

# The Bahá'í Faith and African American History

Creating Racial and Religious  
Diversity

Edited by  
Loni Bramson

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# Contents

List of Figures	vii
Introduction	ix
<i>Loni Bramson</i>	
<b>1</b> The Bahá'í “Pupil of the Eye” Metaphor: Promoting Ideal Race Relations in Jim Crow America	1
<i>Christopher Buck</i>	
<b>2</b> “The Most Vital and Challenging Issue”: The Bahá'í Faith’s Efforts to Improve Race Relations, 1922 to 1936	43
<i>Loni Bramson</i>	
<b>3</b> Alain Locke on Race, Religion, and the Bahá'í Faith	91
<i>Christopher Buck</i>	
<b>4</b> The Most Challenging Issue Revisited: African American Bahá'í Women and the Advancement of Race and Gender Equality, 1899–1943	117
<i>Gwendolyn Etter-Lewis</i>	
<b>5</b> Hand in Hand: Race, Identity, and Community Development among South Carolina’s Bahá'ís, 1973–1979	143
<i>Louis Venters</i>	
<b>6</b> Race Unity Efforts among American Bahá'ís: Institutionalized Tools and Empirical Evidence	179
<i>Mike McMullen</i>	
<b>7</b> Race, Place, and Clusters: Current Vision and Possible Strategies	225
<i>June Manning Thomas</i>	

Conclusion: Multiple Authors of the Chapters in This Book	255
Index	259
About the Contributors	267

# List of Figures

Figure 1.1	Robert Turner	12
Figure 2.1	Louis Gregory around 1930	44
Figure 4.1	Sarah Martin Pereria speaking at a Bahá'í conference	122
Figure 4.2	Elsie Austin. Photo courtesy of US National Bahá'í Archives.	124
Figure 5.1	The members of the 1974 Northern #1 District Teaching Committee serving the Greenville-Anderson in upper Piedmont	150
Figure 5.2	To the left is Dr. Sarah Martin Pereira, member of the Continental Boards of Counselors. To the right is Alberta Deas, secretary of the South Carolina Regional Teaching Committee, 1974	155
Figure 5.3	Early participants in programs at the Louis G. Gregory Bahá'í Institute	157
Figure 5.4	Early participants in programs at the Louis G. Gregory Bahá'í Institute	158
Figure 5.5	Early participants in programs at the Louis G. Gregory Bahá'í Institute	158
Figure 5.6	To the left is David Gordon of Greenville. To the right is Woodrow Jackson, the first person from the Folly Grove community to become a Bahá'í, in the 1970s	160
Figure 5.7	Local Bahá'ís and friends with home-front pioneers, black and white; Saluda, South Carolina, 1974	162

- Figure 5.8 John Birks “Dizzy” Gillespie (1917–1993), a native of Cheraw, performing for Gov. Edwards and a joint session of the General Assembly as part of South Carolina’s national bicentennial celebrations, State House, Columbia, March 1976 166
- Figure 5.9 Home visit with Bahá’í family, eastern South Carolina, 1979 168

## Chapter 3

# Alain Locke on Race, Religion, and the Bahá'í Faith

Christopher Buck

*We must not look for material things.  
There are other treasures.*

– Alain Locke.<sup>1</sup>

Race relations in America is a benchmark of social progress. Many factors affect race relations. One of the most significant of these is religion. It is the great intensifier. For good or ill, religion sacralizes all that it holds dear. Cherished beliefs, whatever they may be, are strengthened by their status as “sacred” values. Therefore, religion can, and does, operate as a driving impulse within the realm of will and volition. It is an engine of motivation, then, which can have significant impact on the state of race relations. The Bahá'í Faith in America is a case in point. In terms of race relations, this has not escaped the notice of contemporary scholars and other public intellectuals. One historian notes that the Bahá'í Faith “was not only the first religion to initiate racial amity activities in America but the first to elicit interfaith support.”<sup>2</sup> Among contemporary black intellectuals, Cornel West has expressed his admiration for the Bahá'í “race amity” efforts:

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 Gillespie's and the Alain Locke's and so forth.<sup>3</sup>

Cornel West mentions Dizzy Gillespie and Alain Locke, two recognized figures in African American history and culture who are well known

as Bahá'ís. The present study focuses on Alain Locke (1885–1954), who embraced the Bahá'í Faith in 1918, the very same year that he was awarded his doctorate in philosophy from Harvard University. He remained a Bahá'í until his death in 1954. Cornel West's mention of Alain Locke invites a closer look at Locke's role in promoting ideal race relations, both within the American historical context in general, and in the Bahá'í context in particular.

The present study will show that Alain Locke was somewhat cynical about the prospect of any real progress in race relations within Christianity itself (which, after all, historically played a role in legitimizing, and at the same time, elsewhere opposing, the practice of slavery). However, Locke saw great potential in Bahá'í efforts to promote “race amity,” that is, interracial harmony, for the advancement of African Americans in particular, and with a sense of common cause with oppressed minorities in general. In addition to making America more truly “American” in terms of its founding values, Locke sought to make democracy more egalitarian in terms of the rights and status of minorities who have been denied their share of the American dream. As a public spokesman for African Americans, and more broadly as an advocate for living up to the ideals of American democracy as a benchmark of social progress, the figure of Alain Locke deserves, if not commands, attention. The present study focuses on Locke's perspective on race and religion, with special emphasis on his evaluation as a Bahá'í.

## ALAIN LOCKE ON RACE AND RELIGION

Alain Locke was a philosopher within the American pragmatist tradition who used his prestige and vocation as a public intellectual in order to promote ideal race relations, which, in his era, was often referred to in Bahá'í sources as “race amity.” “Amity,” of course, means friendship. This term was occasionally noted by the press the few times that Bahá'í-sponsored race amity events attracted media attention. For instance, the following notice was in the December 1924 issue of *The Crisis*, published under the auspices of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP): “Under the auspices of the Bahai (sic) movement a convention of amity between white and colored races in America was held in Philadelphia. Among the speakers were Leslie P. Hill and Louis G. Gregory.”<sup>4</sup> Alain Locke was a speaker at this event.<sup>5</sup> Such brief news notices, in and of themselves, were noticeably silent as to the significance of these interracial Bahá'í events, the purpose of which was to promote ideal race relations. Had the NAACP, or *The Crisis* editor, W. E. B. Du Bois himself, seen greater social significance in these interracial initiatives, surely there would have been more press



coverage and public discourse about the importance of these interracial solutions to America's racial crisis.

During the Jim Crow era, when African Americans had virtually no political recourse, Alain Locke turned his attention to the arts. His goal was to serve as a cultural ambassador to break racial stereotypes by showcasing the artistic genius, be it visual, literary, dramatic or musical, of African Americans. Although his first claim to fame was as the first African American Rhodes scholar in 1907, Alain Locke is far more widely known as the prime mover of the Harlem Renaissance, a highly successful artistic movement that flourished from the mid-1920s through the mid-1930s.

Alain Locke was a public intellectual who advocated for the civil and human rights of African Americans, and who is credited with having internationalized the problem of racism. Although he published a number of articles, along with several books, during his lifetime, he was not as prolific as he had the potential to be, probably because he was in such great demand as a speaker. A study of the "Alain Locke Papers" at Howard University reveals a very busy schedule as he tried to balance his responsibilities as a professor with his public role as a "race man." To illustrate Alain Locke's national prominence and historic importance as a spokesman for African Americans, one anecdote may suffice. The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., who held Locke in high esteem, mentioned Locke in an unpublished speech at the Poor People's Campaign Rally in Clarksdale, Mississippi, on March 19, 1968. Dr. King 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."<sup>6</sup>

Arguably, Dr. King has overrated Alain Locke as a philosopher with respect to his contributions to the discipline of philosophy. Nevertheless, Dr. King's remarks ring true and resound in the annals of history considering the role that Alain Locke had to play in promoting ideal race relations, while at the same time publicly advocating on behalf of the advancement of his fellow African Americans by taking advantage of his reputation as a philosopher. Locke used his prestige as a philosopher to advocate for social change and for the amelioration of the very real circumstances of oppression that African Americans and other minorities suffered and chafed under, knowing full well, and painfully so, the irony of America's professed ideals, which were sadly lacking in their practical application, in terms of both public policy and prevailing social attitudes (i.e. prejudices). As "the most influential African American intellectual born between W. E. B. Du Bois and Martin Luther King, Jr.,"<sup>7</sup> Locke is a natural choice for exploring the relationship between race and religion in the American historical context.

As a public intellectual, Locke chose not to publicly identify himself as a Bahá'í, yet he allowed himself to be publicly identified as a member by

others. This distinction may be overstated but is generally useful in noting a pattern in Locke's public life. When invited, he did speak at Bahá'í-sponsored events. In the same way, Locke contributed to Bahá'í publications when invited to do so. The result is that Alain Locke was a public Bahá'í in a selective sense. In other words, if one knew where to look, or was socially interactive in Bahá'í circles, or had read the occasional newspaper article on the Bahá'í Faith that happened to mention Alain Locke as an adherent, then, in that sense, Locke was indeed a public Bahá'í figure, in a nuanced historical context. Posthumously, however, Alain Locke has emerged as one of the most public Bahá'í figures in the American context, down to this day.

Locke was actively involved in the Bahá'í community at local, national, and international levels. At the national level, he was a member of several successive "Race Amity" committees.<sup>8</sup> At the international level, Alain Locke contributed several essays to the *Bahá'í World* volumes, which were the public face of the Bahá'í Faith. These publications were often presented to civic leaders and religious leaders. They chronicle and richly document the growth and burgeoning recognition of the Bahá'í Faith as an emerging world religion.<sup>9</sup>

Alain Locke has not left posterity an autobiography, although he had hoped to write one.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, any and all claims to his "influences," cumulative or convergent, are inferential at best, and require further nuancing. The following may be said: Locke's worldview was enriched—infused, one might say—by the Bahá'í ideals of unity (interracial, interreligious, and international) that clearly synergize with his prior cosmopolitan outlook and philosophical interests. Rather than arguing influence, it is perhaps more sound to speak of a certain "confluence" in which synergy, that is, intensive interaction of the sum total of Locke's influences, may be the best way to describe the role that Locke's Bahá'í ideals and principles played in his thinking and public performances, whether as a speaker, writer, philosopher, art critic, or public advocate of minority rights in the name of a more truly "democratic" and more idealistically authentic "American" expression of democracy.

Alain Locke was raised an Episcopalian and continued to represent himself as one in short biographical notices.<sup>11</sup> Locke's dual identity as an Episcopalian by heritage and a Bahá'í by conviction is an apparent contradiction that can be easily resolved. In his day, the Bahá'í Faith did not strictly require its adherents to formally disaffiliate themselves from their former religious affiliations. Rather, it was possible, and, indeed, a common practice, to maintain a dual religious identity.<sup>12</sup> Therefore, it could be said of Alain Locke that not only had he an Episcopal heritage that carried over into his public religious affiliation, but that he actually maintained a dual religious identity. It must be remembered that the Bahá'í Faith was still an obscure religion, and so Alain Locke probably found it more expedient, in certain contexts, simply to

identify himself as Episcopalian. That said, there is no strong evidence that he was an active, much less a committed, Episcopalian. In fact, in an autobiographical statement, Locke qualified his Christian identity:

I am really a Xtian <Christian> without believing any of its dogma, because I am incapable of feeling hatred, revenge or jealousy—though filled all the time with Righteous indignation . . . I have always hoped to be big enough to have to justify myself not to my contemporaries but to posterity. Small men apologize to their neighbors, big men to posterity.<sup>13</sup>

Locke's Bahá'í biography was published in 2005;<sup>14</sup> his long association with Bahá'í circles has been noted by such historians as Leonard Harris, Charles Molesworth, and Jeffrey Stewart.<sup>15</sup> Locke's contributions to the Bahá'í "Race Amity" movement were further chronicled in 2012.<sup>16</sup> These studies demonstrate how Locke's Bahá'í perspective enriched and reinforced his innate cosmopolitanism, which expressed itself most eloquently and resolutely in his advocacy of ideal race relations. The following historical anecdotes and selected statements by Alain Locke himself are consistent with his dual religious identity as an ostensible Episcopalian by heritage and a quasi-public Bahá'í by conviction.

### **RACE AND RELIGION: THE NATIONAL INTERRACIAL CONFERENCE, 1928**

Alain Locke was a social barometer of the state of race relations in America. His year-by-year published statements on race relations chronicled efforts as well as progress, retrospectively and contemporaneously, in promoting and advancing race relations. In addressing the state of race relations in America, as he was occasionally invited to do, Alain Locke included religion within the scope of his social analysis. For instance, in 1928, Locke largely authored an official report on the state of race relations in America, in which he made a few cogent comments about the social role of Christianity within the context of race relations in the United States. The report was presented at the National Interracial Conference held in December 16–19, 1928, in Washington, DC,<sup>17</sup> an ambitious public event organized by the National Urban League. Founded in 1910 as the "National League on Urban Conditions among Negroes" following the merger of three predecessor organizations (Committee on Urban Conditions among Negroes, the Committee for the Improvement of Industrial Conditions among Negroes in New York, and the National League for the Protection of Colored Women), the National Urban League proclaimed its stated mission as being "to enable African Americans to secure economic

self-reliance, parity, power and civil rights.”<sup>18</sup> Two retrospective reports were written, one private (archived and now made public by the Library of Congress), the other public (published in 1928; see below). The latter one was penned by Locke himself.

The first private report is thirty-seven pages long, submitted by the “Committee on Findings.” Under the heading, “Problems of Race Relations,” questions are posed as to the role of religion in promoting ideal (or, more pragmatically, ameliorated) race relations: “Suggested basic questions as to the conditions of improved race relations,” included, *inter alia*: “B. To what extent is the improvement of race relations conditional upon the acceptance of inter-marriage between the races?” The specifically religious dimension is introduced under the subheading, “C. The Christian implications of the problem.” “1. At what points do the teachings of Christ and social expediency conflict?” and “2. What immediate commitments for the improvement of racial relationships are practicable for Christian men and women?”<sup>19</sup> These appear to be proposed questions for discussion at the National Interracial Conference itself.

Locke’s report on the National Interracial Conference was noted in the press: “Dr. Locke states that never before has there been such a large number of sponsoring organizations connected with any one conference; that in addition to the many organized groups invited to send delegates, many other organizations and activities were represented through delegates at large.”<sup>20</sup> In the public report, Alain Locke uses religious imagery:

And it was at that point that the meeting became, as I said at the beginning, pentecostal. For what the workers in this field most needed was that realization which the conference achieved of the essential unity of their cause, and the “gift of tongues” to hear in one another’s programs and policies the practical evangelization in each province of the same great principles of social democracy. The conference opened the way for an abiding realization that the Negro problem is not sectional but national; that it differs only in degree and emphasis between North and South; that it cannot be either exclusively the white man’s burden or the black man’s burden, but is fundamentally interracial, both in its negative handicaps, its joint responsibilities and its possible positive benefits. That, further, it is neither exclusively educational, economic nor political, but a composite; and that religious and secular, philanthropic and public agencies must conjoin in resolving it.<sup>21</sup>

This rhetoric (“pentecostal,” “gift of tongues,” and “practical evangelization”) not only invokes religion as a trope, it also specifically points to the role that religion must play in improving race relations. Locke is making an important statement, something of a manifesto as it were, with wide-ranging and far-reaching implications. The most significant point is that the problem

of racism, and how best to solve it, “is fundamentally interracial” in nature. In other words, it is neither “exclusively the white man’s burden” nor “the black man’s burden.” Since the problem is interracial in nature (even though the primary problem stems from racial prejudice on the part of whites toward blacks), the solution must be interracial in nature as well. Locke is careful to point out that America’s racial crisis is multidimensional; it is “a composite” of “educational,” “economic,” “political,” “religious,” aspects, and “religious and secular, philanthropic and public agencies must conjoin in resolving it.” The most effective way for this to happen is when religious influence is brought to bear in the religiously leavened civil sphere (“religious and secular”), whereby spiritual principles can contribute to the public discourse.

### **RACE AND RELIGION: RELEVANCE OF RELIGIOUS VALUES**

As previously pointed out, Alain Locke, by education and vocation, was a philosopher. However, his contributions to formal philosophy, that is, American pragmatism, was not his primary focus. He had more pressing issues on his agenda. Similarly, Locke has also been referred to as a “Bahá’í philosopher.”<sup>22</sup> A formal “Bahá’í philosophy” has yet to emerge. Alain Locke’s exposure to the Bahá’í principles of unity, and his later affiliation as a declared Bahá’í, can be seen as part of his intellectual as well as spiritual and social development. To the extent that his public statements and publications can loosely be described as his “social philosophy” (without formal reference to the philosophical school of American pragmatism itself), Alain Locke is still aptly described as a philosopher, whether as an American pragmatist, a “Bahá’í philosopher,” a “social philosopher,” or as a combination of all philosophical endeavors.

Locke’s views on race and religion received their greatest inspiration from the Bahá’í principles. Their finest expression was when he, whether explicitly or implicitly, mirrored those principles. During the time that he was writing his Harvard dissertation, Locke had been personally investigating the Bahá’í Faith. This extracurricular personal interest was concurrent and convergent with the writing of his doctoral dissertation, which is of intrinsic interest. A brief look at Alain Locke’s study of philosophy may contribute to a better understanding of his views on religion, in relation to race.

Locke specialized in the philosophy of values. The dimension of the spiritual, or sacred, figures prominently in Locke’s typology of values. In his Harvard doctoral dissertation, “The Problem of Classification in the Theory of Value: Or an Outline of a Genetic System of Values” (1917), Locke recognized the pivotal place that religion has in human society, that is, in these

six value dimensions that inform his taxonomy of values: (1) Hedonic; (2) Economic; (3) Artistic; (4) Logical; (5) Ethical; (6) Religious.<sup>23</sup> In his 1935 essay, “Values and Imperatives,” however, Locke reduces his values paradigm to four “Value Types”: (1) Religious; (2) Ethical or Moral; (3) Aesthetic or Artistic; (4) Logical or Scientific.<sup>24</sup> Of course, Locke’s typology of values is more complex than this. In his “Values and Imperatives” essay (his first formal publication in philosophy at age fifty), Locke correlates each “Value Type” with: (1) “Modal Quality”; (2) “Value Predicates”; and (3) “Value Polarity.”<sup>25</sup> For the “Religious” Value Type, the associated characteristics are as follows: (1) “Modal Quality” (Exaltation and Awe-Worship; Inner Ecstasy, Religious Zeal); (2) “Value Predicates” (Holy and Unholy; Good and Evil); and (3) “Value Polarity” (Holiness and Sin; Salvation and Damnation).<sup>26</sup> These values underpin the outcome-oriented moral and social imperatives that Locke proposes.

This inclusion of a specifically religious dimension informed not only Alain Locke’s philosophy of values per se, but his social philosophy as well. It also included attention to religion as a social force and as a wellspring, for good or ill, and as a source of America’s prevailing social attitudes and values, which were often, if not characteristically, contradictory and therefore compromised. Given the importance of the religious dimension in Locke’s philosophy and worldview, this chapter will now focus on Locke’s views on race and religion, particularly on the role of religion both as a contribution to the problem and as a potential solution to the issue of racial prejudice and economic disparity.

## **RACE AND RELIGION: ORIGINAL SINS**

Locke’s general outlook on race and religion provides a more immediate context for his specifically Bahá’í outlook, which may be characterized as a contrast between his critique of Christianity and his positive regard for Bahá’í principles as applied to race relations, both pragmatically and ideally. Framing the problems that religion presents, for Locke, is a prerequisite to proposing possible solutions. The social problematic, in the context of religion, is the failure of adherents to faithfully live up to their professed religious values. This is often referred to in one word: “hypocrisy.”

In “Whither Race Relations? A Critical Commentary” (1944), Locke points to the hypocrisy of spiritual ideals as measured against social reality: “In the field of organized religion the discrepancies between democratic professions and democratic practice on race are not only most glaring but most ironically self-contradictory.”<sup>27</sup>

However, he explains that there were positive developments in American Christianity with respect to ameliorating (instead of exacerbating) race relations:

Yet out of the present-day exposures of such self-contradictions has come a marked demand for reform. In different degrees but all with some accelerated pace the various Protestant Churches and the Catholic Church have responded, it would seem. The Catholic Church, in addition to having instituted a new inter-racial council movement, has recently opened up many of its schools to Negro students. As to the democratic practise of human equality, however, the Christian church is still far from activating its own basic formula of the "brotherhood of man," and accordingly cannot claim either moral or actual leadership in the sphere of race relations.<sup>28</sup>

In "Peace between Black and White in the United States" (a manuscript posthumously published in 2005), Locke wrote:

We used to say that Christianity and democracy were both at stake in the equitable solution of the race question. They were; but they were abstract ideals that did not bleed when injured. Now we think with more realistic logic, perhaps, that economic justice cannot stand on one foot; and economic reconstruction is the dominant demand of the present-day American scene.<sup>29</sup>

In this reference to Christianity and democracy, Alain Locke is specifically referring to what generally may be described as the "religious and secular" dimensions of America's racial crisis. Their respective "abstract ideals" promised, in theory, an "equitable solution of the race question." In practice, however, these same "abstract ideals" remained abstract, that is, inert and thereby useless, rather than pragmatically applied as they should have been. This is why Locke makes the polite, but rather damning statement: "We used to say that Christianity and democracy were both at stake in the equitable solution of the race question. They were; but they were abstract ideals that did not bleed when injured." In this poignant way, Locke succinctly framed the fundamental problem as to religion and race. But in spite of this brief social critique of institutional Christianity, Alain Locke proposed some spiritual solutions.

## **RACE AND RELIGION: SALVIFIC SOLUTIONS**

On November 16, 1924, Locke spoke at the jubilee celebration of the Salem A. M. E. Church in Harlem on the topic of "Social Salvation."<sup>30</sup> The article is

short on details about the substance of Locke's talk. The term, "Social Salvation," notwithstanding, finds its illumination in another speech, unearthed by the present writer in August 2001 as an unpublished manuscript. It has since been published as "The Gospel for the Twentieth Century"<sup>31</sup> after its opening phrase. This essay may be Locke's most definitive statement on race and religion. It begins as follows:

The gospel for the Twentieth Century rises out of the heart of its greatest problems, and few who are spiritually enlightened doubt the nature of that problem. The clashing ominous [n?]est of issues of the practical world of today, the issues of race, sect, class and nationality, all have one basic spiritual origin, and for that reason, we hope and believe one basic cure.<sup>32</sup>

In this opening paragraph, the word "Gospel" obviously is religious, Christian, in fact. It is a deliberate choice of words on Locke's part. "Gospel" is no mere "message." As a religious mandate, "gospel" typically demands a higher level of commitment since the message is considered to be a moral imperative of a decidedly sacred nature. By contrast, the term "Twentieth Century" is secular. "Race" is only one of a complex of social problems that confront American society. Such social problems are inextricably intertwined and interrelated. Locke demonstrates that he is acutely aware of the social fact that this aggravates and accentuates the problem of racism within the spectrum of other social issues, which typically includes "race, class, and gender" in everyday parlance, even today. Locke elsewhere put this complex of social issues another way: "No more progressive step can be made in our present civilization than the breaking down of the barriers which separate races, sexes and nations."<sup>33</sup> For Locke, this is a moral imperative, not only for America itself, but for the world at large.

In the essay, Locke frames "race, sect, class and nationality" as a constellation of social ills, which are fundamentally "spiritual" (or unspiritual) in nature. "Sect" refers to the ongoing challenge of sectarianism or intercommunal religious strife, whether within a particular religion or between religions. "Class" implicates economic disparity. "Nationality" probably refers to nationalism (more than national origin), especially since nationalism stands in tension with internationalism. Locke was a cosmopolitan and a staunch internationalist in his outlook.

In speaking of "one basic cure," Locke rhetorically uses disease as a metaphor. He continues with his description of America's social problem of race:

Too long have we tried to patch these issues up and balm them over; instead of going to the heart and seat of the trouble in the limited and limiting conceptions of humanity which are alone, like a poisonous virus circulating through



our whole social system, responsible for them. A change of condition will not remedy or more than temporarily ameliorate our chronic social antagonisms; only a widespread almost universal change of social heart, a new spirit of human attitudes, can achieve the social redemption that must eventually come.<sup>34</sup>

This discourse is suffused with diagnostic and prognostic pronouncements where “our whole social system” stands for the body politic, afflicted with a “poisonous virus” that is “chronic” and in dire need of a true remedy for the cause and not just a superficial balm for the symptoms. The cure, or “social redemption,” is spiritual in nature, which can only come about when the “social heart” of humanity is infused with a “new spirit” that will diffuse over time “social antagonisms.”

Locke continues:

The finest and most practical idea of Christianity, the idea of the millenium [*sic*], of peace on earth, has been allowed to lapse as an illusion of the primitive Christian mind, as a mystic's mirage of another world. And as a consequence the Brotherhood of Man, taken as a negligible corollary of the fatherhood of God, has if anything in practical effect put the truth of its own basic proposition to doubtful uncertainty. The redemption of society, social salvation, should have been sought after first, the pragmatic test and proof of the fatherhood of God is afterall [*sic*] whether belief in it can realize the unity of mankind; and so the brotherhood of man, as it has been inspirationally expressed, the “oneness of humanity,” must be in our day realized or religion die out gradually into ever-increasing materiality. The salvation we have sought after as individuals in an after-life and another sphere must be striven for as the practical peace and unity of the human family here in this [world]. In some very vital respects God will be rediscovered to our age if we succeed in discovering the common denominator of humanity and living in terms of it and valuing all things in accordance with it.<sup>35</sup>

In this passage, Alain Locke adds a distinctively social dimension to the religious goal of “salvation,” which he terms “social salvation.” Evangelical and even conservative Christianity have typically emphasized personal and individual “salvation.” “Social salvation” is the term that Locke invokes, if not coins, here. It implies that religion has a social mandate as well.<sup>36</sup> The salvation of individuals, standing alone, is not sufficient to effect a sea-change in society. Individual salvation (whatever that means or entails) is not enough to cure the ills of society, including the problem of racism. Locke was keenly aware of this problem, and very much alive to possible solutions. A collective problem requires a collective solution. It can even be said that individual salvation is bound up with social salvation. In any case, Locke's assertion that, “the Brotherhood of Man, taken as a negligible corollary of the

fatherhood of God, has if anything in practical effect put the truth of its own basic proposition to doubtful certainty,” is a powerful critique of the social failings of institutional Christianity, which, according to Locke, had become alien to its original spirit. He uses the term “social salvation” as synonymous with “social redemption.”

Locke now endows a secular term with spiritual significance:

The world has not yet sounded the depths and realized the profundities of its most moving contemporary ideal, or sensed the challenge of its most popular slogan. Much has been accomplished in the name of Democracy, but Spiritual Democracy, its largest and most inner meaning, is so below our common horizons. Only a few from the elevation of some jutting human problem see it, and they too often as through a tragic rift through which it appears more the solution of their particular issue, the light for their particular valley than as the sun of a new universal day for humanity at large.<sup>37</sup>

If Alain Locke himself espoused a secular “Gospel,” then that would be the idea of the “Spiritual Democracy.” In fact, Locke’s greatest contribution to philosophy is his philosophy of democracy, which has been systematically described in previous publications.<sup>38</sup> Locke’s philosophy of democracy may be characterized as a grand theory (in the positive, not pejorative, sense of the term): (1) Local Democracy; (2) Moral Democracy; (3) Political Democracy; (4) Economic Democracy; (5) Cultural Democracy; (6) Racial Democracy; (7) Social Democracy; (8) Spiritual Democracy; (9) World Democracy, with adjunct notions of natural, practical, progressive, creative, intellectual, equalitarian democracy.<sup>39</sup> One of these nine dimensions is “spiritual democracy.” According to Locke, “Spiritual Democracy” is democracy’s “largest and most inner meaning.”<sup>40</sup>

For civilization to advance, a universal perspective is needed. For American society to evolve, a coherent, multifaceted approach must be adopted. The following passage connects the problem of racism with that of the economy:

America, that has in an economic and material way labored through to the most promising material elements of democracy, is spiritually very far from the realization of her own organic [i]deal. One would despair except for the knowledge from history that the solutions come out of the crater pots of the deepest and most seething problems. The fundamental problems of current America are materiality and prejudice. They seem to rise out of separate positions, but their common base is selfishness. They rest primarily not upon the economic and historical conditions in terms of which they are so often explained and discussed, but upon false human values, a blind ness [*sic*] of heart, an obstruction of social vision. And so we must say with the acute actualities of America’s race problem and the acute potentialities of her economic problem, the land that is nearest to

material democracy is furthest away from spiritual democracy, unless, as we have said, the heart of the solution is to come out of the crux of the problem.<sup>41</sup>

The “crux” of America’s overarching social “problems” are racial and economic, that is, “materiality and prejudice.” The two problems, of course, are interrelated. Racism and poverty are intimately related in terms of cause and effect. Together, they exacerbate each other in a vicious cycle, with no end in sight. Therefore, it makes sense that Alain Locke, in a manner of speaking, is basically saying that money (i.e., avarice) is the proverbial root of all evil. Locke reduces the “fundamental problems of current America” to naked “materiality and prejudice,” which share a “common base” of “selfishness.” Intractable problems attract new solutions, especially when the former approaches simply have not worked.

Locke develops his analysis of America’s social problematic yet further. Bleak as these problems may seem, there still is hope, as Locke notes:

Perhaps this is so. Practical philanthropy is welling up in rapidly increasing volume out of the heart of the capitalist system; and even before the class issues have begun perceptibly [*sic*] to ameliorate, we witness at last a favorable trend to the most crucial of all the American issues, the strained relations of the race question. New and promising efforts of race cooperation and help have sprung up within the last decade from the very section where the issues are most acute; of course the Old South still lingers both as an unfortunate social condition and state of mind. But essentially a New South is breaking through; and it is interesting to note not in terms of the old notion of help but of the new discovery of common interests, in other words in terms of cooperation.<sup>42</sup>

At the time that Locke was writing, just how “new and promising” these positive developments actually were is uncertain. Progress was possible, but not inevitable. The main point here is that the “Old South” (i.e., a backward, low-wage regional market economy) must be replaced by the “New South” (i.e., a reformed and revitalized economy, such as integration into the national labor market, leading to some measure of prosperity).<sup>43</sup> Both in Alain Locke’s day and today, the term “New South” refers to post-Civil War economic and social progress in general.

Locke extends this paradigm of the new replacing the old social order:

The inter-racial commissions spreading their work of common council through the better and more representative elements of the two races in the South, the new movement for the equalisation [*sic*] of public school expenditures, health and public welfare measures and activities that has significantly but only recently begun, the challenge of the great industrial migration of the Negro away from the South, which has led to ameliorative measures to retain this economically

valuable but hitherto socially mis-valued group, and the increasing self-esteem and direction of the New Negro himself which though it has, like the assertive rise of suppressed minorities the world over today, the potentialities of clash and rivalry and increasing sectarianism, holds nevertheless with the right social attitude toward it the possibilities of finer mutual respect and reciprocity; all these are hopeful signs out of a spiritually dark and threatening situation.<sup>44</sup>

The term “reciprocity” is a key concept found throughout Locke’s essays and speeches. “Reciprocity” is Locke’s racial golden rule. Locke continues, contrasting “unity” and “uniformity,” which ultimately are antithetical to each other:

I have often thought that one of the great obstacles that has prevented the world from realizing unity was the notion, especially characteristic of the West, that to be one effectively we must all be alike, and that to be at peace we must all have the same interests. But the increasing breaking-up of Western society may not be the debacle of civilization which the Occidental materialistic uniformitarians have imagined it to be, but rather the preparatory step that will force us to abandon this false idea and adopt the true one, not of uniformity, but reciprocity, not of an outward union of bodies and cultures, but of social heart and feeling. Once we rid ourselves of the proprietary notion of civilization, we enter upon an era of spiritual reciprocity.<sup>45</sup>

One can say that Locke’s thesis is “reciprocity, not uniformity.” “Reciprocity” is the golden rule condensed into a single watchword. That very word is often met throughout Alain Locke’s writings. It has profound philosophical, spiritual, and social import. Locke states that a major obstacle to world “unity” has been the “Western” emphasis on “uniformity.” Although the two words, “uniformity” and “unity” sound similar, they are polar opposites and are functionally antithetical. To favorably compare or erroneously equate these two values is social folly of world-historical proportions. The same is true if one confuses, confounds, or otherwise conflates these two concepts. In Locke’s view, uniformity is a formidable barrier to unity. Reciprocity, then, is a moral imperative, collectively as well as individually. Indeed, the well-being of society depends upon it. “Reciprocity” implicates “universal values”:

This, I take it, is from the intellectual point of view the one great new idea and ideal to be added in our day to our science and wrought into our practice of education. Segments of it come from many quarters; none more promising, to mention one significant light, it seems than the philosophy of the Austrian Holzapfel, with its professed basic principle of the “Pan-Ideal”, where universal values, the point of view of all mankind is to be substituted for the narrowing

and hopelessly conflicting scales of value that race, class, nation and sect have made almost chronic defects in our thinking.<sup>46</sup>

Rudolf Maria Holzappel (1874–1930) was an Austrian philosopher, social psychologist, and theorist of art whose *magnum opus*, *Panideal, das Seelenleben und seine soziale Neugestaltung* (“Pan-idealism: The Life of the Soul and Its Social Reform”), was published in 1923. He advocated “a new kind of conscience” transcending “individual or collective egoism, whether of a national or a racist character,” with the goal of advancing civilization by means of an overarching, world ideal.<sup>47</sup> Locke eschewed absolutisms, but embraced universals.

He called for “universal values” that transcend the narrow “scope of race, class, nation and sect.”

Locke now adopts a visionary, utopian tone:

We must begin working out the new era courageously, but it must be a revolution within the soul. How many external wars and revolutions it will make unnecessary, if it is only possible! And we must begin heroically with the great apparent irreconcilables; the East and the West, the black man and the self-arrogating Anglo-Saxon, for unless these are reconciled, the salvation of society in this world cannot be. If the world had believingly understood the full significance of Him [Jesus Christ] who taught it to pray and hope “Thy Kingdom come on earth as it is in Heaven” who also said “In my Father’s house are many mansions,” already we should be further toward the realization of this great millennial [*sic*] vision.<sup>48</sup>

According to Locke, a “revolution within the soul” is needed. The “salvation of society” depends, in large part, on resolving “the great apparent irreconcilables,” whether nationalism or racism. Locke concludes his essay as follows:

The word of God is still insistent, and more emphatic as the human redemption delays and becomes more crucial, and we have what Dr. Elsemont [Esslemont] rightly calls Bahá'u'lláh's “one great trumpet-call to humanity”: “That all nations shall become one in faith, and all men as brothers; that the bonds of affection and unity between the sons of men should be strengthened; that diversity of religion should cease, and differences of race be annulled. . . . These strifes and this bloodshed and discord must cease, and all men be as one kindred and family.”<sup>49</sup>

Locke is quoting the words of Bahá'u'lláh delivered when Cambridge Orientalist, Edward Granville Browne was granted an audience with him on Wednesday, April 16, 1890.<sup>50</sup> It is quite clear that this well-known statement

by Bahá'u'lláh resonated profoundly with him and resounds conceptually throughout his writings.

Religion most typically concerns the affairs of the heart and spirit. The “spiritual” dimension is a pivotal concept in Locke’s public discourse. For instance, in the Oxford anthology, *The Works of Alain Locke*,<sup>51</sup> which excludes his Bahá’í publications, one encounters the terms “spiritual” and “spiritually” in a wide array of examples.<sup>52</sup> According to Locke, racial prejudice and religious prejudice arise from the very “psychology of prejudice” (i.e., the attitudinal orientation and mental dynamics of racial prejudice) itself:

It seems to me, as I study it, that the psychology of prejudice—that the habit of social group discrimination—is a very infectious and vicious thing which, if allowed to grow, spreads from one group to another; and *I also feel that in talking against American racial prejudice we are at the same time talking against religious prejudice*, cultural prejudice of all kinds, and even social class prejudice to a certain extent. The same psychology seems to feed them all.<sup>53</sup>

As for a religious solution to the problem of racial prejudice and discrimination, Alain Locke declared in 1925:

America’s democracy must begin at home with a spiritual fusion of all her constituent peoples in brotherhood, and in an actual mutuality of life. Until democracy is worked out in the vital small scale of practical human relations, it can never, except as an empty formula, prevail on the national or international basis. Until it establishes itself in human hearts, it can never institutionally flourish. Moreover, America’s reputation and moral influence in the world depends on the successful achievement of this vital spiritual democracy within the lifetime of the present generation. (Material civilization alone does not safeguard the progress of a nation.) Bahá’í Principles and the leavening of our national life with their power, is to be regarded as the salvation of democracy. In this way only can the fine professions of American ideals be realized.<sup>54</sup>

His conclusion, that “Bahá’í Principles and the leavening of our national life with their power, is to be regarded as the salvation of democracy,” may be regarded as Alain Locke’s most distinct and definitive statement as to the relevance and importance of Bahá’í social principles as applied to racism and related social ills afflicting American society. This was a bold and courageous statement on Locke’s part. Although, at sundry times, Locke may have been somewhat skeptical, even cynical, about the practical application of these principles (both within Bahá’í communities themselves and in American society at large), he remained committed to these Baha’i principles throughout his personal and professional life.<sup>55</sup>

## RACE AND RELIGION: RETROSPECT AND PROSPECT

This study focused on Alain Locke's perspectives on race and religion in general, and on race and the Bahá'í Faith in particular. As social phenomena, race and religion, whether characterized by self-segregation or integration, by prejudice or camaraderie, are as dynamically interrelated as they are intercommunal. For better or worse, their reciprocal interactions have been and continue to be historically at play. A lesson that can be drawn from this brief historical retrospective is that religion can be a motivating and effective sociomoral force for the "social salvation" of the body politic. Although religion, ideally and ideologically, can foster fraternity and equality and thereby contribute to racial harmony, it takes a concerted effort to overcome the legacy of prejudice that continues to bedevil American society, albeit more covertly than overtly. The leadership of such influential protagonists for social progress as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and, before him, Dr. Alain Leroy Locke, are worthy of study for better understanding the past, negotiating the present, and priming the prospect of a better future. Not only is this an ongoing interracial project, but it has an interreligious dimension as well.

Throughout his professional career as a public intellectual, Alain Locke was a champion of "race amity." His advocacy for ideal race relations expressed itself as a recurring theme throughout his writings and public discourse. "On the one hand there is the possibility," Locke wrote to the *New York Times* in 1931, "of a fine collaboration spiritually between these two groups [black and white] with their complementary traits and qualities. They have great spiritual need, the one of the other, if they will so see it."<sup>56</sup> Locke stated quite the same in *The Negro in America* (1933):

If they will but see it, because of their complementary qualities, the two racial groups have great spiritual need, one of the other. It would truly be significant in the history of human culture, if two races so diverse should so happily collaborate, and the one return for the gift of a great civilization the reciprocal gift of the spiritual cross-fertilization of a great and distinctive national culture.<sup>57</sup>

This latter statement has been quoted in a Bahá'í compilation on race, which is interesting and significant in that during the era being studied such compilations, by and large, primarily quote from the scriptural texts, and rarely from individuals.<sup>58</sup> "No more progressive step can be made in our present civilization," Locke elsewhere wrote, "than the breaking down of the barriers which separate races, sexes and nations."<sup>59</sup> This grand imperative, so eloquently yet succinctly stated, synchronizes, synergizes, and intensifies in concert with Alain Locke's Bahá'í ideals.

Race and religion are dynamically interlinked. Depending on how it is interpreted and applied, religion can be a source of good or evil, a blessing or a curse, the cause of amity or enmity, the reason for harmony or hatred, and the cradle of benediction or malediction. Locke's views on race and religion naturally depended on context. Steeped in the philosophy of values, he was very much alive to the potential of religious values as they variously impacted on race relations. "Race, nationality, language and religion can all be sharp and serious issues of difference and hostility. Yet none of them need be."<sup>60</sup> He viewed the Bahá'í Faith, as a new world religion born in the fullness of modernity, especially suited for promoting ideal race relations. This great potential was only partly realized in practice during this era. Much more is needed to be done in order to more fully democratize democracy and "Americanize Americans," as Locke wrote.<sup>61</sup> The present study has shown that Alain Locke, while skeptical and somewhat cynical about the prospect of any real progress in race relations within Christianity itself, saw great potential in Bahá'í efforts to promote "race amity," and believed that they were a radical departure from prevailing social (and religious) racial norms in Jim Crow America.<sup>62</sup>

## NOTES

1. Alain Locke, "Negro Art and Culture," quoted in Louis G. Gregory, "A Convention for Amity," *The Bahá'í Magazine (Star of the West)* 15, no. 9: 273.

2. Gayle Morrison, "To Move the World: Promoting Racial Amity, 1921–1927," *World Order* 14, no. 2 (Winter 1980): 19.

3. In the same video, Cornel West added: "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 twentieth 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 twentieth century, was also of Bahá'í Faith, the first Black Rhodes scholar and chairman of the philosophy department at Howard University, for over forty-two 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." See Cornel West, "Cornel West Praises Work of Bahá'ís in Establishing Racial Unity," <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SbEDC8wAWiI>.

4. *The Crisis* 29, no. 2 (December 1924): 77. More notices appeared in other issues, for example, *The Crisis* 40, no. 10 (October 1931): 345–346.

5. Christopher Buck, *Alain Locke: Faith and Philosophy* (Los Angeles: Kalimát Press, 2005), 111–113.

6. Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., "Rally Speech, Mississippi Tour, Clarksdale, Mississippi, Pre-Washington Campaign," St. Paul Methodist Church, March 19,



1968. Manuscript Collection, No. 1083, Subseries 11.2, Martin Luther King Speaks program files, 1967–1985, Box 612, Folder 22, Manuscript 68#40C, page 7. Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library (MARBL), Emory University.

7. Leonard Harris and Charles Molesworth, *Alain L. Locke: The Biography of a Philosopher* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 1.

8. Buck, *Alain Locke: Faith and Philosophy*, 73–74 and passim.

9. The present writer has published a monograph and a number of articles documenting Alain Locke's life and contributions as a Bahá'í. See, *inter alia*, Christopher Buck, *Alain Locke: Faith and Philosophy* (Los Angeles: Kalimát Press, 2005); Buck, "Alain Locke's Philosophy of Democracy," *Studies in Bahá'í Philosophy* 4 (2015): 24–45; Buck, "Alain Locke," *The African American Experience: The American Mosaic*, eds. Marian Perales, Spencer R. Crew, and Joe E. Watkins (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2013); Buck, "The Bahá'í 'Race Amity' Movement and the Black Intelligentsia in Jim Crow America: Alain Locke and Robert S. Abbott," *Bahá'í Studies Review* 17 (2011): 3–46; Buck, "Alain Locke: Four Talks Redefining Democracy, Education, and World Citizenship," edited and introduced by Christopher Buck and Betty J. Fisher, *World Order* 38, no. 3 (2006–2007): 21–41; Buck, "Alain Locke: Race Leader, Social Philosopher, Bahá'í Pluralist," in "Alain Locke: Dean of the Harlem Renaissance and Bahá'í Race-Amity Leader," special issue, *World Order* 36, no. 3 (2005): 7–36; Buck, "Alain Locke in His Own Words: Three Essays," edited and annotated by Christopher Buck and Betty J. Fisher, *World Order* 36, no. 3 (2005): 37–48; Buck, "Alain Locke," *American Writers: A Collection of Literary Biographies*, ed. Jay Parini (Farmington Hills, MI: Scribner's Reference, The Gale Group, 2004), 195–219; Buck, "Alain Locke and Cultural Pluralism," *Search for Values: Ethics in Bahá'í Thought*, eds. Seena Fazel and John Danesh (Los Angeles: Kalimát Press, 2004), 94–158; Buck, "Alain Locke: Bahá'í Philosopher," *Bahá'í Studies Review* 10 (2001–2002): 7–49.

10. Buck, *Alain Locke: Faith and Philosophy*, 195.

11. Buck, *Alain Locke: Faith and Philosophy*, 279.

12. See, for example, Mehrdad Amanat, *Jewish Identities in Iran: Resistance and Conversion to Islam and the Bahá'í Faith* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2013), 92.

13. Locke, quoted in Buck, *Alain Locke: Faith and Philosophy*, 279.

14. Buck, *Alain Locke: Faith and Philosophy*.

15. Leonard Harris and Charles Molesworth, *Alain L. Locke: The Biography of a Philosopher* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008); Jeffrey C. Stewart, *The New Negro: The Life of Alain Locke* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

16. Buck, "The Bahá'í 'Race Amity' Movement and the Black Intelligentsia in Jim Crow America: Alain Locke and Robert S. Abbott."

17. Library of Congress, "National Urban League Papers. National Interracial Conference, 1928," [https://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/cool:@field\(DOCID+@lit\(mu03T000\)\)](https://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/cool:@field(DOCID+@lit(mu03T000))).

18. National Urban League, "Mission and History," <http://nul.iamempowered.com/who-we-are/mission-and-history>.

19. Library of Congress, "The Revised Draft of Findings Committee Report," [https://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/cool:@field\(DOCID+@lit\(mu0313\)\)](https://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/cool:@field(DOCID+@lit(mu0313))).

20. “Dr. Alain Locke Reviews Interracial Conference,” *The Interstate Tattler* (New York, January 4, 1929), 3, personal communication by Steven Kolins, 20 November, 2017.

21. See National Urban League Papers. National Interracial Conference, 1928 (Library of Congress), [https://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/cool:@field\(DOCID+@lit\(mu032\)\)#mu03010](https://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/cool:@field(DOCID+@lit(mu032))#mu03010). See also Alain Locke, “The Boxed Compass of Our Race Relations,” *The Survey* 51 (January 1929): 469–472; reprint, “The Boxed Compass of Our Race Relations. North and South: The Washington Conference on the American Negro,” *Southern Workman* 58 (February 1929): 51–56.

22. Buck, “Alain Locke: Baha’i Philosopher.”

23. Buck, *Alain Locke: Faith and Philosophy*, 20–21 and 270. See also Alain Locke, *The Problem of Classification in the Theory of Values* (PhD diss., Harvard University, 1917).

24. Buck, *Alain Locke: Faith and Philosophy*, 20–21. See also Alain Locke, “Values and Imperatives,” in *American Philosophy, Today and Tomorrow*, eds. Sidney Hook and Horace M. Kallen (New York: Lee Furman, 1935), 313–33; reprint, Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries Press, 1968.

25. Buck, *Alain Locke: Faith and Philosophy*, 20–21.

26. Buck, *Alain Locke: Faith and Philosophy*, 20–21.

27. Alain Locke, “Whither Race Relations? A Critical Commentary,” *Journal of Negro Education* 13, no. 3, Yearbook: Education for Racial Understanding (Summer, 1944): 401.

28. Locke, “Whither Race Relations?” 401.

29. Alain Locke, “Peace Between Black and White in the United States,” in Alain Locke, “Alain Locke in His Own Words: Three Essays,” *World Order* 36, no. 3 (2005): 45. Alain Locke Papers, MSRC, Box 164–123: Folder 19 (“Peace Between Black and White in the United States”).

30. “Drs. E. P. Roberts and Alain Leroy Locke Address Salem M. E. Church Lyceum Sun,” *The New York Age* (November 22, 1924), 5, [https://www.newspapers.com/clip/358274/alain\\_locke\\_at\\_opening\\_of\\_new\\_church](https://www.newspapers.com/clip/358274/alain_locke_at_opening_of_new_church).

31. Alain Locke, “The Gospel for the Twentieth Century,” in Alain Locke, “Alain Locke in His Own Words: Three Essays,” edited and annotated by Christopher Buck and Betty J. Fisher. *World Order* 36, no. 3 (2005): 39–42. Published by permission from the Alain Locke Papers, Moorland-Spingarn Research Center (MSRC), Howard University, Washington, D.C. See Alain Locke, “The Gospel for the Twentieth Century” [untitled essay], Alain Locke Papers, MSRC, Box 164–143, Folder 3 (Writings by Locke—Notes. Christianity, spirituality, religion).

32. Locke, “The Gospel for the Twentieth Century,” 39–40.

33. Locke, quoted in “Locke Holds Smashing of Humanity’s Barriers Civilization’s Present Need: Howard University Professor Views Elimination of Bars Between Races, Sexes and Nations as Necessity for Progress,” *The New York Amsterdam News* (26 March 1930), 11.

34. Locke, “The Gospel for the Twentieth Century,” 40.

35. Locke, “The Gospel for the Twentieth Century,” 40.

36. Liberal, progressive, and socially conscious Christian reformers, such as Washington Gladden, Josiah Strong, Walter Rauschenbusch, and Harry F. Ward,

were leading advocates of what has come to be known as the “Social Gospel.” In Locke’s day and age, the Niebuhr brothers and their Neo-Orthodoxy were tinged with Christian Socialism and were a contemporary parallel of Locke’s social salvation. See, for example, H. Richard Niebuhr’s *Social Sources of Denominationalism*.

37. Locke, “The Gospel for the Twentieth Century,” 40.

38. Buck, “Philosophy of Democracy: America, Race, and World Peace,” *Alain Locke: Faith and Philosophy*, 241–65; Buck, “Alain Locke’s Philosophy of Democracy,” 30–31 and *passim*.

39. Buck, “Alain Locke’s Philosophy of Democracy,” 30–31 and *passim*.

40. Buck, “Alain Locke’s Philosophy of Democracy,” 40.

41. Locke, “The Gospel for the Twentieth Century,” 40.

42. Locke, “The Gospel for the Twentieth Century,” 41.

43. See, for example, Gavin Wright, *Old South, New South: Revolutions in the Southern Economy since the Civil War* (Baton Rouge, LA: LSU Press, 1997).

44. Locke, “The Gospel for the Twentieth Century,” 41. “The New Negro” is an iconoclastic term that is used to dispel prevailing negative stereotypes of the “Negro.” It became the watchword of the “New Negro” movement, of which Locke was a leading proponent. See Christopher Buck, “New Negro Movement,” *Encyclopedia of African American History*, vol. 3, eds. Leslie Alexander and Walter Rucker (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2010), 925–927.

45. Locke, “The Gospel for the Twentieth Century,” 41.

46. Locke, “The Gospel for the Twentieth Century,” 41.

47. Hans Thomas Hakl, *Eranos: An Alternative Intellectual History of the Twentieth Century*, trans. Christopher McIntosh (Montreal: McGill–Queens University Press, 2014), 26. Holzapfel’s influence on Locke’s philosophy of values, in evidence here, awaits further research and study.

48. Locke, “The Gospel for the Twentieth Century,” 41.

49. Locke, “The Gospel for the Twentieth Century,” 42.

50. Locke quotes from John E. Esslemont, *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era: An Introduction to the Bahá'í Faith* (New York: Brentano’s, 1923), 46. Esslemont, in turn, cites Cambridge Orientalist, Edward Granville Browne from ‘Abdu’l-Baha, *A Traveller’s Narrative written to illustrate the Episode of the Báb (Maqālah-i shakhsī-i sayyāh kih dar qazīyah-i Báb nivishtah ast)*. Edited by Edward G. Browne, vol. 1. Persian Text, vol. 2, English Translation and notes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1891), Vol 2, xxxix–xl. See Christopher Buck and Youli A. Ioannesyan, “Scholar Meets Prophet: Edward Granville Browne and Bahá'u'lláh (Acre, 1890),” *Bahá'í Studies Review* 20 (2018): 21–38.

51. See Alain Locke, *The Works of Alain Locke*, ed. Charles Molesworth (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

52. See Locke, *The Works of Alain Locke*: “spiritual kinship” (110); “spiritually refined” (111); “spiritual selfhood” (114); “spiritual quickening” (125); “spiritual release” (125); “spiritual freedom” (125); “spiritual interpretation” (159); “spiritual values” (159); “spiritually inside” (160); “spiritual view of life” (165); “spiritual advantage”(183); “spiritual endowment” (183); “spiritually compensating for the present lacks of America” (187); “spiritualizing reaction” (187); “the proud stigmata of spiritual immunity and moral victory” (187); “spiritually free” (187); “spiritual

discipline and a cultural blessing" (199); "colorful and distinctive spiritual things in American life" (199); "cornerstone spiritually in the making of a distinctive American culture" (199); "national spiritual life" (200); "spiritual declaration of independence" (200); "spiritual emancipation" (200); "deep spirituality" (202); "spiritual gain" (206); "deeper spiritual identification" (206); "deeper spiritual identification" (206); "spiritual discipline and intensification of mood" (208); "spiritual espousal" (209); "spiritual loyalty" (210); "spiritual bloom" (212); "precious spiritual gifts" (218); "our spiritual growth" (219); "borrowed spiritual clothes" (222); "spiritually unmoored" (224); "spiritual portrait" (224); "spiritual truancy" (224); "spiritual bread" (227); "spiritual maturity" (228); "spiritual progress" (229); "spiritual ghetto" (241); "moral and spiritual superiority" (286); "the race's spiritual creativeness" (290); "this great spiritual curse" (294); "spiritual solidarity of minorities" (294); "cultural and spiritual advance" (307); "becomes an American spiritually" (429); "Spiritual capital must be accumulated" (438); "spiritual development" (450); "spiritual Coming of Age" (451); "religious beliefs as expressions of spiritual needs" (469); "new spiritual stature" (487); "man's carnal and spiritual selves" (500); "a spiritual imperative not to be denied" (534); "a spiritual, or at least an intellectual virtue" (545); "a spiritual corporate idea" (555); "moral and spiritual brotherhood" (556); "ancient spiritual lineage" (562); "intellectual and spiritual disarmament" (567).

53. Alain Locke, "The Negro Group," in *Group Relations and Group Antagonisms: A Series of Addresses and Discussions*, ed. Robert M. MacIver (New York: Institute for Religious Studies, 1944), 49. (Emphasis added.)

54. Locke, "America's Part in World Peace," quoted in Harlan Ober, "The Bahá'í Congress at Green Acre," *The Bahá'í Magazine (Star of the West)* 16, no. 5 (August 1925): 525.

55. Buck, *Alain Locke: Faith and Philosophy*, 161–162.

56. Alain Locke, quoted in "Says Art Raises Status of Negroes: Dr. Alain Locke Declares Nation is Re-evaluating Race for Its Contributions," *New York Times* (8 September 1931), 17. Locke, who was in Germany at the time, sent to the *New York Times* the text of his paper entitled "The Negro in Art," which had been read in absentia on September 7, 1931, at the Conference of International Student Service, held at Mount Holyoke College in South Hadley, Massachusetts. *The New York Times* excerpted the paper in its article.

57. Alain Locke, *The Negro in America* (Chicago: American Library Association, 1933), 50.

58. 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi, *Race and Man: A Compilation*, compiled by Maye Harvey Gift (Wilmette, IL: Bahá'í Publishing Committee, 1943), 36.

59. Alain Locke, quoted in "Locke Holds Smashing of Humanity's Barriers Civilization's Present Need: Howard University Professor Views Elimination of Bars Between Races, Sexes and Nations as Necessity for Progress," *The New York Amsterdam News* (26 March 1930), 11.

60. Locke, *The Works of Alain Locke*, 390.

61. Buck, *Alain Locke: Faith and Philosophy*, 239.

62. This chapter is dedicated to Sandra Kay (Thompson) Buck (September 4, 1928–April 24, 1991) and George Hugh Buck (March 10, 1926–May 10, 2010), the

present writer's parents, in perpetual honor: "Gratitude urges us to repay kindness; justice disposes us to do what is right; kindness moves us to act graciously; humanity constrains us to show mercy." John Page Hopps, *First Principles of Religion and Morality* (1874), 22.

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