# Reviews

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***Gnostic Apocalypse and Islam: Qur'an, Exegesis, Messianism, and the Literary Origins of the Babi Religion.*** **Todd Lawson.[1] (2011)**
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## Structure and Overview

The spirit is willing, but the text is deep. To plumb its depths, an extended review of *Gnostic Apocalypse and Islam* is needed to explore Todd Lawson's analysis of the early work of Sayyid 'Alī-Muḥammad Shīrāzī (1819–50), known as the Bab ('the Gate'), prophet-founder of the Babi religion (which later evolved into the Baha'i Faith). According to Lawson, the Bab's 'first public heretical act was to compose/reveal a new Qur'an – "the true Qur'an"' (21), which is the Tafsīr Sūrat Yūsuf ('Commentary on the Sura of Joseph') – also known as the Qayyūm al-Asmā' (10) and the Aḥsan al-Qiṣaṣ ('Best of Stories'), the name that the Qur'an itself gives to the Sura of Joseph (Q. 12:3). This 'public heretical act' – and others – was as brazen as it was brilliant, and ultimately cost the Bab his life, with his public execution on 9 July 1850 in Tabriz, Persia (Iran). The Tafsīr Sūrat Yūsuf, composed/revealed in 40 consecutive days (29) in mid-1844, when the Bab was 25 years old (28), is thus the subject matter of Lawson's monograph.

The full title, *Gnostic Apocalypse and Islam: Qur'an, Exegesis, Messianism, and the Literary Origins of the Babi Religion*, packs – that is, compacts – a great deal of conceptual and theological agenda in a few words. Transforming the title into a thesis statement, the following claim – using all of the words (in italics) of the title itself – may be made in representing the 'message' of Lawson's work:

> *The literary origins of the Babi Religion* begin with a *Gnostic Apocalypse*, the *Tafsīr Sūrat Yūsuf*, an *exegesis* of the *Qur'an* that proclaims the *messian*[ic] fulfillment of Islam.

In essence, *Gnostic Apocalypse and Islam* could be equivalently entitled, *The Tafsīr Sūrat Yūsuf and the Qur'an*. The Tafsīr Sūrat Yūsuf is composed 'entirely in Arabic' (17) and comprises around 400 pages, with around 4,662 verses (= 111 x 42). The Qur'an itself has 114 suras and 6,200 verses. Whether one of the reasons the Bab chose Sura 12 was that its verses closely number the suras of the Qur'an is uncertain, although undoubtedly the effect of this coincidence was not lost upon the audience of readers (41).

Structurally, *Gnostic Apocalypse and Islam* is laid out as follows: 'Acknowledgments' (vi–vii); 'Introduction: Qur'an, apocalypse, and gnosis' (1–20); '1. Commentary and imitation: Charismatic text, messianic exegesis' (21–45); '2. Voices of the text: Remembrance and gate' (46–74); '3. Renewal of covenant: *Coincidentia oppositorum* and the primal point' (75–92); '4. The metaleptic Joseph: The shirt, the Bees, and Gnostic Apocalypse' (93–139); 'Conclusion: Hermeneutic Spiral' (140–1); 'Appendix 1: Manuscript of Sūrat al Naḥl' (142–4); 'Appendix 2: Sūrat al Naḥl transcription' (145–9); 'Notes' (150–84); and 'Bibliography' (185–205); 'General Index' (206–28); and 'Index of Qur'anic verses' (229–30).

Both concept and title – is borrowed, an acknowledged debt. As a 'production' note, Lawson's *Gnostic Apocalypse and Islam* has a strikingly similar colour scheme (blue, black and white) as the cover of Cyril O'Regan's *Gnostic Apocalypse: Jacob Boehme's Haunted Narrative*.[2] While this is fortuitous, yet it is happily coincidental, as Lawson, in defining the term 'Gnostic Apocalypse' intentionally invokes O'Regan's monograph (3).

By 'Gnostic Apocalypse', Lawson argues that the Tafsīr Sūrat Yūsuf is 'itself the result of a reordering of the basic elements of the scripture of Islam [the Qur'an] that have been internalized and transformed by the apparently opposite processes of imitation and inspiration to become finally an original "act" of literature of a genre that we would like to call gnostic apocalypse' (141). By means of its 'special charismatic energy' (141) and the torquing of central aspects of Shi'i Islam, the Bab endeavoured 'to appropriate and participate in the spiritual power (or charisma) of the Qur'an in order to invoke his own spiritual authority – namely by recasting the existing revelation in a new form' (48).

How does the Bab achieve this? It is through 'metalepsis and paraphrase' (140). Metalepsis is the key to the Bab's literary calculus, by which the Bab interprets the Qur'an in transumptive style, by paraphrase and intertextual echoes, thereby creating a 'the "True Qur'an", *and* a new Qur'an' (22). The 'True Qur'an', according to Shi'i Islamic tradition, 'has been in the safekeeping of the Twelfth Imam, due to be restored to its proper place at the time of the return *(raj'a)* on or before the Day of Judgment, when justice is to be reestablished in the world' (4). Thus the Tafsīr Sūrat Yūsuf is the new and true Qur'an revealed by the Twelfth Imam in the apocalyptic moment of realized eschatology, known only by gnosis.

What is metalepsis? The *Oxford English Dictionary*[3] defines 'metalepsis' as: 'The rhetorical figure consisting in the metonymical substitution of one word for another which is itself a metonym; (more generally) any metaphorical usage resulting from a series or succession of figurative substitutions. Also: an instance of this.' Technically, metalepsis (or *transumptio*, in its Latin form) is 'double metonymy'. A metonymy (Greek, 'change of name' [noun]), is 'a figure [of speech] by which one name or noun is used instead of another,' and is 'not founded on resemblance, but on *relation*.'[4] In the very next section, Bullinger defines 'metalepsis', or 'double metonymy', as consisting of 'two stages, only one of which is expressed'.[5] The Romans called this figure of speech a *transumptio* ('taking across'), i.e. 'transumption'.[6] The most well-known biblical instance of metalepsis is the expression, 'the blood of Christ', as Ethelbert Bullinger explains:

> In the New Testament, the expression 'the blood of Christ' is the figure *Metalepsis*; because first the 'blood' is put (by *Synecdoche*) from blood-shedding: i.e., the death of Christ, as distinct from His life; and then His death is put for the perfect satisfaction made by it, for all the merits of the atonement effected by it: i.e., it means not merely the actual blood corpuscles, neither does it mean His death as an act, but the merits of the atonement effected by it and associated with it.[7]

Lawson does not explicitly define metalepsis, but refers the reader to O'Regan.[8] In a 2001 monograph, O'Regan characterizes metalepsis 'as essentially consisting of disfiguration-refiguration of biblical narrative'.[9] Thus metalepsis operates as a 'revisionary ratio, the way in which a later discourse both neutralizes an earlier discourse and siphons off its authority' – in other words, a form of 'usurpation'.[10]

What does metalepsis look like? How did the Bab make use of this device, this literary technique? It is through a process that may be called 'inverse exegesis', resulting in 'interpretation as instantiation'. Here, the Bab 'usurps' (or 'appropriates' or 'fulfils') the charismatic power and authority of the Qur'an as his own messianic prerogative. In the Tafsīr Sūrat Yūsuf, the Bab 'disfigures' the Qur'anic narrative of the Sura of Joseph and 'refigures' the figure of Joseph as an archetypal, prophetic figure who typologically prefigures the messianic advent of the Bab himself (as the Shi'i messiah, known as the Mahdi, Qa'im, or return of the Twelfth Imam). Thus the Bab, Lawson concludes, is the new, 'metaleptic Joseph' (93–139), that is, Joseph *redivivus*.

## Interpretation as Instantiation: Inverse Exegesis?

Exegesis is interpretation – typically of scripture. After reading Todd Lawson's closely-argued *Gnostic Apocalypse and Islam*, the present writer was left with the distinct impression that the Tafsīr Sūrat Yūsuf, the Bab's first major revelatory work, was a '*tafsīr*' (Qur'an commentary) in name only, as no 'formal' interpretation is found in the chapter translated by Lawson, the Sura of the Bees (chapter 4), which is Sura 93 *(Sūrat al-Naḥl)* of the Tafsīr Sūrat Yūsuf. This is in stark contrast to an earlier work of the Bab's, the Tafsīr Sūrat al-Baqara ('Commentary on the Sura of the Cow'), an exegesis of the first and second chapters of the Qur'an (2), completed in January to February 1844. Thus the Tafsīr Sūrat Yūsuf is the first work composed subsequent to the inception of the Bab's prophetic career.

The Tafsīr Sūrat Yūsuf purports to be a commentary on the 'Sura of Joseph', which is Sura 12 of the Qur'an. Yet this commentary does not formally 'explain' the verses in question, but uses the Qur'anic text as a foil, or template, for presenting something quite different. To be fair, the Bab, as Lawson puts it, 'had been commanded to write his *tafsīr* by none other than the Hidden Imam' (23). This fact had earlier been noted by Edward Granville Browne: 'In it [the Tafsīr Sūrat Yūsuf] a distinct claim to a divine mission is put forward.'[11] This is exemplified in Browne's translation of the following passage from the Sūrat al-Mulk:

> God hath decreed that this book, in explanation of the 'best of stories' (i.e. the *Súra-i-Yúsuf*, which is so called) should come forth from Muhammad, son

> of Hasan, son of 'Alí, son of Músa, son of Ja'far, son of Muḥammad, son of 'Ali, son of Huseyn, son of 'Alí, son of Abú Tálib, unto his servant that it may be the proof of God on the part of the Remembrance [the Bab] reaching the two worlds.[12]

Here, 'God hath decreed' – through the agency of the Hidden Imam – that the Bab reveal the Tafsīr Sūrat Yūsuf. This revelation therefore constitutes 'proof' of the Bab's prophetic credentials.

So it is not the 'fact' of interpretation that is in question, but the 'how'. How does this interpretation-as-proclamation work? First, the the Tafsīr Sūrat Yūsuf is a Qur'an commentary in neo-Qur'anic form. The Bab typically quotes the Qur'anic text (but without using quotes or indicating the he is quoting) and then inserts his own comments – both of which combine to read as though the entire passage was the (imitative) voice of the Qur'an itself. To discern Qur'anic passages from the Bab's neo-Qur'anic glosses, in fact, one must be able to recognize the Qur'anic text within the Bab's discourse itself, because where each quotation begins and ends is not immediately obvious. This is where Lawson's technique of representing the Qur'anic text in small capital letters enables the reader to immediately distinguish the Bab's 'commentary' from the text being commented on. The first eight verses of the 'Sura of the Bees' (Sūrat al-Naḥl, Sura 93 of Tafsīr Sūrat Yūsuf) offer a prime example of the Bab's embellished Qur'anic paraphrasing:

1. In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate.
2. Go, take this shirt of mine and do thou cast it on my father's face, and he shall recover his sight; then bring me your family altogether. (Qur'an 12:93).
3. *kāf hā' 'ayn.*
4. Indeed we revealed unto the bees, saying: take from the mountains (Qur'an 16:68) which are citadels – the abode for affirming the sanctity of God – the sign of this Luminous One, and of trees (Qur'an 16:68), places for affirming that there is no God but God *(al-tawḥīd)*, the sign of this Easterner and of what they are building (Qur'an 16:68) in the path of affirming the unity of God *(al-tawḥīd)*, the threadbare garment of this Westerner belonging to God, the Sublime. And He is God, Witness over all things.
5. Then eat of all manner of (Qur'an 16:69) divine allusions *(al-ishārāt)* made smooth (Qur'an 16:69) in the path of the Remembrance, this Gate. There comes forth from their bellies (Qur'an 16:69) the water of the elixir that is one in terms of its blessings, although it is of diverse hues wherein is healing for (Qur'an 16:69) believers. Verily God is Powerful over all things.
6. God is the creator of everything through His power. And God, in very truth, is apprised of everything which men do.
7. O believers! Fear God concerning this most great word protected in the divine fire. Indeed he is, in very truth, accounted by God, the Sublime, as a witness.
8. O people of the veils! Hearken to the call of God from the tongue of the most great Remembrance: Verily verily I am God (Qur'an 28:30) there is no God but Him (Qur'an *passim*). Indeed, the likeness of the Remembrance is as gold softened in fire that flows in rivulets through all the hidden places by the will of God, the High. And he is God – Mighty, Ancient. (100–10)

Here, with the exception of verse 2 and its reference to all Joseph's 'shirt', the 'commentary' is squarely on the 'Sura of the Bees' (Sura 16), rather than the 'Sura of Joseph' (Sura 12) – unless one is prepared to argue that the Bab is somehow explicating verse 93 of Sura 12 by the verses of Sura 16. This would largely explain why the Bab titled his own sura, the 'Sura of the Bees'.

Here, the Bab represents himself as Joseph in verse 4 ('the threadbare garment of this Westerner'). In verse 5, the honey is explicated as 'divine allusions' to 'the Remembrance, this Gate' (i.e. the Bab). Then, in verse 8, the 'gold softened' *(al-dhahab al-mā'ila)* appears to be a double metaphor within the formal 'similitude' (i.e. simile). Here, the Bab's revelation is, at once, compared to both (golden) honey (implicit) and (molten) gold (explicit), conveying the sense that the new revelation is both mellifluous and precious, sweet and rich. Lawson notes that, in verse 8, 'VERILY VERILY I AM GOD' is an implicit claim to divine prerogative and authority: 'It affirms that the Bāb is claiming revelation by comparing his rank to that of Moses' (112). In other words, this 'tafsīr' is no less than 'the call of God from the tongue of the most great Remembrance' – that is, the Bab's new Qur'an, cast in the form of a Qur'an commentary.

As represented by this example, the reader can see that there is neither formal interpretation being performed here with respect to the Qur'an itself, nor of its 'authorial intent', apart from pointing to the Bab as the new Joseph, the new Moses, the revealer of a new Qur'an, and the new voice of God. Where, then, is the formal *tafsīr*? This is a *tafsīr* in form only, not in substance. In other words, the reader will not have a greater understanding of the 'Sura of Joseph' as such – except insofar as the Bab is the new, 'metaleptic Joseph' (93–139). Even the Bab's paraphrases are not strictly exegetical, insofar as they do not explicate the meaning of the Qur'anic passages being invoked. Granted, this may be a radical reading, and a departure from what Lawson has to say regarding it: 'The chapter chosen for this examination is written in the form of a commentary on the 93rd verse of the sura of Joseph (Qur'an 12)' (92). Yet Lawson elsewhere concedes: 'The work is patently not *tafsīr* in the classical sense. ... Though it is not *tafsīr* in the generic, technical sense, it does say what the meaning of the Qur'an is' (4). This assertion is little more than concession. In any case, Lawson points to the sudden, inexplicable intrusions of apparently unrelated subject matter and/or Qur'anic text, which add to the difficulty of fathoming just what the Bab is doing:

> The symbol of the shirt of Joseph is immediately associated with the BEES mentioned in the Qur'an 16 (*Sūrat al-Naḥl*/The Sura of the Bees). Such an apparently incongruous and abrupt association of the BEES with the *shirt* of Joseph is quite typical of the Bāb's method throughout this commentary. The Bāb seems to take the BEES out of thin air. As will be seen, this air is actually the exceedingly rich atmosphere of Shi'i exegetical tradition.
>
> (98)

It does appear that the bee and honey imagery is not explained in terms of the 'authorial intent' of the Qur'an itself, but of the intent of the author himself (the Bab). In other words, the Bab is not so much explaining the

Qur'an as using the Qur'an to explain himself. This is what is meant by 'inverse exegesis' and 'interpretation by instantiation', whereby the Qur'an is interpreted as typologically prefiguring 'the reappearance of ... the true Qur'an' (10) which, 'according to tradition, has been in the safekeeping of the Twelfth Imam' (4), whose return was proclaimed in the advent of the Bab.

Suggesting that the Bab is not so much interpreting the Qur'an as invoking the Qur'an to authorize his own advent is perhaps overstating the case and admittedly contradicts, in part, this statement by Lawson: 'There is no doubt that the work is unusual; but to say that it is not interpretive, or that it does not "make clear" what the Qur'an meant is either not to have read it, or to have imposed upon it too rigid a notion about what constitutes *tafsīr*, which is after all "explanation"' (140). But the real 'explanation' at work here is the presentism of the Bab's prophetic advent. Thus *Gnostic Apocalypse*'s thesis may be reduced to three words: 'Eisegesis usurps exegesis.'

## The 'True Qur'an'

As previously stated, the Bab is not, *strictu sensu*, explicating the Qur'an. Rather, he is expatiating – and thereby announcing – his advent in the guise of interpretation. Indeed, it is utterly remarkable that a Qur'an commentary would be cast in the form of a complete Qur'an. Lawson underscores this very fact: 'Certainly the most striking aspect of the work is that it purports to be at once a commentary on the Qur'an, the 'True Qur'an', *and* a new Qur'an' (22).

In revealing the Tafsīr Sūrat Yūsuf, the Bab 'is introducing a new scripture or revelation by means of the Trojan horse of exegesis' (22). In other words, the Bab's tafsīr is modelled on the Qur'an – indeed, 'a blatant imitation of the Qur'an itself' (17) – and divided into 111 suras (chapters) each with 42 verses *(ayat)* each, with its language 'cast in rhyming prose *(saj')*' (17). True, the Qur'anic Sura of Joseph contains 111 verses. That is why there are 111 suras in the Tafsīr Sūrat Yūsuf. The Qur'an has 114 suras. Lawson notes that the Bab assigns titles to each the 111 suras, as in the Qur'an, such that there is 'no question that the use of these titles is meant to suggest the appearance of the new Qur'an' (41). Each sura, moreover, begins with the *bismillāh* ('In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate'), and most of the 111 suras open with mysterious 'disconnected letters', just like the Qur'an.

If this 'interpretation by instantiation' is fundamentally correct, then the end result is that the Bab reveals himself, in his performance as exegete, as the subject and object of that exegesis, where the exegesis is about the exegete rather than the exegeted text. Lawson seems to suggest this: 'But this text is within the soul of the Bāb, who in the act of reading inscribes himself with the read text and becomes a text himself, which he also reads aloud to us: reading reading itself' (135).

In appreciating what Lawson is saying here, three levels of sacred text emerge: (1) the literal text, in and of itself, which is obviously the Qur'an; (2) the 'read text' as the imamological interpretation, wherein the Bab reads 'Joseph' as the Qa'im (the occulted, Twelfth Imam); and (3) the 'text himself', i.e. the 'realized' interpretation in the Bab's prophetological advent as the new, metaleptic Joseph. The substitution of the Qa'im (for the figure

of Joseph in the Qur'an) operates as the first-order metonym, while the Bab's advent functions as the second-order metonym (for the figure of the Bab, who is the advent of the Hidden Imam).

This completes the metalepsis. 'This method, by which the Bāb weaves his own words into the fabric of the Qur'an, is a kind of metalepsis,' Lawson writes (60), which is nothing less than 'the utter and unapologetic manipulation of sacred Scripture–metalepsis' (137). 'Rather,' Lawson concludes, 'the message of the commentary is proclaimed by an invocation of images and symbols, which when combined points to a kind of annunciation' (41).

What appears as a merely literary trope or device, i.e. metalepsis, is actually a spiritual, existential process of presenting the text (the Qur'an), of re-presenting the text (of interpreting Joseph as the Qa'im), of representing – indeed, of instantiating, even incarnating – the text (of interpreting the Qa'im as the Bab himself), as Shi'i tradition predicts: 'When the Qā'im comes forth the shirt of Joseph will be on him, and he will have the staff of Moses and the ring of Solomon' (qtd. on 175, n. 13). Here, through metalepsis, the Bab engages in a profound and sustained meditation ('reading') of the Qur'an and then explicates the text by embodying the text, wherein the Qa'im rises up through the soul/mind of the Bab such that the Bab performs the Qa'im, becomes the Qa'im. In other words, the Bab steps out of the pages of his commentary and emerges as a messiah.

In order to develop Lawson's primary thesis of *Gnostic Apocalypse and Islam*, this review has had to pass over features of this dense, information-rich, and utterly fascinating text. To recapitulate the major point that Lawson makes, it is this: In 'utter and unapologetic manipulation of sacred Scripture – metalepsis,' Lawson writes, the '*Tafsīr Sūrat Yūsuf* may be read, then, as the rising of the Imam through the consciousness of ecstasy, or better "instasy" *(wijdān)*, of the Bāb' (137). And further: 'Throughout this "heresy of paraphrase", his [the Bab's] apocalyptic and messianic consciousness "flames forth" and is deliberately, elaborately, and responsibly reflected' (137). Not only that, but the Hidden Imam, as Lawson asserts, actually addresses the Bab in this dramatic passage from verses 38–42 of the 'Sura of the Bees':

> 38. O Solace of the Eye [the Bab]! Say: 'VERILY, VERILY I [the Bab] AM THE HOUR. HOW IS IT THEN THAT YOU DO NOT KNOW THAT THE HOUR, IN VERY TRUTH, IS NEAR ACCORDING TO THE MOTHER BOOK?' (132) ...
>
> 41. AND VERILY, VERILY I [the Bab] AM the fire in the LIGHT UPON LIGHT [Q. 24:35] OF SINAI in the land of Felicity and him had been in the precincts of the Fire [Q. 20:10–11]. (133)
>
> 42. O Solace of the Eye [the Bab]! Say to the believers from among all the people of the Earth and the heavens: 'COME TO ME WITH YOUR PEOPLE who are effaced COMPLETELY by the permission of God, the Sublime.' Verily God desires your reward in this Gate [the Bab], upon the most great truth. And He is God, Knower of all things. (134)

According to Lawson, we know that the Hidden Imam apostrophizes the Bab because this is a 'Say! *(qul)*' passage. That is, in each occurrence of the 'Say!' command in the Tafsīr Sūrat Yūsuf, the Hidden Imam is directly calling out to the Bab. It may be objected, however, that neither the Qur'an

nor the Tafsīr Sūrat Yūsuf itself states that it is the Qa'im who is summoning the Bab, but rather God, i.e. as the 'voice' of revelation. The occurrence of 'Say!' only confirms this impression. For it is by this expression that God is addressing Muhammad in the Qur'an. Whenever the command 'Say!' occurs in the Qur'an, it is God commanding the Prophet Muhammad to the address the people. Why should it be any different in the Tafsīr Sūrat Yūsuf, especially if its resemblance to, and even being a deliberate imitation of the Qur'an in form, is accepted?[13] Of course, for Shi'i Muslims, the voice of God is conveyed through the Imam as interlocutor. Shi'ism, after all, is imamocentric.

The voice of divine authority is of major importance, for this fact alone establishes the Tafsīr Sūrat Yūsuf as an apocalypse (both cosmologically and eschatologically). Because the apocalypse has not literally occurred on the earthly plane, this eschatological event (the advent of the Bab) is perforce a 'Gnostic Apocalypse'. Only those imbued with the perspicuity of faith (i.e. 'gnosis') can 'realize' (i.e. recognize) the occurrence of this apocalypse, what just transpired in the invisible realm of spiritual consciousness. Given its historical context, this fact makes the Qayyūm al-Asmā' truly revolutionary. In a sense, everything else is secondary.

It seems reasonable to assume that the Bab did not really think this was the long-hidden 'true Qur'an' – the actual book in hiding with the Hidden Imam – but rather a metaleptic evocation of it which, in the final analysis, is just as real (if not more real) than any historical artefact might be. It is a 'poetic' truth or 'spiritual' fact – a typological figuration. The 'recognition' scene, cited above, in which the Hidden Imam reveals the 'Gate' (i.e. the Bab) is extremely powerful, apocalyptic, explosive. The Bab is no mere 'Gate' *(al-bāb)* or deputy/interlocutor of the Hidden Imam. The Bab is revealed as the Mosaic flash of fire in the Burning Bush on Mount Sinai, as the light of God, in the language of the 'Verse of Light' (Q. 24: 35), one of the 'jewels of the Qur'an'. But no towering skyscrapers collapse or other catastrophes befall. Rather, the apocalypse is gnostic – unknown except to those who know (with the certitude of presentism that characterizes 'realized eschatology').

The body of the book is relatively error-free. Since errata are useful for subsequent printings, instances of rare typos in the back matter may be noted. The most significant of these oversights is where Lawson refers to prior studies of the Sura of Joseph that he fails to cite beyond the authors' last name: 1: p. 154 (Notes), n. 17: 'See bibliography for the shorter studies by Waldman, Johns, Mir, Morris, Neuwirth, Firestone and monographs by Bajouda, Bernstein, and Prémare among others.[14]

The present work is a refinement of Lawson's doctoral dissertation (1987) at McGill University, Canada.[15] It has aged, matured and sophisticated like fine wine in the barrel of Lawson's subsequent work, and is interspersed with insights arising in subsequent studies. Thus, it is a work of original research on an original figure prismed by an original mind. *Gnostic Apocalypse and Islam* is an instant classic in Babi/Baha' studies. It is foundational to the academic study of Babi/Baha'i history and doctrine. Not only did it take a scholar with a command of Arabic and of the history, doctrine and arcane philosophy of Shi'i Islam to write *Gnostic Apocalypse and Islam*. It took a gnostic.

## Endnotes

1. The author, Todd Lawson, is Emeritus Professor, formerly of the Department of Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations of the University of Toronto, and was cross-appointed at the Centre for the Study of Religion and the Centre for Jewish Studies. Lawson is one of the leading scholars in the academic study of the Babi religion.
2. Cyril O'Regan, *Gnostic Apocalypse: Jacob Boehme's Haunted Narrative,* New York: State University of New York Press, 2002. In fairness, however, other recent Routledge books appear with a similar cover design, as Routledge tends to reuse cover designs.
3. *Oxford English Dictionary* (3rd edn., Dec. 2001).
4. Ethelbert William Bullinger, *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible: Explained and Illustrated,* Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1968 [1898], 538.
5. Ibid. 609.
6. Ibid. 609.
7. Ibid. 610.
8. In an endnote (160, n. 13), Lawson refers the reader to O'Regan's *Gnostic Apocalypse*, pp. 115–27 (section 4.2, 'Narrative Swerve: Metalepsis'). The problem is that O'Regan does not define 'metalepsis' in this section.
9. Cyril O'Regan, *Gnostic Return in Modernity,* New York: SUNY Press, 2001, 230.
10. Ibid. 57.
11. Edward Granville Browne, 'The Bábis of Persia. II. Their Literature and Doctrines', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 2 (1889): 906.
12. Trans. Browne, ibid.
13. This observation is thanks to Youli A. Ioannesyan, an orientalist at St Petersburg State University and the St Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies under the Russian Academy of Sciences.
14. The interested reader can find the missing references in Todd Lawson, Typological Figuration and the Meaning of 'Spiritual': The Qur'anic Story of Joseph, *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 2012, 13(2) 240–244.
15. B. Todd Lawson, 'The Qur'an Commentary of Sayyid 'Alī-Muḥammad, the Bāb (1819–1850)', PhD thesis, Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University, 1987.

***The Baha'is of Iran, Transcaspia and the Caucasus.* Soli Shahvar, Gad Gilbar and Boris Morozov (eds.)**
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The second half of the 19th century was characterized by an increasing interest in the Babi and Baha'i Faiths in Europe. Diplomats, orientalists and others were making contributions in every conceivable way to the study of this phenomenon: the emergence of a new religion, contradicting the prevalent view that the appearance of new religions was only possible in ancient times because it was thought to be characteristic of early forms of human society.

There was considerable interest in the Babi and the Baha'i Faiths in Russia and Great Britain, countries whose political positions in Iran were exceptionally strong, and whose diplomats therefore had greater opportunities to collect materials on this subject at the very dawn of the religion's history.

Russian diplomats and diplomatic mission staff in Iran were especially active in collecting these materials. Russia's General Consul in Tabriz, A. M. Bezobrazov; General Consul in Astrabad, F. A. Bakulin; chief interpreter of the Russian mission in Tehran, I. G. Grigorovich, and others played a considerable role in the preservation and contribution of Babi and Baha'i manuscripts to the collections in the then capital of the Russian Empire, St Petersburg, and primarily to the collection in the Library of the Institute of Oriental Languages of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, later transferred to the Asiatic Museum.[1] Among the European scholars whose contribution to Baha'i and Babi studies, including the publication of original texts, was exceptionally valuable were Russian orientalists and diplomats Baron V. R. Rosen, A. G. Tumanski and G. D. Batyushkov.

Rosen left to posterity a vast collection of unpublished materials which, among other purposes, are of extreme value for the study of the Babi and Baha'i Faiths, as well as for research on Babi and Baha'i studies in Europe. These materials in Russian, English, French, Persian and Arabic are for the most past preserved in the Archive of the Russian Academy of Sciences in St Petersburg, Russia. The late Soviet scholar N. A. Kuznetsova was the first to work on and quote from them directly in her article.[2] Later the archive

documents with quotes in English were presented at the 'Irfan Colloquium by Y. Ioannesyan. [3]

The book under review consists of two volumes and comprises documents in English translation, introductory essays, biographical and other notes, glossary and illustrations. 'The volumes include letters and reports found in five separate archives in St. Petersburg and Moscow' in English translation. (vol. 1, p. 13). The list of archives used for the book is impressive. But the great majority of the documents presented are from the Archive of the Russian Academy of Sciences in St Petersburg.

Volume I contains letters of V. I. Ignatyev, A. G. Tumanski, A. P. Orlov and G. D. Batyushkov preceded by three essays (by S. Shahvar, B. Morozov and G. Gilbar). The first two were Baron Rosen's former students. Tumanski as a young captain in the Russian imperial army, while serving in the Turkistan region (Ashkabad), came into close contact with the recently established Baha'i community there and became interested in the Baha'i teachings. He was the first translator of the central Baha'i writing, the Kitab-i-Aqdas, into a European language (Russian). Ignatyev was a diplomat working in Tehran, Ashkabad and Bukhara where he was watching the development of the newly emerging religion. Batyushkov was both a diplomat working in Tehran and a scholar (see below) who found the Baha'i Faith an interesting religious phenomenon. He always tried to collect Baha'i writings and protect them from destruction where possible. Another of Rosen's former students, Orlov, served as a secretary of the Russian consulate in Astrabad.

The first essay (1–47) entitled: 'The Baha'i Faith and its Communities in Iran, Transcaspia and the Caucasus' presents a very accurate account of the history of the Babi and Baha'i Faiths since their inception up to the end of the 19th – beginning of the 20th centuries. It explores the historic background and traces the origins of the Babi and Baha'i Faiths, the interrelationship between them, the origin of the term 'Baha'i' and the emergence of the first followers of Baha'u'llah, referred to as *'ahl al-Baha* or Baha'is. A convincing attempt is made to explain the causes of the confusion between the terms 'Babi' and 'Baha'i', which existed in the minds of many people including scholars and diplomats as evidenced by their private and official correspondence and which has not been cleared up completely up today. The whole essay is based on carefully verified and authenticated historic facts covering also such complicated issues as the break-up between Azal, 'whom the Bab had made the nominal leader of the Babi community', and Baha'u'llah. The Baha'i Faith is described as 'a new religion wholly distinct from Islam' (vol. 1, p. 1), which is a correct and precise definition unfortunately lacking in works of some other authors. The most revolutionary features of the teachings of the Bab who is described as 'not simply claiming to be the Mahdi, but also the bringer of a new divine revelation' (vol. 1, p. 2) are summarized.

Special attention is given to the central book of the Baha'i Faith, the Kitab-i-Aqdas with an emphasis on the laws and ordinances of the new religion highlighting such aspects as the obligations of the individual believer including daily prayer, an annual fast, voluntary payment of a portion of one's excessive wealth to be spent for spreading the faith and charitable purposes, engaging in a trade or profession, educating one's children, cleanliness and living a moral life; prohibitions including murder, theft,

arson, adultery, slavery, asceticism, mendicancy, gambling, intoxicants, backbiting, fanaticism, conflict, contention and sedition along with the abrogation of the Islamic law of the sword (i.e. jihad) for the propagation of religion. Baha'ullah's directing Baha'is to associate with the followers of all religions with amity and concord and cancelling various restrictions of the Koran and the Bayan as well as the establishment of the House of Justice and 'Abdu'l-Baha's appointment as Baha'u'llah's successor are also mentioned.

Factors contributing to the spread of the Baha'i Faith in Iran and other Islamic countries are also analysed. These include certain Baha'i teachings and principles such as a positive attitude toward economic activity, the emphasis on the need for everyone to engage in work or a profession in order to support themselves and their families as well as the endorsement of the individual's right to property ownership. Baha'ullah's denouncement of corruption and oppression coupled with the repeated calls for trustworthiness and justice are also named among the factors involved. The spread of the Baha'i Faith is seen largely related to the fact that it 'became a source of religious , moral and social modernism in Qajar Iran, continuously drawing converts not only from the Babi community but also from the majority Shi'i population... as well as from other religious minorities...' (7). This resulted in 'not only the further dissemination of reformist ideas in Qajar society, but also [in] the conversion of more people to the new religion and the creation of new communities' (11).

The expansion of the Baha'i Faith outside of Iran largely due to the activities of 'Abdu'l-Baha and efforts of individual believers is also considered. This part is mainly focused on the emergence of Baha'i communities in different regions of the Russian Empire such as Transcaspia (Ashgabat, Bukhara, Samarkand), the Caucasus (Baku) etc. The illuminating account of the history of the Baha'i community in Ashgabat covers many significant events and episodes (the erection of the first Baha'i temple, the martyrdom of Haji Muhammad-Riza Isfahani, etc.), which despite being crucial to the history of the Baha'i Faith are almost unknown to the general public. This historic account is a good format for highlighting the attitude of the Russian authorities towards the new religion as well. The whole section on history ends with the following major conclusion: 'Although the Babi movement had asserted a revolutionary message that broke sharply with Islamic orthodoxy and led to the stigmatization of the Babis as radical and dangerous revolutionaries, once transformed by Baha'u'llah into a moderate and pro-reform religion, the Baha'i Faith experienced heightened numerical expansion, as the movement appealed not only to former Babis but to Shi'is and to religious minorities. Nevertheless, as believers in a post-Muhammadan revelation, Baha'is were still widely regarded as heretics, and thus persecution of, and opposition to, the Baha'is continued' (45).

The second essay (49–68) entitled: 'Russian Orientalism and Babi/Baha'i Studies' is a brief account of the history of Russian orientalism in a wider context and with respect to the Babi and Baha'i Faiths in particular. The establishment of the Russian academic school of oriental studies served as a historic background and prelude to research in such fields as the Babi and Baha'i Faiths in Tsarist Russia. It is with this school that the academic activity of V. R. Rosen, pioneer of Baha'i studies in Russia, was

directly connected. Accordingly, the historic account draws a picture of some general processes and tendencies observed in 19th-century Russia's scholarly and diplomatic circles with an emphasis on how Babi and Baha'i materials were being collected. Special attention is given to the key figures: Rosen, Batyushkov, Tumanski, Ignatyev and Orlov. Batyushkov's contribution, of whom the author of the essay says that 'only one of [his six letters to Rosen] was really devoted to Babis and Baha'is (63), appears largely underestimated. In fact his three letters are very relevant to the subject. The description of Batyushkov's published work (G. Batyushkov, *Babidy. Persidskaya Sekta* ('The Babis: a Persian sect', St Petersburg, 1897) which came out in the form of a small book (28 pages) and is referred to in the essay as 'an article', in the opinion of the present writer, is not appropriate: 'Unfortunately there was nothing new in it: the article only summarized already-known facts regarding history of the Bab, his teachings and his followers' (63). Such assessment of Batyushkov's work and his input to Babi/Baha'i studies raises the question: to whom were these 'already-known facts' known? Definitely, not to the majority of the author's contemporaries given the fact that even the general reader today is not familiar with the information presented in Batyushkov's work. The latter, however, apart from a historic value contains some interesting prognoses concerning the possible future of the Baha'i Faith in Iran and the positive role it may play in the restoration of Iranian culture, which, at least, deserves noting.

The third essay (69–82) entitled: 'Baha'u'llah, the Iranian *tujjar* and the New Approach to Interest' is devoted to what is defined in the book as 'significant economic aspects relating to the Baha'is in Iran and neighboring territories revealed in the correspondence' [mainly Tumanski's letters] (68). The essay analyses the economic situation in Iran and what is described as 'the profound economic and social transformation having to do with the country's integration in the world economic system ... that formed the setting for the affinity of the *tujjar* [merchants] with Baha'u'llah's new economic approach" (70). The essay consists of the following subdivisions: 'A Period of Economic and Social Transformation', 'A New Perception of Interest' and 'Tujjar and the Clergy' and ends with some interesting conclusions.

Volume 2 is fully devoted to official Russian diplomatic dispatches, correspondence and reports covering the period 1848–1928. It is chronologically divided into five sections: Part 1 (1848–68), Part 2 (1869–90), Part 3 (1890–95), Part 4 (1896–1901/02), Part 5 (1902–28). As the editors point out in the Preface:

> Not only do they (diplomatic dispatches – Y. I.) provide a unique insight into the perception of Russian diplomats and officials regarding significant events in Babi and Baha'i history ... but they also help us perceive the development of the Russians' understanding of the Babi and Baha'i religions as well as the formation of Russian attitudes and policy toward the Babis and Baha'is in Iran and Russia during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

As for the documents presented in the book, since they speak for themselves I will not discuss them here except for making a few points that seem to me important. Given the fact that these documents are archival the book would have benefited if it contained not only translations but the originals

(in Russian, French and Persian) as well. It is always preferable to enable a qualified scholarly user of primary source documents to verify translations or check on a particular phrase, term or nuance by comparing the passage in question with the original. Every document in the book is supplied with a reference to its archive code and the pages it covers in an endnote. However, displaying also the original folio page number of every part of the document would have been very appropriate. This would have enabled the potential user (when taking notes or quoting a passage for their own research) to reference the original folio of the document in the archive (primary source) instead of the corresponding page of this book (secondary source).

I would like to conclude this review by emphasizing the fact that archival documents are an important source for studying the history of the Babi and Baha'i religions. Consequently, any effort to make these priceless materials available for scholars in an academic format should be encouraged and praised. Apart from archival documents the book also contains introductory essays presenting verified and reliable data as well as unbiased analysis of the facts. It is obviously a valuable contribution to both Baha'i/Babi and Iranian studies. The book is addressed to Iranologists, historians specializing in the Middle and Near East as well as in 19th-century Russia and its policy of the time, scholars engaged in comparative religious studies and students acquiring knowledge in the related fields. A wide scholarly readership will find valuable information in it.

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Endnotes

1. This academic establishment now bears the name of the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts (former St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies) of the Russian Academy of Sciences.

2. See Kuznetsova *N. A. K Istorii Izuchenia Babizma I Behaizma v Rossii* ('On the history of studies in the Babi and Baha'i Faiths') Ocherki po Istorii Russkogo Vostokovedeniya. Moscow: Vostochnaya Literatura. 1963 (in Russian).

3. See Y. Ioannesyan, *Baron Rosen's Archive Collection of Babi and Baha'i Materials* 'Lights of Irfan'. Papers presented at the 'Irfan Colloquia and seminars, book 8, general editor Iraj Ayman. [USA] Evanston IL, 2007, pp. 11–35.

***The Bahá'í Faith in Africa: Establishing a New Religious Movement, 1952–1962.* Anthony A. Lee. Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2011**

xii, 280 pp. Studies of Religion in Africa, vol. 39.
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Anthony Lee, PhD in African History (UCLA), slightly revised his doctoral dissertation, 'The Bahá'í Faith in West Africa', to publish *The Bahá'í Faith in Africa*. The book focuses on west and west-central Africa with little about any other region of Africa. Therefore, this review is primarily limited to the western area of this continent. Lee has rendered the scholarly community a great service, as this is the first academic book on the history of the Baha'i Faith in Africa. However, he explains that his work is limited because he did not conduct fieldwork in Africa. Lee primarily based his analysis on original fieldwork in Africa performed by Dr Donald Addison, research in the Swiss Basle Mission Archives and the United States National Baha'i Archives, Valerie Wilson's papers, and two interviews that he conducted in the United States. Nevertheless, this book, published by Brill, will attract other scholars to start researching on a subject that has been grossly ignored.

Lee starts his book with two introductory chapters. The first includes general background information on the Babi and Baha'i religions and an explanation of his methodology. The second provides interesting, albeit superfluous for this publication, research on the history of Africans in Iran at the time of the birth of the Babi and Baha'i faiths. The third chapter, entitled 'Opting for the Apocalypse: The Bahá'í Response to the Modern Crisis in the Middle East and West Africa', informs the reader of the theory that Lee used as the basis for his analysis. The fourth chapter describes the first decade of the establishment of the Baha'i Faith in West Africa. The final three chapters look more closely at the establishment of the Baha'i Faith in Nigeria and Cameroon.

Lee starts his methodology chapter, chapter 3, with an excellent set of research questions that formed the basis for how he approached the subject. His theoretical focus is clarified in a subsection of the chapter, 'The Crisis of Modernity', with emphasis on Peter Berger's work on modernity. Lee concludes, 'The Bahá'í teachings offered a way of renewing the missionary dream by reaching into the future to make use of eschatological promises of Christianity.'[1] Although Lee shows in this chapter that he understands the importance that colonialism and the decolonization crisis played in Africans rejecting Christianity and the Christian missions, he does not sufficiently discuss African Traditional Religion, also called African Indigenous Religion.

Lee not only insufficiently examines African Traditional Religion in his book; he also does not distinguish between differing conceptions of religion, specifically those in the United States and Europe with those in West Africa. Kofi Asare Opoku, in a book to prepare students for examinations

such as the West African Senior School Certificate Examination, explained the African worldview,

> A close observation of Africa and its societies will reveal that religion is at the root of African culture and is the determining principle of African life. It is no exaggeration, therefore, to say that in traditional Africa, religion is life and life, religion. Africans are engaged in religion in whatever they do – whether it be farming, fishing or hunting; or simply eating, drinking or travelling. Religion gives meaning and significance to their lives, both in this world and the next. It is hence not an abstraction but a part of reality and everyday life. In other words, as Professor Idowu has so aptly put it, Africans are 'a people who in all things are religious'.[2]

Therefore, in order for a new religion to solidly anchor itself in a West African society, it must be able to completely integrate into African culture. This element of the West African attitude toward life must be analysed in order to understand why the Baha'i Faith succeeded in establishing itself. Not doing so is one of the major flaws of this book.

The Christian missionaries, of course, did not just bring their religion. They were part of the whole colonial effort to impose Western power over the African people. Necessary to this conquest was having Africans abandon their culture; the missionaries were at the forefront of accomplishing this. Here we see a conflict, crucial to understanding why Africans accepted the Baha'i Faith that Lee, again, insufficiently addresses. The colonizers wanted to establish their hegemonic agency over the Africans, who struggled to retain their culture, traditions, rituals, customs and religious beliefs. African traditional religion, as explained above, is at the core of Nigerian and Cameroon society. Socialization occurs, for example, through the rituals performed during rites of passage, such as birth, naming and puberty. Christianity did not accept this, whereas the Baha'i Faith did.

Further, Lee states that not much is known of how Enoch Olinga,[3] who was mainly responsible for the early implantation of the Baha'i Faith in Nigeria and Cameroon, spoke about his new religion to potential converts.[4] Had Lee taken the opportunity to interview the early converts to the Baha'i Faith in this area who became Baha'i through Olinga, and their children, a more nuanced and appreciative portrayal of Enoch Olinga might have emerged. Olinga understood how central indigenous culture is in the life of an African, and showed respect for it while he was propagating the Baha'i Faith in Cameroon, and later in Nigeria. Anyone who spends sufficient time in this area of the world can recognize the importance of respecting traditional African culture for the successful spreading of new ideas.

One element of the way Enoch Olinga and other teachers successfully propagated the Baha'i teachings was through hosting 'tea parties', or generally sharing food and drink when they visited someone. These meetings attracted young men because an older man served them, which showed great respect. When Olinga ate or drank with them, it also showed how much he honoured and trusted them, as it took an act of courage to eat and drink anything that could potentially be poisoned. Poisoning is a real or imagined threat for anyone who goes to live in a different area away from his own tribe. Oscar Njang gives an example of this. A Cameroonian

pioneer in Enugu was poisoned for showing kindness to a woman.[5] By ingesting the food and drink, the Baha'is showed that they trusted the people they were talking to about the Baha'i Faith. The people who shared food and drink with Enoch Olinga felt the respect that he had for them and their customs.[6] Sharing food and drink while explaining the Baha'i teachings was, and remains, an important means of propagating the Baha'i Faith in this part of Africa.

Anthony Lee's understanding of the status of women at this time is also curious. In numerous places in the book, he questions why women did not convert.[7] This had everything to do with colonial and traditional laws. In Nigeria, well into the twentieth century, women could not take a job, travel, open or close a bank account, leave or enter the country, or have any legal rights to their children. The situation was not different in most other parts of Africa. Another example is the 1982 continental Baha'i conference in Lagos, Nigeria. Months and months of work were expended on Baha'i men to allow their wives and daughters to attend the Lagos conference. Nor does Lee investigate the appropriateness of men speaking to women in different cultures about the Baha'i Faith, or women speaking to men. For women to have more freedom, including whom they spoke with other than in a business or official situation, such as the market women, they needed to be 'an honorary man', for example a chief or university professor. For a woman to become a Baha'i, especially in the early years, it needed an extraordinary husband, such as Oscar Njang. His wife, Elizabeth, became a Baha'i when she saw the lack of prejudice that white Baha'is had for the Africans, which included sharing lodgings and food, a rare action during the colonial era and even well after. The Rosenbergs, an interracial American couple, stayed two days with the Njang family. It was through Elizabeth Njang that many women converted to the Baha'i Faith in the Calabar region, thus earning her the nickname of 'Tahirih of Nigeria'.[8]

In chapter 6 on the establishment of the Baha'i Faith in British Cameroons, Lee states that Enoch Olinga had little contact with non-Christian Africans, and one paragraph, referring to Olinga, must be fully quoted:

> The attitudes that he expresses toward villagers practicing African Traditional Religions ('Juju') may seem surprising, at first. However, Olinga had been born into a strict Christian family in Uganda, and these attitudes are precisely those taught in Christian schools and churches. This lack of familiarity with non-Christian religions demonstrates how completely Olinga was working from a Christianized perspective. Without question, he finds the pagan villagers he encounters benighted, and he appears genuinely frightened by their capacity to perform evil. He imagines himself struggling against this evil, with the protection of Baha'u'llah. Such a vision certainly recapitulates Olinga's father's early work as an Anglican teacher in Uganda. The correspondence is almost exact. As his father had found successful methods of teaching Christianity to non-Christians, so Olinga would be successful with his Baha'i message.[9]

To understand the history of this era, the book needed a more thorough and nuanced understanding of African Traditional Religion. For example, juju and witchcraft are not synonymous with African Traditional Religion;

the book lacks this explanation. The use of 'pagan' is a European-American term that African academics find offensive. Someone who has not lived in this part of the world can easily misunderstand, as did Lee, that although juju and witchcraft are part of the West African cultural matrix, African Traditional Religion is considerably richer than that. What Lee did can be likened to a scholar stating that Catholicism is nothing more than the superstitious veneration of saints.

Enoch Olinga was not only cognizant of African culture, norms, traditions and religion, but showed respect for them, and when teaching about the Baha'i Faith, Olinga did not hesitate to bring out the similarities between African culture and the Baha'i Faith. An example of this occurred in the Mamfe district of Cameroon, where Olinga received the honour of being inducted as a member of the Nyamkpe society. This is a traditional Bayagi-Ejagam society for law enforcement. As a member of this society, he was obviously quite knowledgeable about African Traditional Religion.[10] An important element of how Olinga taught the Baha'i Faith and tried to change religious attitudes at variance with Baha'i teachings was his example of how he lived his life, and his patience in explaining when and how practices and attitudes were at odds between traditional religion and the Baha'i Faith.

Another seriously problematic section of the book relates to Lee's analysis of a 'Baha'i Church'. Nigerian Baha'is who lived during the era when Enoch Olinga taught the Baha'i Faith in Nigeria, and scholars who have studied the Baha'i Faith in this country, think that the church in Calabar is a minor blip in Nigerian Baha'i history. Lee's emphasis on it demonstrates another aspect of his misunderstanding of the Baha'i Faith's history in this region of the world. In his conclusion, Lee asks if the so-called 'Baha'i'church in Calabar should even be considered to be Baha'i at all. He thinks yes;11 people in or who have worked in Nigeria, and who know the history of the Baha'i Faith in Nigeria, disagree. Listening to the same interviews as Lee, and knowing the people involved, a viable alternative interpretation is that, at this point, the founders were Christians who felt alienated from local churches because they did not speak the same language, and they wanted to create a religious space for themselves. There is no evidence that Oscar Njang attempted to establish another, similar church in Akpabuyo, because when he moved there, after a dispute between himself and Peter Oban-Etchi, he first joined an established church.[12] Therefore, according to the same sources that Lee used, Njang became a Baha'i after the collapse of the Calabar church, and Oban-Etchi, some time after that.[13] Njang became a Baha'i in Akpabuyo after Enoch Olinga contacted him.[14] Olinga, at that time, had not yet met Njang or Oban-Etchi. Olinga's address was in the copy of *Paris Talks*[15] that was available to Njang and Oban-Etchi. A Cameroonian in Nigeria wrote to Olinga and included Njang's new address in Akpabuyo.[16] It is at this point that Olinga wrote to Njang to encourage him to commit to being a Baha'i. Enoch Olinga helped Njang and the others to act on their desire to convert to the Baha'i Faith, and to better understand their new religion by sending them copious letters that included the text of his speeches on the Baha'i Faith. Therefore, in which way can what happened in Calabar be a Baha'i church? An alternative explanation is that in Calabar, Christians founded a church on principles read in *Paris Talks*. These Christians then

converted to the Baha'i Faith, and from that point on, strove to establish Baha'i institutions.

Anthony Lee was generous to send this reviewer some of his archival material, which allowed the above alternative interpretation and analysis to be presented. In the conclusion of his book, and in email messages, he understands that this book is the beginning of the work on the history of the Baha'i Faith in Africa; a point of view to which I wholeheartedly agree. In the conclusion he clearly states that his doctoral research was based on limited sources, and that he had never been to Africa. This, regrettably, led to faulty analysis and conclusions, partially because he does not understand the culture and also because he did not verify his interpretation of the material that he had. When Lee conducted his doctoral research, the people mentioned in the archival material were still alive, and Lee did not even try to contact them through letters.

Future historians who study the Baha'i Faith in Africa need to understand the culture, have access to the archival material in Africa, and while important informants are alive, need to establish a relationship with them and personally interview them. Both Lee and I agree that it is important for Africans to arise to write their own history. They better understand their culture and society, and have easier access to the necessary people to interview and to archival material. In terms of this book, the above-mentioned problems and the price of the book restrict the scope of those likely to be interested in purchasing this volume. It will primarily be of use to individuals who wish to study the history of the Baha'i Faith in West Africa thanks to Lee's in-depth and excellent analysis of the Swiss Basle Mission Archives.

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Endnotes

1. Anthony A. Lee, *The Bahá'í Faith in Africa: Establishing a New Religious Movement, 1952–1962,* Leiden: Brill, 2011, 59.
2. Kofi Asare Opoku, *West African Traditional Religion,* Accra, Ghana: FEP International, 1978, 1.
3. Enoch Olinga (1926–79) was an early Ugandan Baha'i; he converted to the Baha'i Faith in 1952. He was an economist. His dedication to his adopted religion inspired him to serve it as a missionary (which Baha'is call 'pioneer'). In 1957, Shoghi Effendi, the administrative head of the Baha'i Faith, appointed Olinga to the high rank of Hand of the Cause of God. These individuals served Shoghi Effendi, and later the Universal House of Justice, as his representative around the globe. Olinga was killed in 1979 during the chaotic aftermath of overthrowing the Ugandan dictator, Ida Amin.
4. Lee, 59, 142, 145.
5. Oscar Njang, interview by Donald Addison, Ikot Uba, Akpabuyo, Nigeria, 27 June 1981.
6. Ibid.
7. See, for instance, Lee, 148–9.
8. Oscar Njang, interview by Donald Addison.
9. Lee, 166.
10. Michael Forchu, email message to Loni Bramson, 19 December 2012.
11. Lee, 221–2.
12. Lee, 206; Oscar Njang, interview by Donald Addison; Oscar Njang, interview by the Secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Nigeria, Lagos, Nigeria, January 1992.
13. Lee, 211.

14. Oscar Njang, interview by Donald Addison; Oscar Njang, interview by the Secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Nigeria, Lagos.
15. *Paris Talks* is a small book with talks by Abdu'l-Baha, son of the founder of the Baha'i Faith, Baha'u'llah.
16. Ibid.

***Philosophic Values and World Citizenship: Locke to Obama and Beyond.* Jacoby Adeshai Carter and Leonard Harris (eds.). Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2010. 247 pp.**
ISBN 978-0-7391-4803-7 (hbk), $90.00 (£57.95)
ISBN 978-1-4616-3403-4 (eBook), $89.99 (£57.95)

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## *World Citizenship*: Promise and Delivery

*Philosophic Values and World Citizenship* ('*World Citizenship*'), as the title indicates, aims at connecting the values philosophy of Alain Locke (1885–1954) and peers with the global ethic of world citizenship. To what extent does this volume deliver on its promise?

*World Citizenship* is effectively the proceedings volume of a 2008 conference of the Alain Locke Society held at George Washington University. This multi-author work succeeds in catapulting Locke into the limelight as a cosmopolitan, by showcasing Locke as an advocate of world citizenship, as no other previous publication on Locke has done. Indeed, prior to this, Locke, for the most part, had been frozen in time as the 1925 editor of *The New Negro: An Interpretation*, thus privileging Locke as a 'race man'. *World Citizenship* features Locke as a man of the human race.

In the 'Introduction' (xi–xvii), editors Jacoby Adeshai Carter and Leonard Harris rightly note that 'Locke's philosophy holds the universal and the particular in creative tension' (xiii). *World Citizenship* tautens this tension by maintaining a delicate balance between Locke's 'advocacy aesthetics' (xi) and 'his emphasis on emancipation' and 'transvaluation of values' (xii). The book is divided into three sections: 'Value' (1–73), 'Tolerance' (77–136) and 'Cosmopolitanism (139–233).' Each of these three parts opens with a short work or two by Locke.

In answer to the opening question, *World Citizenship* delivers on its promise, but not as nearly as coherently as a monograph might have, since the thirteen chapters (apart from Locke's five essays) are rather uneven. The reader 'listens in' on the 2008 conference of the Alain Locke Society, and is thereby a vicarious participant. Yet it is, after all, a colloquy of philosophers, who discourse in their own jargon, and are in conversation with each other. Some authors, more than others, are aware of their projected audience – their readers – which contributes to a certain unevenness of

treatment of the theme of 'world citizenship' and its value predicates, as might be expected. What follows is a guided tour of the book, from start to finish.

## Part 1: 'Value' (1–73)

Part 1 begins with two essays by Alain Locke: 'Moral Imperatives for World Order' (1944) (1–2) and 'Unity Through Diversity: A Bahá'í Principle' (1932) by Alain Locke (2–5). Oddly, neither essay is given a proper citation, let alone an introduction. The same lack of citation holds true for another Locke essay published in this volume, 'World Citizenship: Mirage or Reality?' (1947) (139–45).

'Moral Imperatives for World Order' opens with these arresting words: 'Realism and idealism should be combined in striking for a world order' (1). Locke takes Christian 'salvation' to task for its limitations:

> 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 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 vindicate its claims to Universality; and so bring about moral and spiritual brotherhood. (2)

Locke spells out just what he means by his title: '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' (2). Thus *World Citizenship* is off to a good start, with a global reordering predicated on reciprocity and mutuality of nations, races and religions.

The latter essay, 'Unity Through Diversity: A Bahá'í Principle' is the only major association between Alain Locke and the Baha'i Faith, which Locke embraced in 1918, the very same year that he was awarded his PhD in Philosophy from Harvard. Over the years, Leonard Harris has consistently drawn attention to Locke's predisposition to Baha'i values, which may be said to represent cosmopolitanism made sacred. Harris had previously anthologized this essay,[1] the most oft-quoted statement of which is this: 'What we need to learn most is how to discover unity and spiritual equivalence underneath the differences which at present so disunite and sunder us, and how to establish some basic spiritual reciprocity on the principle of unity in diversity' (3).

Not surprisingly, Locke's Baha'i identity is closeted throughout the rest of part 1 – indeed, from the volume as a whole – effectively shutting out Locke's Baha'i values from the analysis that follows. Thus, apart from the 'Unity Through Diversity' essay itself, the Baha'i dimension is singularly lacking, which subtracts a hermeneutical key in understanding Locke's outlook as a cosmopolitan. That said, this volume does some justice to Locke's philosophical contributions.

Rose Cherubin, in chapter 1, 'Culture and the *Kalos*: Inquiry, Justice, and Value in Locke and Aristotle' (7–19), discusses Locke 'at his most Greek' (7), looking at Locke's notion of 'culture' in light of Aristotle's concept of *kalos* ('beautiful' / 'noble'). Art is not only of intrinsic worth, in and of itself, but, in Locke's and Aristotle's conceptions of it, is strategically allied with 'beauty, justice, and the search for knowledge' which are 'mutually supportive' (17). Although not explicitly stated, the implication here – in connection with this volume's overarching theme of world citizenship – is that 'to pursue justice without inquiring after beauty or knowledge is self-defeating' (17).

Art, in contrast with the previous essay, may be 'beautiful', but not 'noble'. Erin Kealey, in chapter 2, 'Aesthetic Evaluations of Realist Drama' (21–29), talks about 'realist drama' without ever explicitly defining it. A typical metaphor for realist drama is holding up a mirror to humanity in order to reflect on itself, warts and all. The mirror itself can be grossly distorted, as in film propaganda. Kealey offers D. W. Griffith's 1915 epic, *Birth of a Nation*, as a technically superb work that supports, *inter alia*, the role of the Ku Klux Klan in protecting the prevailing social interests of the Deep South – such that the film, at once, is 'morally abhorrent' yet 'aesthetically beautiful' (24). In the case of *Birth of a Nation*, while its aesthetic mode was critically acclaimed, 'the real events that inspire the dramatic content' may be 'evaluated in a different mode that assigns a moral predicate, like right or wrong, or even a religious predicate, like good or evil' (25). This conflict of moral and aesthetic values can create the possibility of 'transvaluation' – which, after having an atypical emotional association with the object of value, is valuing that object in a different way. 'Aesthetic experiences', Kealey concludes, 'allow us to recognize values established by other modes' (28). Thus, according to Kealey, realist drama has the potential for establishing 'a space for personal and social transvaluation' (28). Again, while no connection with the book's theme of world citizenship is made, the implication is that drama can offer up new vistas for seeing values in a pluralistic light.

Grant Silva, in chapter 3, 'The Axiological Turn in Early Twentieth Century American Philosophy: Alain Locke and José Vasconcelos on Epistemology, Value, and the Emotions' (31–55), develops Locke's values axiology further, shifting the focus from persons to cultures, as 'patterns of valuation that are consistent across groups of people' (40). Silva compares Locke's theory of values with José Vasconcelos (1882–1959). Both were 'philosophical anthropologists' (31). Due to lack of space, this reviewer will skip over Silva's analysis of Vasconcelos, which occupies equal, if not greater space than his discussion of Locke.

Leonard Harris, in chapter 4, 'Conundrum of Cosmopolitanism and Race: The Great Debate between Alain Locke and William James' (57–73), presents a problematic or 'conundrum' that faced Oxford's Cosmopolitan Club when Locke, the first African American Rhodes Scholar, joined in 1907: '[H]ow is it possible to promote universalism, or common culture, and simultaneously promote local culture, or a particular racial, national or ethic [*sic*: read 'ethnic'] culture?' (61). Harris then poses an interesting hypothetical colloquy of philosophers: 'Imagine that the Metaphysical Club inadvertently met the Cosmopolitan Club' (64).

Like Oxford's Cosmopolitan Club, Harvard's Metaphysical Club was cosmopolitan. In this mythical meeting of the Cosmopolitan and

Metaphysical Clubs, two of the Metaphysical Club's philosophers – [Oliver Wendell] Holmes and [Charles Sanders] Peirce – 'might not sit for dinner with Locke and Seme' (64). But the Clubs' leading pragmatists, Alain Locke and William James, would dine together and engage in philosophical discussion. Each had 'a deep dedication to a metaphysical pluralism that allowed James to be something of a religious mystic and Locke to sojourn with the B'há'i [*sic*: read 'Bahá'í'] faith and its brave insistence on racial egalitarianism' (64). For Locke, race is a social construct: 'Instead, therefore, of regarding culture as a product of race, race, by this interpretation, is regarded as itself a cultural produce' [*sic:* read 'product'] (70). Harris then contrasts Locke's 'Dynamic Theory of Value' with James's 'uniformitarian universalism' (66).

## Part 2: 'Tolerance' (77–136)

Alain Locke, in 'A Functional View of Value Ultimates' (1945) (77–81) advocates a 'functionalist theory of value' for its ability to treat various values 'in terms of their interrelationships, guaranteeing a comparative and a more realistic type of value analysis' (77) that may lead 'toward a relativistic but not anarchic ethics, world view and religion' (81).

Greg Moses, in chapter 5, 'A Funtional [*sic:* read 'Functional'] Peace in *This* World: Farmer and Locke on the Challenges of a Truly Post-War Hope' (83–96), looks at the views of two professors of Howard University, Alain Locke and J. Leonard Farmer, who 'analyzed what would be needed to produce lasting peace after World War II' (83). Locke focused on democracy, while Farmer concentrated on Christianity. The Federal Council of the Churches of Christ had, in 1943, proposed a six-point peace platform (91). Out of this history, Moses grandly asks: 'Can laws of good will transcend the name of democracy? By introducing the ideal of peace on earth as the criterion that challenges symbol with value, could the symbols of Christianity and Democracy both discover that they cannot be the common denominators that they most desire to share?' (90). In answer, Farmer writes of both international and domestic peace among and within nations: 'The world cannot be saved until it is saved socially; and this social salvation must include all races and classes within each nation. Only this all-inclusive salvation of the world is the fullest expression of God' (94). Locke has stated likewise.

Arnold L. Farr, in chapter 6, 'Beyond Repressive Tolerance: Alain Locke's Hermeneutics of Democracy and Tolerance in Conversation with Herbert Marcuse and H. G. Gadamer' (97–110), after comparing discourses on tolerance by Marcuse, Gadamer and Locke, advocates adoption of Locke's methodology (in Farr's words) of 'objective comparison between different value systems,' which (in Locke's words) may serve as 'functional constants' to 'take scientifically the place of our outmoded categoricals' (109). It is true that Locke proposed judging social values on a comparative basis in quest of functionally equivalent, and objectively identical, standards – which common denominators Locke variously termed 'culture-cognates' or 'culture-correlates', fostering, in turn, 'reciprocity' (a real exchange of values), even leading to a 'limited cultural convertibility' whereby a nation, or group of nations, might selectively adopt a universal value.[2] Locke's methodology of 'functional constants' to pragmatically

arrive at common denominators that may serve as verifiable universals in operationalizing world peace, while praised in theory, was never put into practice.

Christopher J. Collins, in chapter 7, 'Multicultural Education, Metaphysics, and Alain Locke's Post-Metaphysical Alternative' (111–22), evaluates 'Locke's philosophy of education, informed by his value theory' (112) in conversation with Allan Bloom's and Richard Rorty's respective theory's of multiculturalism within the university curriculum. For Locke, the university is a forum for the critical study of values (117–18). The implication here, as it relates to the book as a whole, is that multicultural education cultivates world citizenship.

A. Todd Franklin, in chapter 8, 'Unlikely Allies: Nietzsche, Locke, and Counter-Hegemonic Transformation of Consciousness' (123–36), presents Friedrich Nietzsche, a 'caustic critic of democracy and all other ideologies of human equality' (123), and Alain Locke as 'unlikely allies who employ variations of a common method' (123) to counter value absolutism, which both philosophers regarded as a social pathology. While Nietzsche stressed the importance of individuality as the key to cultural health (124–5), Locke stressed the importance of mutual respect (125–6). Both used 'aesthetic means and methods to induced [*sic:* read 'induce'] cultural transformation' (134). While Nietzsche's antidote to Christian dogmatism was outright contempt, Locke aimed at fostering empathy, which meant artistically advocating satire, irony, social protest and social analysis as 'good medicines ... against social poison' (131).

## Part 3: 'Cosmopolitanism' (139–233)

Alain Locke, in 'World Citizenship: Mirage or Reality?' (1947) (139–45), is a welcome publication of this previously unpublished essay. This speech shows Locke at his finest. Here's an excerpt:

> For in the realm of religion and morals must come one of its chief uses and vindications. ... Although there has been considerable organizational initiative and effort in world-wide religious rapprochement, there still is little internal renouncing on the part of religious bodies of their sectarian parochialisms and their mutually conflicting claims. Yet here obviously is the crux of the whole issue: if the brotherhood of man is an inescapable corollary of the 'fatherhood of God' principle, so also is the confraternity of religions. This enlightened religion must learn – that the realistic way to become a world religion is not through world pretensions and world rivalry, but through promoting world-wide peace and understanding and moral cooperation of all sorts on a world scale. On that outcome hangs a goodly part of any real ideological peace, since religion, for all its universalistic claims, instead of being a universalizer has so often been the prime weapon of partisan strife and limited parochial attitudes and loyalties.
>
> (144)

Robert Danisch, in chapter 9, 'Cosmopolitanism and Epideictic Rhetoric' (147–64), presents an original thesis, which is that '*The New Negro*, given its hermeneutical practices, is a special form of epideictic rhetoric' (151). Often referred to elsewhere as 'praise and blame' oratory, Aristotle's definition of epideictic rhetoric is provided (149–50), but not with sufficient

clarity for the uninitiated reader. True, '*The New Negro* does not include a single orator or public speaker' (152). Danisch focuses on Locke. Locke is part of the epideictic tradition because he (1) praises the virtue and value of African American art; (2) valorizes art's role in fostering race pride as a bulwark against racism; cites notable examples to inspire further artistic excellence; stresses the role of African American art vis-à-vis the wider American society; and stresses the role of values in improving social relations (161).

David Weinfeld, in chapter 10, 'What Difference Does Difference Make? Horace Kallen, Alain Locke, and the Birth of Cultural Pluralism' (165–87), revisits the origins of the term, 'cultural pluralism' – a philosophical term of art that was the predecessor of the more familiar concept of 'multiculturalism' – which was coined in 1907 conversations between Horace Kallen and Alain Locke at Oxford when Locke posed the question (which forms this chapter's title): 'What difference does difference make?' (165). Weinfield's essay is assiduously historical, skilfully critical, and adroitly nuanced. It is arguably the best essay in this volume. The analysis elucidates and illuminates both harmonics and dissonances between Kallen's and Locke's respective philosophies of cultural pluralism.

Chielozona Eze, in chapter 11, 'Ethnocentric Representations and Being Human in a Multiethnic Global World: Alain Locke Critique' (189–202), asks an interesting question: 'Is Obama the cosmopolitan that Alain Locke dreamed about?' (189). The answer to this excellent question is left unanswered.

Terrance MacMullan, in chapter 12, 'Global Citizenship through Reciprocity: Alain Locke and Barack Obama's Pragmatist Politics' (203–16), thematizes 'common strands of thought evidenced by both men' (213). MacMullan treats 'Locke's Vision of Pluralistic Democracy' that led him 'to develop an ideal of peace through reciprocity' (207). Reciprocity – mutuality of rights and responsibilities – is central to Locke's philosophy. Thus 'Locke's call for value pluralism and cosmopolitan democracy is a pragmatic path to global peace' (207).

After quoting from one of Locke's *Bahái World* essays, 'The Orientation of Hope' (1936), MacMullan adds: 'Locke believed that the spiritual pluralism of his Bahá'í faith would provide direction for humanity's hope' (207). While undeveloped, this recognition of Locke's Baha'i affiliation and worldview adds a depth and dimension missing in the other essays. In the section, 'Lockean Elements of Obama's Political Philosophy' (207–12), MacMullan quotes from President Obama's Inaugural Address, in which the president spoke of America's world role:

> For we know that our patchwork heritage is a strength, not a weakness. We are a nation of Christians and Muslims, Jews and Hindus – and non-believers. We are shaped by every language and culture, drawn from every end of this Earth; and because we have tasted the bitter swill of civil war and segregation, and emerged from that dark chapter stronger and more united, we cannot help but believe that the old hatreds shall someday pass; that the lines of tribe shall soon dissolve; that as the world grows smaller, our common humanity shall reveal itself; and that America must play its role in ushering in a new era of peace.
>
> (Qtd. 209–10)

Following this 'admittedly charitable reading of both Locke and Obama' (213), MacMullan raises two issues that represent challenges to President Obama: capitalism and gay and lesbian rights.

Jacoby Adeshai Carter's 'goal' in chapter 13, 'New Moral Imperatives for World Order: Alain Locke on Pluralism and Relativism' (217–33) is 'to provide greater clarity to Locke's conceptual instruments' and to 'bring Locke's philosophy into meaningful conversation' (218) with contemporary social issues. Carter reviews Locke's pluralism – the most formidable barrier to which is absolutism – then cultural relativism, then both pluralism and relativism as 'moral imperatives' in a 'Democratic World Context'.

As for editing, it was purely by happenstance, and not by design, that the present reviewer spotted some glaring typographical errors, as noted above: i.e. 'ethic [*sic*: read 'ethnic'] culture?' (61); 'B'há'i [*sic:* read 'Bahá'í'] faith' (64); 'cultural produce' [*sic:* read 'product'] (70); 'A Funtional [*sic:* read 'Functional'] Peace' (83); 'induced [*sic:* read 'induce'] cultural transformation' (134).

As a thematic project (and not merely a conference proceedings volume), while the essays relate to the overarching theme of world citizenship rather unevenly, they do so in concert, with no discordance. The Baha'i dimension in Locke's thought, although undeveloped, is given pride of place with 'Unity Through Diversity: A Bahá'í Principle' as the second piece. Publication, apparently for the first time, of Locke's 1947 speech, 'World Citizenship: Mirage or Reality?', (1947) is welcome. If indeed published for the first time, then the editors should have drawn attention to this publication 'event'.

*Philosophic Values and World Citizenship* is a welcome contribution to scholarship on Alain Locke, showcasing him not only as a philosophical precursor to President Barack Obama, but as a man ahead of his time – with now being that time. This volume goes far in bringing Locke back to influential life. Carter and Harris are to be commended for their vision in conceiving this project, which brings Alain Leroy Locke into contemporary relevance as a major philosopher of cosmopolitanism and world peace. (Locke typically gets stuck in the Harlem Renaissance.) Universities may find this book to be a worthwhile adjunct to global studies. This volume, particularly because of its curricular relevance to contemporary issues of global concern, is also recommended for graduate courses in philosophy.

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Endnotes

1. Alain Locke, 'Unity through Diversity: A Bahá´í Principle', in *The Bahá´í World: A Biennial International Record*, vol. 4, 1930–1932, Wilmette: Bahá´í Publishing Trust, 1933, 372–4. Reprint (Wilmette: Bahá´í Publishing Trust, 1980). Reprinted again in Locke, *The Philosophy of Alain Locke*, ed. Leonard Harris, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1991, 133–8.
2. See Alain Locke, 'Cultural Relativism and Ideological Peace', *Approaches to World Peace*, ed. Lyman Bryson, Louis Finfelstein and R. M. MacIver, New York: Harper & Brothers, 1944, 609–18. Reprinted in *The Philosophy of Alain Locke* (1991), 67–78 [73].

***Compassionate Woman: The Life and Legacy of Patricia Locke.***
**John Kolstoe. Wilmette, IL: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 2011.**
**226 pp.**
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John Kolstoe, author and consultant, tells the story of friend and fellow educator Lakota Indian Patricia Locke, through the lens of her work to achieve equal education for American Indian youth and equal rights for indigenous people everywhere. In this concise and easy-to-read biography, Kolstoe's in-depth research provides its readers with a comprehensive view of what Locke struggled for, what she achieved, and how she dramatically changed the lives of thousands of Indian youth by establishing the first colleges on American Indian reservations. In a straightforward and non-condemning way, Kolstoe's *Compassionate Woman* provides details that may remain unknown to today's non-native reader regarding historical governmental policies towards American Indians. In addition, historians, sociologists and scholars in American Indian Studies as well as in religious studies, will find *Compassionate Woman* a useful resource and reference tool for their own work and that of their students. Kolstoe's methodology employs a concise and well-documented timeline of the most dominant issues in Native America that encompassed – not only Locke's life and her ancestors – but the life of every native person on all levels, whether legal, moral, spiritual, physical or educational. During the 1960s and 1970s, American Indians, in both militant and peaceful ways, brought critical native issues to the forefront of the American nation, demanding the nation's long overdue attention and resolutions. Insights into a turbulent and pivotal time period in American history can be gained through the window of Locke's life and how she strove to help her people resolve these issues for native people, and for the nation. Kolstoe leads readers into *Compassionate Woman* with a succinct statement that he is not attempting to 'provide a complete list' of Locke's 'activities or achievements' but rather to provide 'vignettes' or written portraits of 'this remarkable woman' (ix).

Provide vignettes he does, but Kolstoe does more than just give portraits of an interesting but relatively unknown woman to most Americans outside the arenas of education, the Baha'i Faith, the Standing Rock reservation in South Dakota; and those echelons of power in Washington, DC that Locke dared to invade on behalf of her Indian people. *Compassionate Woman* carries the capacity to engage the hearts and minds of its readers by introducing them to a 'warrior' woman, passionate about education, children, youth, indigenous rights and religious freedoms. Kolstoe begins *Compassionate Woman* with chapter 1 'The Funeral', by highlighting the impact that Locke's life and work had on a wide variety of people from highly diverse backgrounds. 'Who was this Lakota woman of humble origin', Kolstoe asks, 'for whom obstacles were the ladder of life?' (6). Kolstoe continues to ask and answer this question throughout the remaining 16 chapters

of *Compassionate Woman* by telling the story of how Locke persevered in spite of her humble origins – persevered enough to obtain a college education 'against all odds'; to be inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame; to become the first American Indian woman elected to serve on the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of the United States; to win the prestigious MacArthur Fellowship award; and to be listed as one of the two 'most outstanding Sioux Indians' next to Sitting Bull (6–7).

Answers to Kolstoe's question begin in chapter 2 'The Early Years' with Locke's birth and growing up, and continues on into chapter 3 'Heritage'. In native cultures a person is introduced by where they came from and who their ancestors are. Titles and accolades come second to ancestors and heritages that define and shape one's roots – and therefore one's life. Kolstoe's work encapsulates important details, adds and blends facets of Locke's heritage into American history by squarely placing her ancestors' lives into the framework of colonialism, broken treaties and white dominance that forever changed the landscape of Native America.

In chapter 4 'Marriage and Family Life' Kolstoe addresses Locke's early adulthood and parenting, giving the first glimpses of Locke's determination to value and educate children at all costs, starting with her own. Subsequent marital problems coupled with a difficult relocation (in chapter 5 'Alaska') starts Locke on her journey of setting things right for indigenous people, volunteerism, coming into the political eye as she manoeuvred through the political system, and moving forward into the arenas of education, establishing tribal colleges, and native language preservation (in chapter 6 'Tribal Colleges').

Kolstoe shows how Locke's life, like a stone dropped into still water, created overlapping circles that continually spiralled outward, reaching and overcoming, growing wider and wider to embrace all in her path until her energy transitioned the final shore of crossing over (death). Kolstoe nimbly weaves Locke's life from multiple patterns and paths, bringing his readers to a convergent frame of reference that continues to motivate and inspire. Two copies of *Compassionate Woman* travelled with me to China and were loaned to individuals connected to both education and indigenous issues. Robert Giebitz, educator and writer with relationship ties to the Navajo Nation, tells how *Compassionate Woman* informed him, yet poses another question about Locke's intriguing life:

> Thanks for introducing me to *Compassionate Woman* – a tremendous inspiration. This is an important reminder of our history and of what America has of enduring value to share with China – China needs to hear the story of the native peoples of the Americas. A couple of things I found interesting were the sociologists' determination of American values: mercantilism (commercialism), acquisitiveness, and individualism. I did not know about Lincoln's brutality toward the Native Americans. ... Yesterday, I was reading about Patricia's time in Peru and Bolivia. It brought back fond memories [of his time in Bolivia]. ... I wonder if Patricia met Andres Jachakollo – an exceptional man – the first native believer [Baha'i] in Bolivia. ...[1]

Gregory Vessey, New Zealander entrepreneur, businessman and teacher with strong connections to the Maori aborigines of New Zealand, uses the concept of calling on master minds to aid him in his life and work. Vessey

said that he removed Abraham Lincoln, whom he had greatly admired, from his 'council of master minds' after reading *Compassionate Woman*.[2] Kolstoe notes, 'The policy of Lincoln's administration was "to kill as many Indians as possible"' (124–5). Kolstoe's intent is not to malign, attack or defame American historical figures. Rather, Kolstoe brings to the reader's attention Locke's life as a continuation of her ancestors and heritage. Kolstoe's work is, in accordance with most biographical stories about American Indians and American history, seen through Indian eyes.

Perhaps the most telling example of how *Compassionate Woman* can inform and educate while changing hearts and minds comes from a Chinese professor who spent a year in Canada studying the First Nations people, falling in love with their culture along the way. Associate Professor Lily Wang, a highly motivated and deeply committed educator, uses North American traditional culture to teach her Chinese college students the English language. Wang has written numerous articles, published both in Canada and China, about how Canada educates its First Nations people. Chinese scholars acknowledge Wang as a North American traditional culture expert, often called upon to inform them about education among Canada's indigenous people. China, a nation with 56 ethnicities, looks towards Canada and the United States as examples of how to treat – or not to treat – their own ethnicities. After reading *Compassionate Woman*, Wang emphatically declared, 'I have a new hero [in Patricia Locke]!' [3] Wang's statement is a strong testament to Kolstoe's work.

Kolstoe moves into the final chapters of *Compassionate Woman* with Locke's middle years (in chapter 7 'Freelance Years') of continued work for 'Native American self-determination' as he continues to weave Locke's many accomplishments together into a coherent whole (73). Kolstoe educates his readers about important native issues that Locke worked on, such as the American Indian Religious Freedom Act (76–81); native language preservation (81–5); and the preservation of native sacred sites (85–8). In her later years (in chapter 8 'Reservation Life') Locke moves into 'Elderhood'[4] and onto her beloved Standing Rock reservation to finish out her life writing, serving the Baha'i Faith, and travelling (in chapter 13 'Bolivia and Peru'). However, Kolstoe clearly shows that the most important part of Locke's life was her children and grandchildren (in chapter 9 'Her Family'). Kolstoe's biography positions Locke as the gravitational centre around which her adult children and their children rotated. Kolstoe writes, 'Deep and ardent as her passions were for Indian education, language preservation, rights for Indians and women, the environment, worldwide indigenous rights, and so on, they pale in comparison to the adoration she felt for her children and grandchildren' (95). Here we see Kolstoe portray Locke's warrior woman stance at its most intense, overseeing her children's and grandchildren's cultural and academic educations, and flowing over to those who surrounded her (in chapter 10 'Friends and Neighbors').

Kolstoe carries Locke's warrior woman stance into her compassionate woman stance when he portrays the other half of Locke's nature in chapter 11 'Tȟawáčhiŋ Wašté Wín: Compassionate Woman', exemplified in the Indian name she was given at the age of 41 in 1969, which translates into '"Good-hearted Woman", "She has a consciousness", or "Compassionate Woman"' (114). In just a few pages Kolstoe provides his readers with a general but satisfactory explanation of how and when one

obtains an Indian name and then goes into detail about how Locke received her name because 'she embodied the four virtues most prized by the Lakota – generosity, bravery, respect and wisdom (111).[5] Kolstoe shows how these qualities can both exemplify the persona of a warrior and the persona of a compassionate person without creating dissonance or disunity (114). He briefly addresses some of the tensions that existed between Locke's warrior woman stance and her compassionate woman stance before Locke accepted the Baha'i Faith and shows how she changed some of her ideas, attitudes and decision-making methods based on the principles of her new faith (150). Through interviews with individuals who were a part of Locke's decision-making process Kolstoe shows not only how Locke changed and adapted, but also how she encouraged others to change their own thought processes and behaviours.

Kolstoe began his work with Locke's funeral and ends the final three chapters with chapter 15 'Her Passing' (162–5), followed by looking at Locke's distinctions – a rarefied list relatively unknown even to close friends due to Locke's 'modesty and living up to her Lakota name' (167–74). Kolstoe notes that Locke 'wore each honour lightly' (168). Chapter 16 'Tributes and Remembrances' contain vignettes from individuals whom Locke's life touched in special ways (174–93). Kolstoe closes with an epilogue addressing the 'seachanges' sweeping the world since the 1800s, in which Locke, as well as her ancestors and her descendents, played and are playing important and decisive parts. Kolstoe writes that Locke 'understood the different perspectives people had and the need to speak in a way others can understand', sharing with others the Lakota way of enlightening rather than antagonizing; and poses a final question to his readers, 'What would the world look like if more people followed her lead?' (199).

This is an unusual work – unusual in its organization along timelines of Locke's development rather than along the chronological line of dates and events common to most biographies. It is a profound work – a work that stays with one long after the reading is done, giving pause for thought and reflection. Kolstoe departs from the norm, taking his readers into places they were not expecting and perhaps not prepared for, educating and challenging at once, raising questions and leaving readers wanting to know – *more*.

*Compassionate Woman* deliberately resides on a table by my front door in China. When guests come they always pick it up, drawn to the picture of Locke's face and penetrating eyes on its jacket. Locke stands in a field of grass up to her waist, wrapped in her Lakota shawl, with silvered hair flowing in the direction of the grasses bent in will to the wind of the South Dakota prairie highlands. Her wise and knowing eyes seemingly speak volumes to their viewers, saying 'Who are you?' 'What do you know?' 'How are you doing?' '*What* are you doing?'

What indeed!

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Endnotes

1. Personal communication, 5 May 2012, Dalian, China.
2. Personal communication, 21 June 2012, Dalian, China.
3. Personal communication, 28 February 2012, Dalian, China.

4. Being an Elder in the native way is not about the age one reaches but about the service that one gives or provides to others, regardless of whom those others might be or where they might live. The capitalized 'Elder' refers to such a status and sets the lower case 'elder' apart from simply being of a certain age. Locke was renowned for her unstinting, unselfish and devoted service to whoever needed her help.

5. One does not come into an Indian name 'full-blown', but spends the rest of his or her life working on emulating those qualities that led to the name in the first place. Kolstoe notes that Locke 'lived up to her name' (115).