s Divine Revelation. He has explained that those aligned with Divine Will must be driven by the desire to “quench the flame of hatred and enmity, so that the whole earth may come to be viewed as one country.” In further elucidating His own mission, Bahá'u'lláh states, “The Prophets of God should be regarded as physicians whose task is to foster the well-being of the world and its peoples, that, through the spirit of oneness, they may heal the sickness of a divided humanity” (*Gleanings* 80). Obviously, the anti-black ideology that has infected societies for several centuries is a constituent element of the humanity-dividing sickness that Bahá'u'lláh’s Revelation aims to heal. In its most virulent forms, anti-blackness has marginalized black life out of existence—that is to say, it promotes social

conditions in which disregard or disdain for black life is so intense that the social and civic body is unperturbed by or even desirous of the elimination of black people.

Through His “pupil of the eye” metaphor, which adamantly centers black life in the figurative body of humanity, Bahá'u'lláh acted as social Physician, prescribing a spiritual and social concept that must be regarded as something more than a gesture of

comfort or solace for a historically burdened people. Bahá'u'lláh's specific and explicit refutation of one of modernity's most hateful and divisive social ideologies is an instructive prescription addressed to all humanity. Surely, the condition of oneness that is global society's highest and most urgent aspiration is impossible without the universal internalization of the medicine that Bahá'u'lláh has loaded into the “pupil of the eye” metaphor.

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Helen Elsie Austin

JOHN S. HATCHER



Helen Elsie Austin was born May 10, 1908, to Mary Louise Austin and George J. Austin, both of whom worked at the Tuskegee Institute and were friends with Booker T. and Margaret Washington at the same university.¹ The family moved several times because George Austin (a veteran of the Spanish-American War) served as “Commander of Men”² at schools in

1 Booker T. Washington was an American educator, writer, and noted speaker. In the latter part of the nineteenth century and the early part of the twentieth century, he was considered by many to be the most prominent African-American leader and spokesperson.

2 This was a position in the World War I period equivalent to contemporary commandants of university ROTC programs.

Alabama, in Texas, and—with America’s involvement in World War I—at the Fort Des Moines, Iowa, Provisional Army Officer Training School.

By January 1920, the family had settled in Cincinnati, Ohio, where Mary Louise worked at a school named after Harriet Beecher Stowe. It is told that on her first day of high school, after the teacher had read from a textbook that the black race had contributed absolutely nothing to civilization but had been created to be subservient to the more fortunate races, Elsie stood up and said: “I was taught in a black school that Africans worked iron before Europeans knew anything about it. I was taught that they knew how to cast bronze in making statues and that they worked in gold and ivory so beautifully that the European nations came to their shores to buy their carvings and statues. That is what I was taught in a black school.” This is how early the character of Elsie Austin manifested itself in what would prove to be a lifetime of daring, courage, and autonomy.

After graduating from high school in 1924, Austin and seven other African-American women students were admitted to the University of Cincinnati. Historically, there was limited attendance of black students at the university, and in the 1920s most of the African-American women were only allowed into the college of education. In addition, there were no black faculty; black students could not live in the dormitories, had limited access to the university pool, and were cautioned by the college administrator to be inconspicuous and to have low expectations.

Not to be deterred, Austin and the other black female students decided they would go out for everything. They also made a solemn vow to finish that first year with honors in something. Their success in doing just so motivated the same college official to apologize to them.

Austin went on to be the first black woman to graduate from the University of Cincinnati Law School. She also passed the Indiana Bar as one of only twenty-two black women lawyers admitted by 1930. In addition to this important achievement, while working on her law degree, Austin spent a year on the staff of the *Rocky Mountain Law Review* and later earned a placement at the *Cincinnati Law Review*. In 1931, Austin opened a law practice in Indianapolis, Indiana, and in 1933, she co-founded a law firm with Henry J. Richardson, Jr., in Ohio.

Over time, Austin had become increasingly incensed about the role of religion in dealing with racism. She approached her father to explain that she was leaning toward becoming an agnostic or even an atheist because all the religions not only practiced segregation but also seemed to be at war with one another.

While her father listened with understanding to her frustration, he told her that, before she abandoned religion entirely, she might do well to investigate the Bahá'í Faith. He knew about the Faith because he had attended monthly public meetings held by the long-established Cincinnati Bahá'í community and had made contact with some of its members.

Austin was interested, but she tempered her curiosity with caution. For two years or so, she carried Bahá'í literature with her, and she attended meetings, impressed particularly by prominent African-American lawyer Louis G. Gregory and by Dorothy Baker, whose wit, wisdom, and charismatic openness helped Austin conquer her cynicism about religion. She finally became a Bahá'í in 1934.

It was also in 1934 that Austin represented the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People at a hearing regarding the inequity of school allocations in Ohio. In addition, Austin was admitted to plead cases before the Ohio Supreme Court, and she was named to the Board of Trustees of Wilberforce University, a historically black college.

Over the next few years, she both led private classes on the Bahá'í Faith and served on an all-Cincinnati YWCA committee. But 1937 was a major turning point in Austin's life and career. She was appointed as an assistant attorney general for Ohio. She received an honorary Doctor of Laws degree from Wilberforce University because of this appointment. She also worked with the YMCA, and she was appointed to a regional committee tasked with overseeing the Bahá'í Faith in Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, and Kentucky. Finally, she was honored as an invited speaker at a symposium in Cleveland.

In 1946, Austin was elected to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States, and later she went on pilgrimage to Haifa. In 1953, upon Shoghi Effendi's instigation of the Ten Year

World Crusade—the major emphasis of which was to encourage Western Bahá'ís to pioneer to other countries to establish the “pillars” for election of the Universal House of Justice—the inspired Elsie Austin decided to pioneer to Morocco. At that time, Morocco was still a “virgin territory” as far as Bahá'í presence was concerned, so her relocation to that country earned her the title of “Knight of Bahá'u'lláh.” While teaching at the American School of Tangier in Morocco, she helped establish Bahá'í communities in northern and western Africa. Austin was then elected to the National Spiritual Assembly of North West Africa, and, as a member of that institution, she was a delegate to the international convention electing the first Universal House of Justice in 1963.

In addition to pioneering internationally and serving on national bodies, Austin served on Local Spiritual Assemblies in five different countries: the United States, Morocco, Nigeria, Kenya, and the Bahamas. She also served as one of the first members of the Auxiliary Board—established in 1954 to assist Hands of the Cause of God—aiding Hand of the Cause Músá Banání. During this time, she also wrote *Above All Barriers: The Story of Louis G. Gregory* (1955).

In 1958, she was appointed executive director of the United States National Women's Council, and from 1960 to 1970, she was a Foreign Service officer, serving as a cultural attaché with the United States Information Agency in Lagos, Nigeria, and later in Nairobi, Kenya. Austin retired

from the Foreign Service in 1970.

In 1975, Austin chaired the Bahá'í delegation to the International Women's Conference in Mexico City, and in 1982, she worked with the Phelps-Stokes Fund in China, inspecting schools, businesses, and community services affecting education and opportunities for minorities. In 2000, the University of Cincinnati named a scholarship in her honor. She died of congestive heart failure on October 26, 2004, whereupon the Universal House of Justice mandated that public memorial services for her be held at the Houses of Worship in the United States and Uganda.

SCHOLARSHIP ON ELSIE AUSTIN

The Bahá'í World, volume 33 (2004–2005), honored Austin's passing with a lengthy “In Memoriam.” Yet, so far as we can determine, no extensive biography has been published, nor has any major study of her contribution to the advancement of racial equality and her immense contribution to the spread of the Bahá'í Faith. One hopes that some capable writer will undertake a comprehensive study of her life and contributions.

An article by Austin, titled “Faith, Protest, and Progress,” was published in volume 8, number 2, of *The Journal of Bahá'í Studies* and is available in electronic format on the Association for Bahá'í Studies website.

VIBURNUM LANTANA

The wayfarer tree

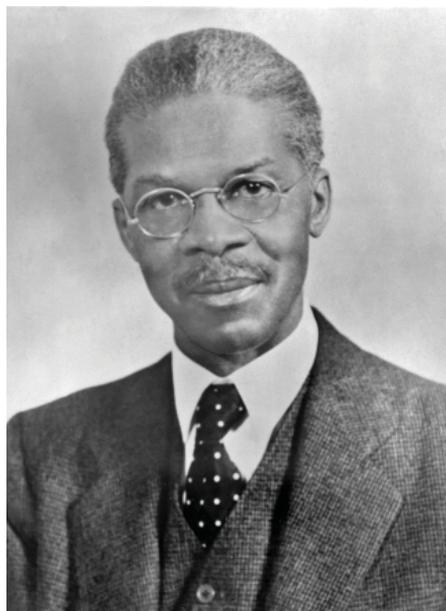
GARY HOGENSEN

Darkness streams into daylight,
To breath, passions, carnal dreams,
All leading to ultimate loss.
Our human tide flows ceaselessly
From the valley's rifts,
Down mountains, to deserts,
Unwavering to seas.
Thus doth the wayfarer go

Leaving behind inception with each step,
Conception of body and soul—
The one meandering to dust,
While uncaged, the other soars
To the placeless paradise
Where beginnings have no end.

Louis Gregory

JOHN S. HATCHER



Louis Gregory was born June 6, 1874, in Charleston, South Carolina, the child of former slaves who had gained their freedom during the Civil War. His father died when Gregory was only four years old. At seven, he witnessed the lynching of his grandfather—a widely respected man in the community—and this event had a profound effect on Gregory's life purpose.

During his elementary schooling, Gregory attended the first Charleston public school that was open to both African-Americans and whites. When he graduated, he received the honor of giving the graduation speech, which he titled, "Thou Shalt Not Live for Thyself Alone."

Gregory attended Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee, where he studied English literature. He then attended the prestigious Howard University in Washington, D.C., received his Bachelor of Law degree in 1902, and was subsequently admitted to the Bar. When he began work for the United States Department of the Treasury, he met Thomas H. Gibbs, the first to share with Gregory information about the Bahá'í Faith.

After attending a lecture by Lua Getsinger in 1907, Gregory began rigorously studying the religion. Two years later, he felt confirmed in his beliefs, declared himself a Bahá'í, and dedicated himself to the service of his beloved Faith. He wrote to 'Abdu'l-Bahá, who responded by encouraging Gregory to achieve major accomplishments in race relations, both within the Bahá'í Faith and in the American community as a whole.

This is why, in 1910, Gregory stopped working as a lawyer and began a long and relentless period of service to the Bahá'í Faith, holding meetings, traveling, lecturing about the need for race unity, and writing articles on this same theme. Ironically, he had to give talks either to African-American audiences or, on other occasions, to gatherings of whites, because at the time, racially integrated assemblage was against social norms and, in some places, illegal.

Eventually, Gregory received a message from 'Abdu'l-Bahá encouraging integrated meetings. By then, upper-class white Bahá'ís were

accustomed to racially integrated meetings, something 'Abdu'l-Bahá made clear should be the aim of the whole Bahá'í community.¹ Not satisfied to teach in one area or one community, Gregory initiated a major lecture tour about the Bahá'í Faith in the South, visiting such cities as Richmond, Virginia; Durham, North Carolina; Charleston, South Carolina; and Macon, Georgia.

It was around this time that Gregory also began to participate in the budding Bahá'í administrative order. In 1911, he was elected to Washington's Working Committee of the Bahá'í Spiritual Assembly, the first African-American to serve in that position. In March of the same year, Gregory sailed from New York to go on pilgrimage at the request of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Whom he met in person, together with the future Guardian of the Faith, Shoghi Effendi. It was also during this pilgrimage that 'Abdu'l-Bahá encouraged Gregory and Louisa Mathew, a white Englishwoman who was also a pilgrim, to get to know each other. Their meeting marked the beginning of a blessed relationship destined to shake one of American society's most pernicious prejudices.

1 For this and other specific references, see Gayle Morrison, *To Move the World: Louis G. Gregory and the Advancement of Racial Unity in America* (US Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1982) and Louis Venters, *No Jim Crow Church: The Origins of South Carolina's Bahá'í Community* (University Press of Florida, 2015).

With the confluence of all these events, the following year, 1912, was an *annus mirabilis* for this remarkable young man. In April, he was elected to the national Bahá'í "executive board"—a precursor of the National Spiritual Assembly—and in this position he assisted in organizing 'Abdu'l-Bahá's visit to the United States. During this visit, 'Abdu'l-Bahá thanked Gregory for his many efforts, and brought about an incident that is long remembered for its symbolism and social impact. While in Washington, 'Abdu'l-Bahá attended a reception held by the Persian chargé d'affaires and the Turkish ambassador. On that occasion, 'Abdu'l-Bahá took it upon Himself to move the place-names at the large table so that Louis Gregory—the only African-American present—was seated at the head of the table, next to Himself.

In September of this same year, Gregory and Mathew married, becoming the first Bahá'í interracial couple in the United States. During their many travels together, they received a range of vastly different reactions, especially since interracial marriage was either illegal or unrecognized in a majority of states. Nevertheless, by December 1916, Gregory had traveled to fourteen of the sixteen southern states, speaking primarily to student audiences—a herculean effort that Gregory repeated the following year, when he set off on a second speaking tour.

At the end of the First World War, the Ku Klux Klan's activities resulted

in an increase in lynchings in South Carolina. Despite this danger, Gregory was determined to be active in the wider community as well. He helped found chapters of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in South Carolina in 1918, and many of the initial organizers of the NAACP were Gregory's personal acquaintances.

After the remaining letters containing 'Abdu'l-Bahá's *Tablets of the Divine Plan* arrived,² Gregory was elected to a Bahá'í committee focused on propagating the Faith in the American South. Gregory decided the best way to respond to this mandate was a two-pronged approach. First, he presented the teachings of the Bahá'í Faith on race to social leaders and to the general public. Second, he initiated a more extensive trip that lasted from 1919 to 1921, often accompanied by Roy

² *Tablets of the Divine Plan* collectively refers to 14 letters (tablets) written between March 1916 and March 1917 by 'Abdu'l-Bahá to Bahá'ís in the United States and Canada. Included in multiple books, the first five tablets were printed in America in *Star of the West* - Vol. VII, No. 10, September 8, 1916, and all the tablets again after World War I in Vol. IX, No. 14, November 23, 1918, before being presented again at the Ridván meeting of 1919. Because of the difficulty in communication during World War I, These tablets were sent incrementally, contained in fourteen letters written and sent between March of 1916 and March of 1917 by 'Abdu'l-Bahá to Bahá'ís to the United States and Canada.

Williams, an African-American Bahá'í from New York City.

It was during this same period that—inspired by guidance from 'Abdu'l-Bahá—Gregory instigated the first "Race Amity Conference," which was held in May 1921 in Washington, D.C. The following year, Louis Gregory became the first African-American to be elected to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada, a body to which he would be successively elected in 1922, 1924, 1927, 1932, 1934, and 1946.

In 1924, Gregory toured the country for a number of speaking engagements, including one in which he shared the stage with fellow African-American Bahá'í and prominent thinker of the then-developing Harlem Renaissance, Alain LeRoy Locke. In the 1930s, Gregory helped start a Bahá'í study class during a brief visit to Atlanta. He then stayed in Nashville for a time, to respond to inquirers from Fisk University who eventually helped found Nashville's first Local Spiritual Assembly.

Continuing his efforts and in obedient response to Shoghi Effendi's call for Bahá'ís to fulfill the goals of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's *Tablets of the Divine Plan*, Mr. and Mrs. Gregory traveled to Haiti in 1934. The couple taught the Bahá'í Faith to local Haitians, though the government of Haiti asked them to leave because of tensions between Haiti and the American government.

Wherever he was needed, Gregory went, especially throughout the American South. For example, in 1940,

when the Atlanta Bahá'í community was struggling over integrated meetings, Gregory was among those assigned to resolve the situation. Similarly, in early 1942, Gregory spoke at several black schools and colleges in West Virginia, in Virginia, and in the Carolinas. He also served on the first Assembly Development Committee, whose goal it was to support the production of materials for the growth of the Bahá'í Faith in South and Central America.

Finally, in 1944 and 1945, Gregory, now in his seventies, traveled through five southern states where articles about him received public and press attention. His talks and work on the Race Amity conventions, organized by Bahá'ís, would appear in a variety of newspapers.

In December 1948, Louis Gregory suffered a stroke. Louisa's health was also in decline, so they stayed at their home on the grounds of Green Acre Bahá'í School in Eliot, Maine. It was there that Gregory died, at age seventy-seven, on July 30, 1951. On August 6, 1951, Shoghi Effendi sent the following cable to the American Bahá'í community: "Profoundly deplore grievous loss of dearly beloved, noble-minded, golden-hearted Louis Gregory, pride and example to the Negro adherents of the Faith. Keenly feel loss of one so loved, admired and trusted by 'Abdu'l-Bahá." In this same message, he adorned Gregory with the posthumous mantle of "Hand of the Cause of God": "Deserves rank of first Hand of the Cause of his race.

Rising Bahá'í generation in African continent will glory in his memory and emulate his example. Advise hold memorial gathering in Temple in token recognition of his unique position, outstanding services" (*Citadel of Faith* 163).

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The research on Louis Gregory is plentiful and rich with moving vignettes from the life of this remarkable soul. Most prominent among these works is the substantial biography by Gayle Morrison, *To Move the World: Louis G. Gregory and the Advancement of Racial Unity in America* (US Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1982). More recently, Janet Ruhe-Schoen has published a fine description of Gregory's teaching work titled *Champions of Oneness: Louis Gregory and His Shining Circle* (US Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 2015). Finally, as cited above, there is significant discussion of Gregory's work in South Carolina in Louis Venters' history *No Jim Crow Church: The Origins of South Carolina's Bahá'í Community* (University Press of Florida, 2015).

Alain Locke's “Moral Imperatives for World Order” Revisited

CHRISTOPHER BUCK

Abstract

History offers a review of past events in a quest for contemporary relevance, where hindsight can serve as a source of insight into present-day social paradoxes and dilemmas. The present essay revisits three public speeches by distinguished Bahá'í philosopher, Alain Locke, presented at the Institute of International Relations' Tenth Annual Session in 1944, and argues that he articulated a three-part message: (1) racism, although an American problem, is not purely a domestic issue; (2) racism has bilateral and multilateral consequences (especially economic) in the international context; and (3) three “moral imperatives”—of promoting the unity of races, religions, and nations, both locally and globally—are primary objectives in the quest for world peace.

Résumé

L'histoire permet de revoir des événements du passé dans une quête de pertinence pour aujourd'hui, une rétrospective pouvant alors être une source de compréhension de paradoxes et dilemmes sociaux actuels. Cet essai reprend trois discours publics prononcés par l'éminent philosophe bahá'í Alain Locke lors de la

dixième session annuelle de l'Institut des relations internationales, en 1944. Il fait valoir que Locke a articulé un message en trois volets: 1) le racisme, bien qu'il s'agisse d'un enjeu américain, n'est pas un problème propre à ce pays; 2) le racisme a des conséquences bilatérales et multilatérales (notamment économiques) au niveau international, et 3) trois « impératifs moraux » — promouvoir l'unité des races, des religions et des nations, tant aux niveaux local que mondial — sont des objectifs primordiaux dans la recherche de la paix mondiale.

Resumen

La historia ofrece una revisión de eventos pasados en una búsqueda por la relevancia contemporánea, donde la comprensión retrospectiva puede servir como una fuente de percepción de paradojas sociales y dilemas del presente día. Este ensayo revisa tres charlas públicas por el distinguido filósofo bahá'í, Alain Locke, presentadas en la Décima Sesión Anual del Instituto de Relaciones Internacionales en 1944, y argumenta que él articuló un mensaje con tres partes: (1) el racismo, aunque un problema Americano, no es puramente un asunto doméstico; (2) el racismo tiene consecuencias bilaterales y multilaterales (especialmente económicas) en el contexto internacional; y (3) tres “imperativos morales”—de promocionar la unidad de las razas, las religiones y las naciones, tanto local y globalmente—son objetivos primarios en la búsqueda de la paz mundial.

Winner of the National Book Award 2018 for Nonfiction and of the 2019 Pulitzer Prize in the biography category, *The New Negro: The Life of*

Alain Locke, is sure to rekindle scholarly and popular interest in Alain Leroy Locke (1885–1954). The author, Jeffrey C. Stewart—professor of Black Studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara—asserts:

Locke's vision remains a curious blend of pragmatism ("psalms will be more effective than sermons") in converting the heart of the oppressor to empathize with the oppressed, religious consciousness (a blend of Christianity and his Bahá'í faith), mild Afrocentrism (a return to an African past as a non-Western basis of a Black modernism), and philosophical idealism. (542)

Interestingly, "Stewart downplays Locke's involvement with the Bahá'í Faith, giving it only a few paragraphs of attention in a 944-page book" (Smith). Such short-shrift given to Locke's Bahá'í identity and discourses is part of an ongoing reluctance on the part of many Locke scholars to adequately acknowledge, accept, address, and integrate the Bahá'í dimension of Locke's life and thought.

Stewart's cursory treatment of the Bahá'í dimension of Locke's life and thought is similar to that of Locke's biography by Leonard Harris and Charles Molesworth (although not to the same degree), who rightly distinguish Locke's historical significance overall as "the most influential African American intellectual born between W.E.B. Du Bois and

Martin Luther King, Jr." (Harris and Molesworth 1). Dr. King himself, at the Poor People's Campaign Rally in Clarksdale, Mississippi, on March 19, 1968, declared: "We're going to let our children know that the only philosophers that lived were not Plato and Aristotle, but W.E.B. Du Bois and Alain Locke came through the universe" (7). Alain Locke was a public figure of some stature and consequence who is once again—or still—influencing the discourse on race.

To his credit, however, Professor Harris has been vocal about, and appreciative of, Alain Locke's Bahá'í identity, both in public lectures as well as in print. For instance, he includes two of Alain Locke's essays originally contributed to the *Bahá'í World* volumes,¹ whereas Charles Molesworth's anthology of Locke's oeuvre is bereft of any mention whatsoever of his Bahá'í essays. The present writer has tried to fill this void in Locke scholarship, yet the Bahá'í dimension of Locke's life and thought remain marginalized and undervalued. Therefore, throughout the remarks and analysis that follow, occasional references to Locke's Bahá'í context will be offered as an added dimension in an overarching framework of analysis.

Locke's framing of the American racial crisis—and the wide range of problems that racism precipitates and perpetuates—is still relevant today, as such problems have not been resolved and persist, albeit in reconfigured ways. When the Institute of International

1 See Works Cited, *infra*

Relations held its Tenth Annual Session from June 18–28, 1944, in Oakland, California, World War II had set the world aflame, and the conflagration was still raging. World peace was but a dream, and seemed as elusive as ever. Thinkers, academics, educators, and others concerned with this issue would meet, from time to time, in *ad hoc*, confabulatory “think tanks,” to examine possible ways of bringing about a lasting global peace.

This conference was one such event—a place to confer—yet it achieved no definitive consensus or notable outcome. Although high-profile back then, the Institute of International Relations’ “Tenth Annual Session” is now a mere footnote in history. So why is it valuable to revisit this event today? Because the message of one of its outstanding presenters—Bahá’í philosopher Alain Locke—is as relevant as ever.

Over the course of two days (June 20–21), Alain Locke presented three papers: “Race: American Paradox and Dilemma;” “Race in the Present World Crisis;” and “Moral Imperatives for World Order.” Summaries of these three papers were published in a proceedings volume.² “Moral Imperatives for World Order,” however, was reprinted by Leonard Harris in his

2 *Summary of Proceedings: Institute of International Relations, Mills College, Oakland, California, June 18 to 28, 1944.* (Courtesy of Janice Braun, Library Director & Special Collections Librarian Milhaud Archivist, and Director, Center for the Book, Mills College, October 1, 2018.)

edited volume, *The Philosophy of Alain Locke: Harlem Renaissance and Beyond*.

At this prestigious event, which attracted elites from the world over, Locke’s series of presentations appear to have been well-planned and executed. After all, this was a golden opportunity to convey a key social message, by way of formal public discourse, to this assemblage of prominent individuals and leaders of thought. In so doing, Locke presented a three-part message, to wit: (1) racism, although an American problem, is not purely a domestic issue; (2) racism has bilateral and multilateral consequences in the international context; and (3) three “moral imperatives”—of promoting the unity of races, religions, and nations, both locally and globally—are primary objectives in the quest for world peace. Not only does Locke present racism as an American problem domestically, but as an issue with global ramifications. Doubtlessly influenced by his beliefs as a Bahá’í, Locke contends that establishing world peace is contingent on race unity by eliminating racial prejudice and the establishment of race unity, interracial harmony (i.e. ideal race relations) goes beyond eradicating prejudice, which is only the first step.

Little is known about the specific circumstances that drew Locke to this conference; presumably he was invited as a guest speaker. No doubt he enjoyed lecturing on topics that he considered important. As a public intellectual—and particularly as a prominent “race man” (a common catchphrase at

the time) or spokesperson for African Americans—Locke took every opportunity to promote minority rights, especially those of the oppressed “Negro” race. While he pursued a lifelong interest and vocation in promoting African American art as a cultural ambassador of what was called the “New Negro Movement,” whose mission it was to eradicate negative racial stereotypes,³ Alain Locke spoke far and wide on these issues of the widest social concern—issues that were (and still are) both domestic and international in scope.

Locke can be credited with internationalizing the race “problem”—reframing it as not simply a domestic issue, but one with repercussions in the international arena—and strategically connecting it with the issue of democracy. His recasting of the race issue was a key strategy, inasmuch as America has always seen itself as a champion for democracy. In appealing to democracy, Locke sought to broaden its definition and scope, in order to more fully democratize democracy and “Americanize Americans,” as Locke wrote (Buck, *Alain Locke* 239). In so doing, he developed a complex theory of democracy with at least nine dimensions: (1) Local; (2) Moral; (3) Political; (4) Economic; (5) Cultural (Carter 117–19); (6) Racial; (7) Social; (8) Spiritual; and (9) World Democracy (Buck,

“Alain Locke’s Philosophy” 30–41)—to which other forms of democracy may be added, such as “Intellectual Democracy.”⁴ By expanding, even universalizing, the concept of democracy, Alain Locke adroitly linked race relations and minority rights with America’s professed ideals of equality. He, moreover, forged dynamic connections between racial, social, and world democracy.

So it comes as no surprise that Locke’s three conference presentations were equally interconnected and expansive. The Institute operated under the auspices of the American Friends Service Committee (a Quaker organization) and the Oakland Institute of International Relations committee as well. Although these conferences were annual events, the 1944 session is the only one that Locke himself is known to have attended and presented at (“Institute of International Relations Holds 10th Meeting”). Alain Locke was one of nineteen featured speakers—listed as “The Faculty”—with short biographical notices. The impressive credentials of Locke are stated as follows:

Professor of Philosophy at Howard University, vice-president Association of Adult Education, 1934–36; president editor “Plays of Negro Life”; co-editor “When

³ For a more detailed treatment, please refer to my article, “New Negro Movement” in the *Encyclopedia of African American History*, edited by Leslie Alexander and Walter Rucker.

⁴ Personal communication, Janice Braun, Library Director & Special Collections Librarian Milhaud Archivist, and Director, Center for the Book, Mills College, October 2, 2018.

Peoples Meet"; Rhodes Scholar at Oxford 1907–10; Ph.D. Harvard University 1918; member: Anthropological Society, Ethnological Society, Negro Academy, Phi Beta Kappa, Academie des Sciences Coloniales, Negro Society for Historical Research. ("Final Program")

On the morning of Tuesday, June 20, Alain Locke presented his formal lecture, "Race: American Paradox and Dilemma." Locke's other two presentations were featured as "Evening Lectures" ("Final Program"). No information is available on how many attended. According to the conference brochure ("Final Program"), there were twelve "Round Table" sessions as well, in addition to the individual presentations. This session of the Institute of International Relations should be seen within its American historical context. The year 1944, when World War II was raging in full force, was also part of the "Jim Crow" era of legally enforced segregation in the United States. So this prestigious event was all the more significant for publicly featuring a "Negro" speaker. Boldly announcing its special guest speaker, Alain Locke's photograph appeared in the Institute's brochure ("Final Program").

Whether as abstracts or complete texts, the conference presentations were published in a *Summary of Proceedings*. This slender volume appears to have been privately published by Mills College, but no information is

available as to how many copies were actually published.

Of Alain Locke's three lectures, "Moral Imperatives for World Order" was subsequently republished by Temple University Press (*Philosophy of Alain Locke* 151–52) and then again by Oxford University Press (*Works of Alain Locke* 555–56). The latter volume, however, does not credit the source. Locke's two other lectures are published here for the very first time, courtesy of Mills College.⁵ As for the *Proceedings* volume itself, this appears to have been printed from a typescript, rather than a typeset original, indicating that this proceedings volume was more of a souvenir than an academic publication for wide distribution. The editors of this volume were Clarice Hubert and Cynthia Reynolds. Tom Hunt, Executive Secretary of the local "Institute Committee" in Oakland, contributed the one-page "Preface." Hunt states, in part:

In presenting this report of the proceedings of the 10th annual Institute of International Relations, we must again apologize for the extended delay in its appearance.

Each lecture and Roundtable report, with a few exceptions, has been read, corrected,

5 Permission granted, courtesy of Mills College. (Courtesy of Janice Braun, Library Director & Special Collections Librarian Milhaud Archivist, and Director, Center for the Book, Mills College, October 12, 2018.)

and approved by the lecturer or roundtable leader concerned. Editorial form and exact choice of words, however, remain an Institute responsibility. . . .

The Institute hereby expresses formal thanks to the editors, note-takers, typists, and proof-readers, many of whom volunteered long hours to make the Summary possible. (Hunt)

Additional copies of the *Summary of Proceedings* were offered for sale (Hunt). This *Proceedings* volume is a primary source of information for what took place within the Tenth Annual Session itself, including Locke's three presentations.

In "Race: American Paradox and Dilemma," Alain Locke was the sole speaker in the venue. That evening, for "Race in the Present World Crisis," Alain Locke's lecture was followed by Ernest Price's. For his Wednesday evening lecture, the title, "Moral Imperatives for World Order," was shared by four presenters: Alain Locke, Leslie Schaefer, Rabbi William Stern, and Harry Silcock (*Summary* 19–22).

Alain Locke's three lectures (as presented in summary form in *Proceedings*) were not his most rhetorically eloquent, but they were nonetheless directly representative of Locke's essential message to America and the world. Locke was a significant public figure who had something meaningful to say. He was a deep thinker. Although, by some accounts, he appeared to be somewhat aloof (Stewart 301,

314, 381), the truth of the matter is that Locke was fully engaged with the pressing issues of his day and age. Locke's talks themselves appear to have had a certain logical order and progression. The first one, "Race: American Paradox and Dilemma" (*Summary* 9–10), presents the domestic problem in America itself. "Race in the Present World Crisis" (*Summary* 13–15) expands the issue, extending the ramifications of racism to the level of international relations and trade, thereby adding an economic dimension and incentive for the resolution of this problem. The last, "Moral Imperatives For World Order" (*Summary* 19–20) offers solutions at the level of principle. What follows are descriptions, with highlights, of each of Locke's three presentations.

"RACE: AMERICAN PARADOX AND DILEMMA"

In this lecture, Alain Locke describes the problem of racism in America as a "paradox," a polite euphemism for what really was a flagrant contradiction between professed American ideals and lived social reality, which was a far cry from fulfilling those ideals. In developing a stark contrast between social precept and practice—mapping the considerable social distance between the ideal and the real—Locke represents the problem of racism as a national issue for America at large, not simply a regional problem intrinsic to the American South. He uses the

metaphor of a "growing cancer" that has "spread to all parts of the country." This cancer of racism has metastasized and threatens the body politic of America. Characterizing racism as a "cancer" draws attention to the urgency of the problem at hand. Racism contradicts the fundamental American value of "equality" and is, therefore, a threat to American society.

Alain Locke speaks directly to his audience in "California and on the West Coast" in declaring that the problem of racial and ethnic prejudice affects "Orientals as well as Jews and others" and is a social crisis of "increasing force" in that part of America. This is a "major national issue both morally and socially." In other words, the problem is both individual and national, not just regional in nature.

In 1944, American forces abroad, fighting in World War II, represented a cross-section of the country's demographics, including "black and white, Jew and Gentile," which is to say virtually all Americans. Seeing necessity as the mother of social progress, Locke anticipates a significant social change after the war effort is over. "Millions of young men" will return, he declares, and this signal demographic fact is expected to have a great impact on American society. It is well known that the experience of travel abroad often broadens the outlook of the traveler, as Mark Twain famously said: "Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry and narrow-mindedness, and many of our people need it sorely on these accounts" (Twain 650).

American soldiers abroad had seen the world, fought together, protected each other, and eventually achieved an internationally and socially significant victory when World War II ended. Locke knew that America would never be the same after the war was over. Even though slow to come, such change was inevitable. At home, he notes the array of "certain concessionary steps in improved race relations"—"changes" that were "made mainly the interest of the war."

Looking ahead, Alain Locke predicts that if the problem of racial prejudice is not solved, or at least significantly mitigated, then America "will have the race problem intensified not only nationally but with an international spotlight upon it." In other words, the whole world will be watching America—and its reputation will be tarnished in the arena of international opinion unless and until America resolves its longstanding racial crisis. Thus the racial problem no longer stands in splendid isolation. Locke represents African Americans as not only "the largest minority group," but also the "oldest minority in terms of residence." It would appear that in consideration of his audience and of the topic at hand, Locke chose, on this occasion, to disregard the pre-Columbian Indigenous peoples who are the original inhabitants of the Americas, decimated to minority status due to colonialism.

Throughout this lecture, Locke uses the words "paradox," "dilemma," and "problem" more or less synonymously.

A problem obviously demands a solution. After framing the problem, the solution that Locke offers is primarily social in nature, recognizing the limitations of legislation: “The solution needs more than an even-handed enforcement of the Constitution. There must be added equality and economic opportunity; the White [*sic*] population must experience changed attitudes and practices which are outside the Constitutional provisions set up for equality.” In other words, in order to effect social reform, “public opinion” must be seen as a key social dynamic, and therefore must be addressed.

When Alain Locke talks about the “education of public opinion,” he knows full well that he is speaking to influential educators who, if persuaded by his message, can then do their part in progressively informing the American public of both the racial problem and its solution, and of the necessity to go beyond the status quo, which will not foreseeably remain the same, but will only get worse if the situation is not proactively improved. This moral imperative is also a social imperative. Without saying so explicitly, Alain Locke appears to be telling his audience that the present racial crisis, if it persists and remains unchecked, will eventually lead to “bloody” outcomes, unless counter-measures are taken—that is, “if strife is to be averted” and “conflict” avoided. It is almost as if he is predicting what is foreseeable, if not inevitable—outbreaks of race riots, in which the streets of American cities would run with blood.

That evening, Locke did, in fact, talk about the problem of race riots in America. He referred to the Detroit Race Riot of 1943—exactly one year earlier, June 20–21, 1943—when two days of rioting by both blacks and whites left thirty-four dead (twenty-five African Americans and nine whites), and nearly 700 injured, wreaking such havoc as to cause an estimated two million dollars-worth of damages in property destroyed or looted, before federal troops—some 6,000 servicemen, in tanks, armed with automatic weapons—were called to the scene to restore order (Capeci, Jr., and Wilkerson 16). Locke matter-of-factly declares: “It took less than forty-eight hours for news of race riots in Detroit to reach the radios of the enemy.” The Detroit race riots not only shocked America, but drew international attention, including condemnation in the form of anti-American propaganda. Locke could just as readily have also cited the Los Angeles “Zoot Suit Riots” that broke out in Los Angeles, California, on June 3, 1943 (Chiodo 1–14), nearly a year prior to Locke’s talk, which perhaps may have been more vivid in the minds of his largely Californian audience. Locke’s audience was left with a clear sense of the problem, but with no stated solution, except that the measures to be taken needed to affect social change beyond legislation itself, which is of limited effect.

This necessity is illustrated by the fact that Locke lived to see the landmark Supreme Court decision, *Brown v. Board of Education* (decided May

17, 1954), shortly before his death on June 9, 1954. *Brown v. Board of Education* was limited in scope, in that it only struck down school segregation; it did not end the wider problem of racial segregation and its inherent inequality. While the Civil Rights Bill of 1964 did fill some of the gaps in public accommodations, yet interracial marriage was not guaranteed as a right until 1967 and housing discrimination remained legal until 1968—with consequences that affect the present day. So *Brown v. Board of Education* was a beginning, not an ending, in the ongoing—and seemingly never-ending—quest for racial equality in America.

What Locke told his audience was all too true: Federal anti-discrimination laws, such as the Civil Rights Act of 1964, can only go so far. Laws, at most, may have some effect in prohibiting and/or redressing instances of actionable racial discrimination. But for the prevalence of racism in American society, such laws would theoretically not have been necessary in the first place. Yet, such laws, though stopgap measures at best, were slow in coming. Laws do not change hearts. Legislation alone, cannot bring about the sea-change necessary to eradicate the "cancer" of racism in American society. That was Alain Locke's message back then—and is his message today.

"RACE IN THE PRESENT WORLD CRISIS"

The evening session, in a thematic sense, was a continuation of the

morning session. In this lecture, Alain Locke turns his audience's attention to the global situation in his opening statement:

There is no panacea or worldwide solution for the American race problem. But whatever solutions we can make will undoubtedly contribute to the further integration of the nations of the world, will tend to make us world citizens, or in other words, brothers, in addition to making our democracy more consistent and effective. (*Summary* 13)

Clearly, Locke does not mean to imply that no solutions exist. It is for this reason that Locke speaks of "solutions" in the plural, and reminds his audience: "In this hemisphere slavery came first, and then followed labor slavery." Locke cites one instance, the "bracero" question, which was newsworthy at that time (although he does not use this specific term).

Braceros were legally contracted Mexican seasonal laborers, or migrant workers, who crossed the US-Mexico border to work in Texas—primarily on farms and railroads—and in other Southwestern border states as well. In these states, exploitatively low wages and deplorably poor working conditions were the norm, rather than the exception. During World War II—and under pressure by Mexico, seeking better treatment for its citizens—efforts to regulate the influx and employment of braceros led to

bilateral agreements that permitted migrant workers to be employed in the United States on a contract basis. Despite its ups and downs, the bilateral U.S.-Mexico Bracero Program lasted from 1942 to 1964.

Locke was keenly aware of discrimination suffered by the braceros, and alluded to their plight to prove his point that racism entailed serious ramifications for international relations, especially US-Mexico relations, in which prejudice had immediate economic and political consequences, triggering a diplomatic crisis that had to be resolved, however imperfectly. To characterize the problem that Locke was referring to, historian Johnny McCain summarizes a note, dated September 8, 1943, submitted by the Mexican Foreign Office to the American Embassy, outlining major grievances by braceros employed by the Texas and Pacific Railway at Monahans and at Midland, Texas. In McCain's words:

The braceros in question complained bitterly of discrimination. They contended that they were denied entrance to public places of entertainment, were not permitted to sit at tables in refreshment parlors or to purchase items there except by using the service entrance, and could not patronize barbershops or other places of service except in areas almost inaccessible to them. On the matter of unequal treatment, they complained that they had straw mattresses while the Americans had

cotton ones; they had no first-aid kits; they had inadequate bathing facilities, inadequate sanitation, and overcrowded conditions; and they were charged one dollar every two weeks for lodgings, which the employer refused to show on the payroll slips. (59; see also Guglielmo 1212-37)

These charges were brought before the Texas Good Neighbor Commission. With this background in mind, this is what Locke had to say about the bracero question generally:

Such international pressure can and will come. Texas and the Southwestern states have set their behavior on the most reactionary of Southern racial practices in their handling of the Mexicans who come across the border to do seasonal work. The Mexican government took this as an insult, and is, today, insisting that unless better treatment be given to the Mexican laborers by the states and assurance given through the State Department that they be decently received, that they will not be allowed to come across the borders. (*Summary* 14)

By internationalizing the problem of racism, Alain Locke could persuade his audience that eliminating prejudice in favor of practicing equality not only was the way to resolve the American "paradox" mentioned earlier, but was also a necessary step in bolstering

America's declining "moral authority" in terms of "social democracy." As Professor Guy Mount has observed, "Locke's reference to Russia's social policy, which he characterized as a 'clearer moral appeal in the matter of her policies and practices of race,' was a telling observation." Mount further notes:

Locke clearly saw "labor slavery" as having replaced chattel slavery as the ideal means of production for the American capitalist class. Locke's observation was uncanny and largely true to fact: at that time in history, the Soviet Union did have a "clearer moral appeal in the matter of her policies and practices of race" when compared to the United States, by any objective standard. The Leninist party line on race, in fact, attracted many African American intellectuals, including Locke, to socialism in general and to the Communist Party's social platform in particular, and was a primary reason why so many people of color around the world were drawn to communism and formed revolutionary anti-colonial struggles along these lines. (Mount)

That is why the Bahá'í emphasis on promoting racial equality and harmonious race relations was so progressive, as Professor Cornel West has publicly stated:

I have come to have a profound admiration for brothers and sisters of the Bahá'í Faith. I've actually met Dizzy Gillespie and he, of course, one of the great artists of the 20th century, was of Bahá'í Faith, and talked over and over again about what it meant to him. Alain Locke, of course, probably one of the greatest philosophic minds of the middle part of the 20th century, was also of Bahá'í Faith, the first Black Rhodes scholar and chairman of the philosophy department at Howard University, for over 42 years. What I've always been taken by is the very genuine universalism of the Bahá'í Faith, one of the first religious groups to really hit racism and white supremacy head on, decades ago. By decades, I mean many decades ago and remain consistent about it. . . .

When you think about it, I mean, Bahá'í was integrated before the YMCA and the YWCA . . . , even prior to the Community Party, which is the first secular institution to integrate with blacks and whites and reds. . . .

When you talk about race and the legacy of white supremacy, there's no doubt that when the history is written, the true history is written, the history of this country, the Bahá'í Faith will be one of the leaven in the American loaf that allowed the democratic loaf to expand because of the anti-racist witness of those of

Bahá'í Faith. So that there is a real sense in which a Christian like myself is profoundly humbled before Bahá'í brothers and sisters and the Dizzy Gillespies and the Alain Lockes and so forth." (West)

Having framed America's racial crisis not only as regional, but national and international in scope, Locke then proposes some solutions in his third and final presentation.

"MORAL IMPERATIVES
FOR WORLD ORDER"

Throughout his three lectures, Locke consistently refers to World War II as "today's world crisis." In the opening paragraph of his third lecture, he implies a dynamic linkage between "universal human brotherhood" and world peace, based upon the widest possible "loyalty." Loyalty, in fact, is one of Alain Locke's most important social and philosophical terms of reference. In this lecture, Locke speaks of three "corporate" ideas and entities: the nation, race, and religion (which Locke refers to as "sect"). On nationalism, taken to its extreme, Alain Locke comments: "Nationality now means irresponsible national sovereignty." Indeed, the "politically expansive nation," as Locke puts it, was one of the major causes of World War II.

Alain Locke then speaks of social evolution, which he describes as a "process of evolution by progressive enlargement of values." Values were

extremely important to Locke. After all, his 1918 Harvard dissertation was focused on the philosophy of values.

As an instance of this social evolution in the religious context, Locke offers an example from the Bible. His reference to human sacrifice ("reported Biblically when sacrifice to God meant the sacrifice of a human being") probably harks back to Exodus: "And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 'Sanctify unto me all the firstborn, whatsoever openeth the womb among the children of Israel, both of man and of beast: it is mine' (13:1). Alain Locke's subsequent reference to the substitution of an animal for the firstborn son probably has in mind Exodus 13:13, in which a father could "redeem" his "firstborn" son by substituting an animal in the son's stead. However, the parallel commandment in Exodus 22:29 provides for no animal substitution whatsoever: "Thou shalt not delay to offer the first of thy ripe fruits, and of thy liquors: the firstborn of thy sons shalt thou give unto me."

The "next stage" of the Jewish practice and understanding of the meaning of sacrifice, according to Locke, was "an offering of a pure and contrite heart," a reference to the biblical passage: "For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise" (Psalm 51:16-17). It would seem that Locke used the analogy of religious evolution as a metaphor for social evolution, more broadly.

True to his earlier thinking, Locke redefines race, "not in the fascist, blood-clan sense," but as "a common culture and brotherhood." He then states: "Cultural superiority of one race is only an expression of arbitrary loyalty to that which is our own. Confraternity of culture will have to be put forward as what race can mean, and [as] an ideal of the parity of races and cultures." Here, the word "parity" is another favorite term frequently found in Locke's essays and speeches, by which he meant equality, eliminating evaluations of inferior or superior status.

Returning to his religious references, Locke then takes Christianity to task for paradoxically professing the inclusivist doctrine of "the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man," while insisting on an exclusivist doctrine that holds that "only one true way of salvation with all other ways leading to damnation." This shows Locke to be a religious universalist, as well as a cultural pluralist, cosmopolitan and internationalist—all of which were perfectly consonant and resonant with his Bahá'í identity. Locke famously concludes: "The moral imperatives of a new world order are an internationally limited idea of national sovereignty, a non-monopolistic and culturally tolerant concept of race and religious loyalties freed of sectarian bigotry." This statement is as profound as it is formulaic—operating as a categorical imperative, global in scope, universal in its humanity, and socially progressive in nature.

Here, Alain Locke's professed Bahá'í ideals are in evidence, although indirectly so. At this time in American history, while the world was still in the throes of a global conflagration, it was probably not expedient to directly cite the relevant Bahá'í principles and corresponding Bahá'í scriptures. In my previous works, I have suggested that there is a certain synergy between Locke's faith and his philosophy (Buck, *Alain Locke: Faith and Philosophy 2* and *passim*). Such synergy may also be in evidence here, and will be further demonstrated later in this paper.

PUBLICITY

On Sunday, June 18, 1944, the *Oakland Tribune* published an article announcing the event, "Decisions Now Shape Peace Theme of Lecture Series," which states, in part:

"Race in the Present World Crisis" is the topic for the opening lecture tomorrow evening at 8 o'clock when Alain Locke, professor of philosophy at Howard University in Washington D.C., will be the speaker. Poet, Rhodes scholar at Oxford and a Ph.D. from Harvard, Dr. Locke is also co-editor of "When Peoples Meet." (38)

On Wednesday, June 21, 1944, Nancy Barr Mavity, a reporter for the same newspaper, quoted Locke in her story, "Relocation Japs Split on U.S. Loyalty, Official Says." She writes:

RACIAL DILEMMA

Alain Locke, professor of philosophy at Howard University, presented the problem of racial minorities as at once “the paradox and the dilemma of America.”

“The paradox of America is that we profess the democratic equality of men, which in practice we flagrantly deny,” he said. “The problem is no longer sectional, intensified by wartime shifts in population with accompanying changed group relationships.

“The war, it is true, has also brought certain concessions, such as enlarged employment opportunities for Negroes, increased unionization, and advanced technical training and education. But no thinking Negro can feel secure that these concessions will be permanent.

“Unless racial equality is recognized as basis [*sic*: basic] and important in post-war planning, the [race] problem will be intensified not only nationally but with an international spotlight upon it.”

This evening’s program on “Moral Imperatives for a World Order” will include as speakers, in addition to Shaffer, Prof. James Muilenberg of the Pacific School of Religion and Prof. Alain Locke at Howard University. (12)

Locke did not view racism primarily as a set of individualized personal failings caused by ignorant thoughts. As Mount notes, “Locke showed himself

to be a much more sophisticated theorist who saw racism as a set of institutions and state-based practices rooted in a deep set of global historical processes, and not as fundamentally a problem of the heart.” Mount concludes that Locke, “saw racism as multifaceted (and thus inclusive of personal biases) yet rooted, first and foremost, in deep structural problems that, as he points out, are beyond the bounds of the Constitution to correct and remedy. Locke is not simply talking about changing hearts, but changing the very structures of society that were protected by the Constitution.”

CONCLUSION

These three speeches represent Locke at a critical moment in American and world history and in his own intellectual development. In “Race: American Paradox and Dilemma,” Locke speaks not only of “true democracy,” but of “equality and economic opportunity”—something he elsewhere refers to as “economic democracy” (Buck, “Alain Locke’s Philosophy” 34–35). Here, Locke’s notions of economic opportunity and economic democracy (leading, in due course, to equality) contemplate actual democracy in the workplace: “Locke argues that the economy should be run democratically—and not dominated and dictated by those endowed with capital” (Mount). In “Race in the Present World Crisis,” Locke speaks more definitively of democracy in three dimensions—racial, social, and world democracy. In

"Moral Imperatives for World Order," Locke also advocates "moral and spiritual brotherhood," which he elsewhere characterizes as "moral democracy" and as "spiritual democracy." For Locke, "democracy" is basically synonymous with such terms as "equality," "parity," and "reciprocity."

Alain Locke was a leading African-American "race man," as well as a champion of American democracy, and a "world citizen" above and beyond all else. His cosmopolitan outlook is not so lofty an ideal as to be remote and inert, but is grounded in practical realism. His immediate attention is focused on the problem of race, which was then—and is now—the most pressing issue at hand. At the same time, Alain Locke operates on higher intellectual levels without losing touch with what was happening "on the ground." In his three speeches, taken together, presented at the Institute of International Relations' Tenth Annual Session that took place at Mills College in Oakland, California (18–28 June 1944), Alain Locke pragmatically proposes that any real solution to the racial crisis implicates three "moral imperatives"—promoting the unity of races, religions, and nations—which are prerequisite objectives in the quest for world peace. These three moral imperatives, if faithfully and effectively pursued, can achieve a significant degree of social transformation, both locally and globally, by advancing the unity of races, religions, and nations.

There is no doubt that Locke's "moral imperatives for world order" are still relevant today.

In a most useful overview of Locke's contribution at this conference, Professor Derik Smith affirms, "Perhaps most noteworthy are Locke's keen efforts to internationalize domestic race issues of the United States. Locke's impulse to speak about race in transnational terms—amplified by the venue of his presentation—represents a significant contrast to mainstream contemporary race discourse in the United States, especially as it pertains to African Americans" (Smith). Revisiting Locke's three presentations at the Institute of International Relations' conference will repay the effort, as his message remains as relevant to social discourse as ever.

Alain Locke discovered the Bahá'í Faith, which he joined in 1918, because its principles validated all that he stood for. Locke had been a Rhodes Scholar at the University of Oxford between 1907–1910, where he was an active member of the Oxford Cosmopolitan Club. Understandably, the Bahá'í principles regarding racial equality and universalism crystallized what Locke had already come to realize in his own thinking. This dynamic interplay between his personal perspectives and his discovery of the Bahá'í teachings brought forth a synergy that confirmed, nurtured, and sustained his personal philosophical and public academic endeavors henceforth.

APPENDIX I

SYNERGY BETWEEN LOCKE'S FAITH
AND PHILOSOPHY

The synergy between Locke's faith and philosophy becomes apparent after a close comparison between Locke's public discourse and the Bahá'í texts themselves, as the following parallels between Alain Locke's "Moral Imperatives for World Order" (1944) and open letters by Shoghi Effendi, compiled in *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh* (1938), amply illustrate:

Realism and idealism should be combined in striking [sic: striving] for a World Order. Skeletal ideals of universal human brotherhood have been in the world for a long time and we are further from tribal savagery and its tribalisms because of these ideals. But they are but partial expressions of what we hope to make them mean and what today's world crisis demands. (Locke 19)

The principle of the Oneness of Mankind—the pivot round which all the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh revolve—is no mere outburst of ignorant emotionalism or an expression of vague and pious hope. Its appeal is not to be merely identified with a reawakening of the spirit of brotherhood and good-will among men, nor does it aim solely at the fostering of harmonious cöoperation among

individual peoples and nations. . . .

It constitutes a challenge, at once bold and universal, to outworn shibboleths of national creeds—creeds that have had their day and which must, in the ordinary course of events as shaped and controlled by Providence, give way to a new gospel, fundamentally different from, and infinitely superior to, what the world has already conceived. . . .

It represents the consummation of human evolution—an evolution that has had its earliest beginnings in the birth of family life, its subsequent development in the achievement of tribal solidarity, leading in turn to the constitution of the city-state, and expanding later into the institution of independent and sovereign nations. (Shoghi Effendi 42–43)

Both Alain Locke and Shoghi Effendi demonstrate that time-honored ideas and ideals of human oneness have a long history. We began as tribal in origin, national in evolution, and global in nature, leading to what both thinkers refer to as a "world order." Thus, Alain Locke and Shoghi Effendi both view the concept of human oneness as an ever-widening ideal, as a function of social evolution.

Loyalty to corporate unity is a necessary loyalty to something larger than the individual in order to unite men. However, the traditional ideas and values associated

with human group loyalties are now hopelessly inadequate as a foundation for a larger society and impose limitations on a more comprehensive human society. In the transformation of these values we need something bigger and more understanding. (Locke 19–20)

The Faith of Bahá'u'lláh has assimilated, by virtue of its creative, its regulative and ennobling energies, the varied races, nationalities, creeds and classes that have sought its shadow, and have pledged unswerving fealty to its cause. It has changed the hearts of its adherents, burned away their prejudices, stilled their passions, exalted their conceptions, ennobled their motives, coordinated their efforts, and transformed their outlook. (Shoghi Effendi 197)

The concept of loyalty—especially of “loyalty to loyalty” (based on pragmatist philosopher, Josiah Royce)—is central to Locke’s philosophy. Both writers speak of the “transformation”—i.e. expansion and universalization—of formerly limited outlooks and allegiances.

These basic corporate ideas concern (1) the nation as a political corporate idea, (2) the race as a cultural corporate idea, and (3) the sect as a spiritual corporate idea. These larger loyalties, however,

are and have been seeds of conflict and division among men everywhere—loyalties that were originally meant to bring people together. How can we give them up? One great and fundamental way of giving up something that is vital is to find a way to transform or enlarge it. (Locke 20)

While preserving their patriotism and safeguarding their lesser loyalties, it has made them lovers of mankind, and the determined upholders of its best and truest interests. While maintaining intact their belief in the Divine origin of their respective religions, it has enabled them to visualize the underlying purpose of these religions, to discover their merits, to recognize their sequence, their interdependence, their wholeness and unity, and to acknowledge the bond that vitally links them to itself. This universal, this transcending love which the followers of the Bahá'í Faith feel for their fellow-men, of whatever race, creed, class or nation, is neither mysterious nor can it be said to have been artificially stimulated. It is both spontaneous and genuine. (Shoghi Effendi 197)

Here, Locke speaks of “larger loyalties,” while Shoghi Effendi comments on “lesser loyalties.” “Larger loyalties” and “lesser loyalties” are complementary. They can either coexist, or conflict. Taking both statements by Alain

Locke and Shoghi Effendi together, it is clear that “larger loyalties” are transformations of “lesser loyalties,” when political and parochial interests spiritually mature to become cosmopolitan in nature and function. Broadly speaking, both writers view loyalties as corporate in nature—whether national, racial, or religious (or other). Such loyalties will be limited in scope, unless and until they are universalized:

Nationality now means irresponsible national sovereignty. We must give up some of this arbitrary sovereignty in order to prevent war, to get fellowship among nations, to erase conflict boundaries which are potential battle-lines. We must work for enlargement of all our loyalties, but most particularly this one,—of the sovereign selfjudging [*sic*] politically expansive nation. . . .

We must consider race not in the fascist, blood-clan sense, which also is tribal and fetishist, but consider race as a common culture and brotherhood. Cultural superiority of one race is only an expression of arbitrary loyalty to that which is our own. Confraternity of culture will have to be put forward as what race can mean, and [*as*] an ideal of the parity of races and cultures. (Locke 20)

Unification of the whole of mankind is the hall-mark of the stage which human society is now approaching. Unity of family, of

tribe, of city-state, and nation have been successively attempted and fully established. World unity is the goal towards which a harassed humanity is striving. Nation-building has come to an end. The anarchy inherent in state sovereignty is moving towards a climax. A world, growing to maturity, must abandon this fetish, recognize the oneness and wholeness of human relationships, and establish once for all the machinery that can best incarnate this fundamental principle of its life. (Shoghi Effendi 202)

“Nationality”—by which Locke means “national sovereignty”—is “arbitrary” and “irresponsible”—parallel to Shoghi Effendi’s characterizations of “state sovereignty” as a “fetish” due to its inherent “anarchy” with respect to the demands and requirements of international relations, which are far beyond those of the era of “nation-building,” which “has come to an end.”

This process of evolution by progressive enlargement of values can be illustrated by the stages reported Biblically when sacrifice to God meant the sacrifice of a human being. This was changed to the substitution of an animal in the place of a man. Fundamentalists must have said if we give this up, that will be the end of sacrifices; but instead, there was more meaning to the act and when [*sic*:

"then"] the next stage took sacrifice to the still more meaningful level of "an offering of a pure and contrite heart." . . .

We must in the third place consider religion as having many ways leading to salvation. The idea that there is only one true way of salvation with all other ways leading to damnation is a tragic limitation to a Christianity which professes the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. How foolish in the eyes of foreigners are our competitive blind, sectarian missionaries! If the Confucian expression of a Commandment means the same as the Christian expression, then it is the truth also and should so be recognized. It is in this way alone that Christianity or any other enlightened religion can indicate [sic: vindicate] its claims to Universality; and so bring about moral and spiritual brotherhood. (Locke 20)

Incontrovertible as is this truth, its challenging character should never be allowed to obscure the purpose, or distort the principle, underlying the utterances of Bahá'u'lláh—utterances that have established for all time the absolute oneness of all the Prophets, Himself included, whether belonging to the past or to the future. Though the mission of the Prophets preceding Bahá'u'lláh may be viewed in that light, though the measure of Divine

Revelation with which each has been entrusted must, as a result of this process of evolution, necessarily differ, their common origin, their essential unity, their identity of purpose, should at no time and under no circumstances be misapprehended or denied. That all the Messengers of God should be regarded as "abiding in the same Tabernacle, soaring in the same Heaven, seated upon the same Throne, uttering the same Speech, and proclaiming the same Faith" must, however much we may extol the measure of Divine Revelation vouchsafed to mankind at this crowning stage of its evolution, remain the unalterable foundation and central tenet of Bahá'í belief. Any variations in the splendor which each of these Manifestations of the Light of God has shed upon the world should be ascribed not to any inherent superiority involved in the essential character of any one of them, but rather to the progressive capacity, the ever-increasing spiritual receptiveness, which mankind, in its progress towards maturity, has invariably manifested. (Shoghi Effendi 166)

In the above passages, both Alain Locke and Shoghi Effendi speak of religion in progressive, evolutionary terms. Locke gives two examples from the history of religion: the evolution of the notion and practice of sacrifice from human sacrifice, to

animal sacrifice, to spiritual sacrifice by means of “an offering of a pure and contrite heart” (Psalm 51:17 and Matthew 9:13); and the functional equivalence of Christian and Confucian moral concepts—presumably alluding to Jesus’s formulation of the “Golden Rule”⁶ and Confucius’s teaching on “reciprocity.”⁷ Similarly, Shoghi Effendi’s discourse on Bahá’u’lláh’s teachings on what Bahá’ís refer to as the “oneness of religion” speaks to a “process of evolution” that explains the historical distinctiveness among the world’s religions—in which the Bahá’í Faith represents the “crowning stage of [humanity’s spiritual] evolution,” while emphasizing “their common origin, their essential unity, their identity of purpose.”

The moral imperatives of a new world order are an internationally limited idea of national sovereignty, a non-monopolistic and culturally tolerant concept of race and religious loyalties freed of sectarian bigotry. (Locke 20)

6 “Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets” (Matthew 7:12; see also Luke 6:31).

7 “Zigong asked, “Is there a single saying that one may put into practice all one’s life?” The Master said, “That would be “reciprocity”: That which you do not desire, do not do to others” (*Analects* 15.24. See also 5.12 and 12.2).

What else could these weighty words signify if they did not point to the inevitable curtailment of unfettered national sovereignty as an indispensable preliminary to the formation of the future Commonwealth of all the nations of the world? (Shoghi Effendi 40)

Here, Locke’s concept of “an internationally limited idea of national sovereignty” resonates with Shoghi Effendi’s idea of “the curtailment of unfettered national sovereignty.” For both men, this notion of limited national sovereignty is, in Locke’s words, one of the “moral imperatives of a new world order.” Shoghi Effendi describes this new order more specifically as “the formation of the future Commonwealth of all the nations of the world.”

As I hope this section demonstrates, cosmopolitan and Bahá’í ideals co-habited, corresponded, and coalesced inside Alain Locke’s mind and heart. Thus the synergy between Alain Locke’s faith and philosophy was intensely and dynamically reinforcing, making Locke’s famous statement accord with the Bahá’í teachings in both the words he chose and the meaning he intended: “The moral imperatives of a new world order are an internationally limited idea of national sovereignty, a non-monopolistic and culturally tolerant concept of race and religious loyalties freed of sectarian bigotry.”

APPENDIX II

RACE: AMERICAN PARADOX AND DILEMMA

Tuesday Morning, June 20 [1944]

The paradox of America is that basically we profess a democratic equality of men which [sic] in practice we so flagrantly deny. This prejudice and lack of equality is the growing cancer which threatens our American Democracy. It is no longer a sectional problem having spread to all parts of the country. It threatens our basic declarations of equality and so impedes development of true democracy.

In California and on the West Coast you would have this dilemma of minority groups treatment even if you had no Negroes here. The problem of Orientals as well as Jews and others is becoming one of increasing force. But, with the Negro issue added, the problem becomes a major national issue both morally and socially. Fortunately it has become the increasing concern of small groups throughout the country, especially since war conditions have caused such large shifts of population and this inevitably has changed group relationships.

Also as a result of the war, millions of young men, black and white, Jew and Gentile, have been taken out of our country for a great international experience—one which will have its effect when they return. The rest of the population will have to stretch the attitudes and practices in order to

keep up with what I hope will be the enlightened attitudes of this younger generation from its new experiences in international groups [sic] relationships.

It is true that certain concessionary steps in improved race relations have been taken here at home as a result of the war. There are increased employment opportunities for Negroes [sic], increased labor unionization, increased technical training and education. These changes have been made mainly in the interest of the war, however, and it is important that these group relationships go forward from here on and not recede to where they were when the war started.

Unless racial equality is recognized as basic and made important in the post-war planning we will have the race problem intensified not only nationally but with an international spotlight upon it. The American Negro presents the most paradoxical problem. The Negro is the largest minority group, approximately one tenth [sic: one-tenth] of the population is excluded from proper American privileges and standards of living. The oldest minority in terms of residence, it has assimilated American culture more widely in proportion to its numbers than any other group. Negroes speak the same language, have the same religion, the same mores as the White [sic] population. The White population must realize this paradox and reverse its attitudes and do something about it. Around the Negro centers the question of our

moral sincerity about democracy, and our basic national honesty concerning the equality of men. We will not be truly democratic unless we solve this dilemma.

The solution needs more than an even-handed enforcement of the Constitution. There must be added equality and economic opportunity; the White population must experience changed attitudes and practices which are outside the Constitutional provisions set up for equality. The education of public opinion in such respect lags greatly. There is a vicious conspiracy for example to prevent the proper reporting of progress of the minority groups especially for the Negro, so that the public is not being psychologically prepared for the progress which is inevitable nor for the choice which must be made. The choice is whether we will have a bloody or peaceful path of progress for this mass movement of minority groups which are here and here to stay. This must be understood if strife is to be averted. And so there is a choice between progressive and mutually cooperative ways of solving the dilemma or of continuing ways which irritate and cause conflict. If this generation of young people solves that problem within a reasonable time it will have paid its right tribute to democracy and will have met successfully the challenge of the present inter-group crisis. (*Summary* 9–10)

RACE IN THE PRESENT WORLD CRISIS

Tuesday Evening, June 20 [1944]

There is no panacea or worldwide solution for the American race problem. But whatever solutions we can make will undoubtedly contribute to the further integration of the nations of the world, will tend to make us world citizens, or in other words, brothers, in addition to making our democracy more consistent and effective. The formula of the chosen people is as old as civilization. The Chinese had it but it was different from our modern version of the idea. They preferred to be exclusive and have others let them alone. But we proceed not by being consistently exclusive, but by trying to make people over on our culture pattern [*sic*] and then, instead of sharing our society with them, boss them around. A difference exists then between the modern and the ancient ideas of a chosen people. The Anglo-Saxons have a particularly virulent case of this modern kind in their imperialistic attitude of racial superiority and dominance.

There will not be any peace or justice in the world until we get over that kind of superiority which makes us want to and insist upon making other people like ourselves. The crux of the peculiar dilemma in this type of social policy and practice is the paradox of wanting to make people over, not respecting their group individualities, while denying them real fraternity and equality in their relationships with the majority group.

The colonial world we must remember is almost 100 percent non-white. Imperialism of the white race has brought about the present temporary and unstable domination of the whites over the non-whites. Our country has many people here by virtue of such imperialism and colonialism, even though we are not supposed to practice empire building. The Negroes are not the only group of this character, but ten percent of the North American people is Negro or mulatto. The majority of the Caribbean and the greater part of South America is even more Negro or Negroid; fourteen percent [*sic*] of the entire hemisphere. The nearer you come to the tropic zone the higher the percentage of black and mixed-blood populations. In the Caribbean, the Negroes constitute forty-six per cent. Indian and Hindu populations are there, too. Latin American views towards race are less extreme and more humane from the individual point of view, but as to economic exploitation, the Latin world is nearly as guilty [*sic*: guilty] as the Anglo-Saxon world. The Latin is guilty of injury without insult, whereas the Anglo-Saxon world is guilty of both the injury of exploitation and the insult of racial prejudice.

In this hemisphere slavery came first, and then followed labor slavery. The status of the subjugated people must be raised. Two of the greatest obstacles in the race problem today are the lack of confidence on the part of the minority in the dominating group, and the tradition and attitude of the

dominating group, who have a frozen system with vested interests in the customs of discrimination.

New perspectives can be made sufficiently real and vital in general public opinion to force enlightened change. Some of these new interests are Pan-Americanism, a policy not hatched just for the present world crisis, though accelerated by it. The Good Neighbor policy has tried quite successfully to reverse our dollar diplomacy, but we have not yet extended it with sufficient force to make it 100 per cent effective. When large numbers of Caribbean and South American populations come in increasing number to America or turn to America for guidance, the only reservation those people have to make when they look at the scene is the North American attitude towards race. Our foreign frontier of race is much more serious than the domestic. Only in terms of a disavowal and discontinuance of color prejudice can we have sound and secure relations with most of the countries to the south of us.

Our racial practices give us a bad name in the world at large and rob us of the moral authority, the confidence, cultural respect and prestige which we should command as a democratic nation. When business men [*sic*] and statesmen find that the approval and respect of these nations depends on our treatment of racial problems, we shall see racial democracy as a practical necessity for the effectiveness of the Pan-American trade programs and American economic leadership. These

conservative groups will then come to see some very grave and immediate reasons for changing American standards and practices in the matter of race.

Such international pressure can and will come. Texas and the Southwestern states have set their behavior on the most reactionary of Southern racial practices in their handling of the Mexicans who come across the border to do seasonal work. The Mexican government took this as an insult, and is, today, insisting that unless better treatment be given to the Mexican laborers by the states and assurance given through the State Department that they be decently received, that they will not be allowed to come across the borders. It took less than forty-eight hours for news of race riots in Detroit to reach the radios of the enemy.

Traditionally the American position has been for generations a great moving ideal of the world. Oppressed people have found refuge here. Now we are faced with the taunt that we are asking others to practice social democracy on a higher plane than we ourselves do. We have less moral authority to deal with England and her colonial issues because of our approach to the Negro and Jewish problems. We will eventually need to depend for world trade upon the Asiatic populations which will be raising their standards of living and then trading with us.

Russia's industrial output will be for a short time consumed internally and then she will have products to sell

the rest of the world. Trade is apt to go to Russia from the Asiatic and African countries in favor to us because she is Asiatic, she is nearer, and she has clearer moral appeal in the matter of her policies and practices of race. The non-white populations in the world will become increasingly informed about Russia's thoroughgoing social and racial democracy and will force us to reform our American practices and concepts of race.

Thus the situation of race is one of the most intense and serious of present-day America with grave international consequences. Aside from these economic considerations, we must face the call to this higher more democratic patriotism, and to higher allegiance to world democracy. The real threat and competition of Russia is not, as so often thought, that of a conflict of economic systems, capitalism versus communism, but the moral threat and competition of the nation that more thoroughly and consistently pictures [sic: practices] social and racial democracy by treating all human beings as equals. (*Summary* 13-15)

MORAL IMPERATIVES FOR WORLD ORDER

Wednesday Evening, June 21 [1944]

Realism and idealism should be combined in striking for a World Order [sic]. Skeletal ideals of universal human brotherhood have been in the world for a long time and we are further from tribal savagery and

its tribalisms because of these ideals. But they are but partial expressions of what we hope to make them mean and what today's world crisis demands.

Loyalty to corporate unity is a necessary loyalty to something larger than the individual in order to unite men. However, the traditional ideas and values associated with human group loyalties are now hopelessly inadequate as a foundation for a larger society and impose limitations on a more comprehensive human society. In the transformation of these values we need something bigger and more understanding.

These basic corporate ideas concern (1) the nation as a political corporate idea, (2) the race as a cultural corporate idea, and (3) the sect as a spiritual corporate idea. These larger loyalties, however, are and have been seeds of conflict and division among men everywhere—loyalties that were originally meant to bring people together. How can we give them up? One great and fundamental way of giving up something that is vital is to find a way to transform or enlarge it.

Nationality now means irresponsible national sovereignty. We must give up some of this arbitrary sovereignty in order to prevent war, to get fellowship among nations, to erase conflict boundaries which are potential battle-lines. We must work for enlargement of all our loyalties, but most particularly this one,—of the sovereign selfjudging [*sic*: self-judging] politically expansive nation.

This process of evolution by

progressive enlargement of values can be illustrated by the stages reported Biblically when sacrifice to God meant the sacrifice of a human being. This was changed to the substitution of an animal in the place of a man. Fundamentalists must have said if we give this up, that will be the end of sacrifices; but instead, there was more meaning to the act and when [*sic*: then] the next stage took sacrifice to the still more meaningful level of "an offering of a pure and contrite heart."

We must consider race not in the fascist, blood-clan sense, which also is tribal and fetishist, but consider race as a common culture and brotherhood. Cultural superiority of one race is only an expression of arbitrary loyalty to that which is our own. Confraternity of culture will have to be put forward as what race can mean, and [*as*] an ideal of the parity of races and cultures.

We must in the third place consider religion as having many ways leading to salvation. The idea that there is only one true way of salvation with all other ways leading to damnation is a tragic limitation to a Christianity which professes the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. How foolish in the eyes of foreigners are our competitive blind, sectarian missionaries! If the Confucian expression of a Commandment means the same as the Christian expression, then it is the truth also and should so be recognized. It is in this way alone that Christianity or any other enlightened religion can indicate [*sic*: vindicate] its

claims to Universality [*sic*]; and so bring about moral and spiritual brotherhood.

The moral imperatives of a new world order are an internationally limited idea of national sovereignty, a non-monopolistic and culturally tolerant concept of race and religious loyalties freed of sectarian bigotry. (*Summary* 19–20)

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Many articles published in *The Journal of Bahá'í Studies* allude to the institutions and central figures of the Bahá'í Faith; as an aid for those unfamiliar with the Bahá'í Faith, we include here a succinct summary excerpted from <http://www.bahai.org/beliefs/bahaullah-covenant/>. The reader may also find it helpful to visit the official web site for the worldwide Bahá'í community (www.bahai.org) available in several languages. For article submission guidelines, please visit <http://bahai-studies.ca/the-journal-of-bahai-studies-submission-guidelines/>.

ABOUT THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH

The Bahá'í Faith, its followers believe, is “divine in origin, all-embracing in scope, broad in its outlook, scientific in its method, humanitarian in its principles and dynamic in the influence it exerts on the hearts and minds of men.” The mission of the Bahá'í Faith is “to proclaim that religious truth is not absolute but relative, that Divine Revelation is continuous and progressive, that the Founders of all past religions, though different in the non-essential aspects of their teachings, “abide in the same Tabernacle, soar in the same heaven, are seated upon the same throne, utter the same speech and proclaim the same Faith” (Shoghi Effendi).

The Bahá'í Faith began with the mission entrusted by God to two Divine Messengers—the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh. Today, the distinctive unity of the Faith They founded stems from explicit instructions given by Bahá'u'lláh that have assured the continuity of guidance following His passing. This line of succession, referred to as the Covenant, went from Bahá'u'lláh to His Son 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and then from 'Abdu'l-Bahá to His grandson, Shoghi Effendi, and the Universal House of Justice, ordained by Bahá'u'lláh. A Bahá'í accepts the divine authority of the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh and of these appointed successors.

The Báb (1819-1850) is the Herald of the Bahá'í Faith. In the middle of the 19th century, He announced that He was the bearer of a message destined to transform humanity's spiritual life. His mission was to prepare the way for the coming of a second Messenger from God, greater than Himself, who would usher in an age of peace and justice.

Bahá'u'lláh (1817-1892)—the “Glory of God”—is the Promised One foretold by the Báb and all of the Divine Messengers of the past. Bahá'u'lláh delivered a new Revelation from God to humanity. Thousands of verses, letters and books flowed from His pen. In His Writings, He outlined a framework for the development of a global civilization which takes into account both the spiritual and material dimensions of human life. For this, He endured 40 years of imprisonment, torture and exile.

In His will, Bahá'u'lláh appointed His oldest son, 'Abdu'l-Bahá (1844-1921), as the authorized interpreter of His teachings and Head of the Faith. Throughout the East and West, 'Abdu'l-Bahá became known as an ambassador of peace, an exemplary human being, and the leading exponent of a new Faith.

Appointed Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, His eldest grandson, Shoghi Effendi (1897-1957), spent 36 years systematically nurturing the development, deepening the understanding, and strengthening the unity of the Bahá'í community, as it increasingly grew to reflect the diversity of the entire human race.

The development of the Bahá'í Faith worldwide is today guided by the Universal House of Justice (established in 1963). In His book of laws, Bahá'u'lláh instructed the Universal House of Justice to exert a positive influence on the welfare of humankind, promote education, peace and global prosperity, and safeguard human honor and the position of religion.