

ranks Locke as the thirty-sixth most influential philosopher (cultural pluralist). How Locke African American in history. Alain LeRoy should be read depends on which of these two Locke is the Martin Luther King Jr. of American roles predominates. culture. “Race men” were black leaders who came of age during the era of scientific racism. They “RACE MAN” AND “FATHER OF MULTICUL- embraced nineteenth-century middle-class TURALISM” values and held a deep faith in the meliorative powers of liberalism. Cultural pluralists com- Locke was a “prophet of democracy,” whose pensated for the deficiencies of liberalism by grand (though not systematic) theory of democ- promoting social justice and community; they racy sequenced local, moral, political, economic, accorded respect to culturally diverse groups and cultural stages of democracy as they arced and valued their diversity. A Harlem Renais- sance immortal, through history, with racial, social, spiritual, Locke is no less historic in his role as a cultural and world democracy completing the trajectory. pluralist. Locke has been called “the father Adjunct notions of natural, practical, progres- of multiculturalism”—as cultural pluralism sive, creative, intellectual, equalitarian democ- is now known—although his Harvard colleague racy crystallized the paradigm. Seeing America Horace Kallen was the one who actually as “a unique social experiment,” Locke’s larger coined the term “cultural plural- goal was to “Americanize Americans,” with the ism” in conversations with Locke that took place at Oxford simple yet profound message that equality University in 1907 and 1908.

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How should Locke be thought of as a writer? solidarity and fostered the group consciousness Beyond his historic roles as critic, editor, and among African Americans that proved a neces- sary precondition of the cultural ambassador, to what extent does he leap civil rights movement. from history onto the printed page and demand Haifa is the world center of the Bahá’í Faith,

to be read? The answers depend largely on how the religion to which Locke converted in 1918, the same year he received much of Locke can be read. While Locke did his doctorate from the same year he received his doctorate from Harvard. Until recently publish widely, a great deal of his work remains Harvard. Until recently Locke's religion has been the least understood in manuscript form, including lectures, speeches, and unfinished essays that are often the clearest aspect of his life. During the Jim Crow era, at a time when black people saw little exposition of what he really thought. Two editions of his writings relied heavily on archival harmony, this new religious movement offered hope through its "race amity" efforts, which publication: Leonard Harris' *The Philosophy of Locke* was instrumental in organizing. These three spheres of activity—the academy, the art world, and spiritual society—converge to create a composite picture of Locke as an integrationist whose model was not assimilation but rather *Race* (1992). A third collection, *The Critical Temper of Alain Locke: A Selection of His Essays on Art and Culture* (1983), also edited by Jeffrey Stewart, reprints a number of reviews and essays. These posthumous publications and reprints have effectively brought Locke's work back to influential life. How Locke is now being read is becoming as important as how Locke was read. adopted the French spelling ("Alain," close to the American pronunciation of "Allen"), and added the middle name LeRoy (probably because he was called Roy as a child). He

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only son of Pliny Locke and Mary (Hawkins) Harvard, Harlem, Haifa—place names that engaged for sixteen years represent Locke’s special involvement in child of Northern philosophy, art, and religion—are keys to focused on the post-understanding his life and thought. Harvard revolution, while Southern prepared Locke for the distinction of becoming with laws pertaining in 1907 the first black Rhodes Scholar, and in given an enlightened 1918 it awarded him a Ph.D. in philosophy (for education. As a child his dissertation, Problems of Classification in somewhat sheltered the Theory of Value, submitted on September 1, Episcopalian, and during 1917), which eventually secured his position as enamored with classical chair of the Department of Philosophy at Howard University from 1927 until his retirement in 1953. Harlem was the mecca of the condition. In infancy he Harlem Renaissance, whereby Locke, as a fever, which spokesman for his race, revitalized racial heart. Locke dealt

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with his “rheumatic heart” by seeking, as George Santayana—in Michael R. Winston says, “compensatory Thus began a satisfactions” in books, piano, and violin. Only Kallen recorded some valuable six years old when his father died, Locke was about Locke as a sent by his mother to one of the Ethical Culture “very sensitive, schools—a pioneer experimental program of Kallen relates in “Alain Froebelian pedagogy, a philosophy of childhood Pluralism,” Locke would education named after Friedrich Froebel (1782–

Locke, who had been before they married. A Reconstruction (which Civil War economic Reconstruction dealt more to blacks), the boy was upbringing and a private of privilege Locke led a life. He was raised as an ing his youth he became cal Greek philosophy. Locke was predisposed to owing to his physical was stricken with rheumatic permanently damaged his philosophy—taught by which Locke had enrolled. lifetime friendship. able personal observations young man. First, Locke was very easily hurt.” As Locke and Cultural strenuously insist that we

are all human beings, 1852), who opened the first kindergarten. By American fact,” and the time he enrolled in Central High School in difference in the 1898, Locke was already an accomplished life, liberty, and the pursuit pianist and violinist. In 1902 he began studies sentiment is corroborated at the Philadelphia School of Pedagogy, graduated by a letter he wrote to his mother shortly after receiving his Rhodes ing second in his class in 1904. That year Locke scholarship; in it he entered Harvard College with honors, where he insists: “I am not a race problem. I am Alain LeRoy Locke.” was among precious few African American Unfortunately color made all undergraduates. the difference in that era. The prevailing social During the “golden age of philosophy at Har- reality was that Locke’s self-image was really a wish-image. vard,” Locke studied at a time when Josiah In 1907, on a Sheldon Royce, William James, George Herbert Palmer, Kallen ended up at Oxford traveling fellowship, Hugo Münsterberg, and Ralph Barton Perry Locke. In “Alain Locke and at the same time as Kallen describes a racial were on the faculty. Elected to Phi Beta Kappa, Locke. In “Alain Locke and Cultural Pluralism” giving Day dinner hosted in 1907 Locke won the Bowdoin Prize—Har- Kallen describes a racial incident over a Thanks- giving Day dinner hosted vard’s most prestigious academic award—for at Oxford. Locke was not at the American Club invited because of “gentlemen from Dixie an essay he wrote, “The Literary Heritage of associate with Negroes.” Tennyson.” He also passed a qualifying exami- more blunt: “We had a race who could not possibly the Rhodes scholars from the nation in Latin, Greek, and mathematics for the bastards. So they had a Elsewhere Kallen is which I refused to attend Rhodes scholarship, which had just been estab- to have Locke.” In fact, lished by the diamond magnate Cecil Rhodes in 1902. Remarkably Locke completed his four- year undergraduate program at Harvard in three years, graduating magna cum laude with his

even before they left
 bachelor's degree in philosophy. Then Locke
 Rhodes Scholars had
 made history and headlines in May 1907 as
 Rhodes trustees to
 America's first—and only, until the 1960s—
 award”—but to no avail.
 African American Rhodes scholar. While his
 particularly upset, however,”
 Rhodes scholarship provided for study abroad
 The Metaphysi-
 at Oxford, it was no guarantee of admission. cal Club (2001), “was the
 insult to Harvard.” In
 Rejected by five Oxford colleges because of his support of this, Menand
 cites a letter to Harvard
 race, Locke was finally admitted to Hertford English professor Barrett
 Wendell, in which
 College, where he studied from 1907 to 1910. Kallen speaks of overcoming
 his aversion to
 During his senior year at Harvard, Locke met blacks through his loyalty to
 Harvard and by
 Horace Kallen, a German-born Jew who was a virtue of his personal
 respect for Locke. After
 graduate teaching assistant in a course on Greek having invited Locke to tea
 in lieu of the

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Thanksgiving dinner, Kallen writes that, “tho’ it taking a degree and
 spent the 1910–1911
 is personally repugnant to me to eat with him academic year studying
 Immanuel Kant at the
 ... Locke is a Harvard man and as such he has University of Berlin
 and touring Eastern Europe.
 a definite claim on me.” The irony is that Kallen During his stay in
 Berlin, Locke became
 harbored some of the very same prejudices as conversant with the
 Austrian school of anthro-
 the southern Rhodes Scholars who shunned pology, known as
 philosophical anthropology,
 Locke, but not to the same degree. “As you under the tutelage of
 Franz Brentano, Alexius
 know, I have neither respect nor liking for his Meinong, Christian
 Freiherr von Ehrenfels, Paul
 race,” Kallen writes, “—but individually they Natorp, and
 others. Locke much preferred
 have to be taken, each on his own merits and Europe to America.
 Indeed there were moments

value, and if ever a Negro was worthy, this boy never to return to the is.” Locke was deeply wounded by the incident. reluctantly he did return in 1911.

And it wasn’t just the prejudice of his American peers that disaffected him, for he was almost as year Locke would taste critical of British condescension as he was of and alacrity of the ra- American racism. In 1909 Locke published a the first eight days of critique of Oxford, particularly of its aristocratic with Booker T. Washing- pretensions. beginning in Pensacola.

Beyond this the extent of Locke’s travels is At Oxford, resuming their conversation begun unclear, but his trip probably lasted through the at Harvard, Locke asked Kallen, “What difference does the difference [of race] make?” “In when he feared for his life. As a direct result of arguing out those questions,” Kallen recounts, his experience with racism in the South, Locke “the phrase ‘cultural pluralism’ was born.” resolved to promote the interests of African While the term itself was thus coined by Kallen Americans—and thereby of all Americans—in his historic conversation with Locke, it was using culture as a strategy. This was another Locke who developed the concept into a full- turning point in his life. At Oxford, Locke knew blown philosophical framework for the meliora- that he had been prepared and destined to tion of African Americans. Distancing himself become a race leader. But he did not know in from Kallen’s purist and separatist conception what capacity he would lead. It was during this of it, Locke was part of the cultural pluralist trip in the South that Locke had his vision of movement that flourished between the 1920s promoting racial pride and equality through the and the 1940s. Indeed it was at Oxford that a influence of culture. Unlike politics, culture is a crucial transformation took place: Locke saw means of expressing and effectively com-

when Locke resolved United States. But

In the spring of that firsthand the bitterness cialized Deep South. For March Locke traveled ton through Florida,

himself as a cultural cosmopolitan when he communicating the aspirations and genius of a entered Oxford; by the time he left he had people.

resolved to be a race leader, although he did not know then how he would fulfill that role. While unpublished autobiographical at Oxford, Locke founded the African Union Society and served as its secretary, thereby the circumstances that decision in his life and greatly broadening his international contacts in Africa and the Caribbean, which proved valuable in later life.

Returning home in 1911, I spent six months traveling in the South,—my first close-range view of So acutely did the Thanksgiving Day incident there acquired my life-long traumatize Locke that he left Oxford without in encouraging and interpret-
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ing the artistic and cultural expression of Negro Austrian school of value life, for I became deeply convinced of its efficacy and Alexius Meinong) as an internal instrument of group integration and (George Santayana, morale and as an external weapon of recognition and prestige.

William James, and Josiah Royce), along with the anthropology of Franz Boas and Kant's On September 3, 1912, with the help of judgment.

Booker T. Washington, Locke joined the faculty The essence of Locke's philosophy of value of the Teachers College at Howard University.

There Locke taught literature, English, education, and ethics—and later, ethics and logic—Imperatives," which recapitulates his dissertation: although he did not have an opportunity to teach "All philosophies, it seems a course on philosophy until 1915. In the spring derivation philosophies of of 1915 Locke proposed a course on the scientific, disembodied 'objective'

Later, in an

note, Locke reflected on

led to this momentous

career:

the race problem, and

avocational interest

Locke synthesized the

theory (Franz Brentano

with American pragmatism

theories of aesthetic

is captured in the

say "Values and

lates his dissertation:

to me, are in ultimate

life and not of

tific study of race and race relations. His time, place and situation, rationale was that “a study of race contacts is timed history rather than the only scientific basis for the comprehension of race relations.” In anchoring philosophy in of race relations.” But the white ministers on studied the determinative Howard University’s Board of Trustees rejected human experience, and his petition. They opposed him because they values. In his disserta- felt that “controversial” subjects such as race expresses his “psychology of value- had no place at a school whose mission was to cognitive breath: “We have educate young, black professionals. However, classed, rather roughly the Howard chapter of the National Association Hedonic, Economic, Aes- for the Advancement of Colored People Moral, Religious, and Logi- (NAACP) and the Social Science Club spon- in terms of the generic sored a two-year extension course of public value-psychology their type- lectures (1915–1916), which Locke called “Race and specific differentiae with Contacts and Inter-Racial Relations: A Study in types.” Later, in “Values and the Theory and Practice of Race.” (See below reduces his taxonomy to for an account of these lectures.) Religious; Ethical/Moral; In the 1916–1917 academic year Locke took Logical Truth/Scientific a sabbatical from Howard University to become Austin Teaching Fellow at Harvard. In that brief Ph.D. in philosophy from span of time, Locke wrote the two hundred emerged as perhaps the sixty-three pages of his dissertation, The educated and erudite African Problem of Classification in the Theory of Value, generation. The year 1918 evidently an extension of an earlier essay he milestone in Locke’s life when

reality; products of and thus systems of timeless eternity.” social reality, Locke role of values in the developed a typology of tion Locke types” in one therefore taken values and tentatively, as thetic, Ethical and cal, aiming to discover distinctions of a unity, character, respect to other Imperatives,” Locke four types of values: Aesthetic/Artistic; and Truth. When awarded his Harvard in 1918, Locke most exquisitely American of his marked another

had written at Oxford. It was the Harvard professor of philosophy Josiah Royce whose gospel was the originally inspired Locke's interest in the race. The recent discovery of philosophy of value. Of all the major American "Bahá'í Historical Record" pragmatists to date, only Royce had published a Locke fixes the date of book dealing with racism: *Race Questions*, restores a "missing Provincialism, and Other American Problems" Locke's life (as documented in (1908). In formulating his own theory of value, Bahá'í Philosopher," and

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more fully in *Alain Locke: Faith and Philosophy* (references to the Bahá'í philosophy). In a letter dated June 28, 1922, written life, Locke's four ten shortly after the death of his mother, Locke served as his public states: "Mother's feeling toward the [Bahá'í] faith. cause, and the friends who exemplify it, was mentioned, Locke was actively unusually receptive and cordial for one who "race amity" initiatives had reached conservative years,—it was her Bahá'ís. "Race amity" was the wish that I identify myself more closely with race relations (interracial it." Locke honored her wish. "race amity" era lasted from The Bahá'í Faith (known then as the Bahá'í Cause) was attractive to some African Americans wherever it had made significant inroads, harmony (such as as was the case in Washington, D.C. Its message to the present. The sage of world unity—particularly its gospel of "The Vision of Race Unity," interracial unity (then called "race amity")—

he found a "spiritual a new world religion unity of the human of Locke's signed card (1935), in which his conversion in 1918, dimension" of Buck, "Alain Locke: studiously avoided Faith in his professional Bahá'í World essays testimony of As previously involved in the early sponsored by the Bahá'í term for ideal unity). The Bahá'í 1921–1936, followed of 1939–1947, with other experiments in interracial "Race Unity Day") down Bahá'í statement, together with the

video “The Power of Race
was quite radical in its stark contrast to the Unity,” which was
broadcast on the Black
“separate but equal” American apartheid of the Entertainment Network
and across the country
Jim Crow era. One instance of this new reli- in 1997, has its roots in
early Bahá’í race-
gion’s appeal is the fact that W. E. B. Du Bois’s relations endeavors,
in which Alain Locke
first wife, Nina, was a member of the Bahá’í played an important
role. The first four Race
community of New York City. The Bahá’í World Amity conventions were
held in Washington,
Center is located on Mt. Carmel in Haifa, Israel, D.C. (May 19–21, 1921);
Springfield, Mas-
and is a place of pilgrimage for Bahá’ís. As a sachusetts (December
5–6, 1921); New York
Bahá’í Locke undertook two pilgrimages to the
(March 28–30, 1924); and Philadelphia (October
Holy Land, in 1923 and again in 1934. His first
22–23, 1924). Locke participated in all but the
pilgrimage was immortalized in a travel narra-
second, and was involved in the planning and
tive published in 1924, reprinted three times in
execution of these events as well. Beginning
1926, 1928, and 1930, and endorsed by Bahá’í
with the task force that organized and success-
leader, Shoghi Effendi (1897–1957).
fully executed the first convention, Locke served
It is significant that Locke’s trips to Israel on race-amity committees
from 1924 to 1932.
(then called Palestine) were for the primary
There are records of Locke’s having spoken
purpose of visiting the Bahá’í shrines rather
(albeit sporadically) at Bahá’í-sponsored events
than Jerusalem, the spiritual magnet that attracts
from 1921 to 1952. Locke’s last-known public
most pilgrims bound for the Holy Land. The
talk (“fireside”) on the Bahá’í Faith was given
fact that Haifa was his principal destination at-
on March 23, 1952, in Toronto, Ontario.
tests the primacy of Locke’s religious identity
as a Bahá’í rather than as an Episcopalian, as In 1924 Locke left
for the Sudan and Egypt.
he was always designated in the brief biographi- He was granted sabbatical
leave to collaborate
cal notices of him published during his lifetime. with the French

Archaeological Society of

It was not until an article, “Bahá’í Faith: Only of his research trip was the Church in World That Does Not Discriminate,” Tutankhamen. On his appeared in the October 1952 issue of Ebony however, he found his magazine that Locke’s Bahá’í identity was ever from a student strike. In publicized in the popular media. Although he from Howard

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University by its white president, J. Stanley enrichment of the American Durkee, for Locke’s support of an equitable Americans. Not merely a great faculty pay scale and for student demands to the Roaring Twenties, end mandatory chapel and ROTC. Following actually a highly his dismissal, since he was no longer gainfully artistic movement. In an employed, Locke needed to find a patron for relations, Locke support of his intellectual work. He found his Movement “deliberately benefactor in Charlotte Mason, a wealthy white race consciousness for woman with whom Locke faithfully corroborated cultural development. But sponded until her death in 1940. Mason financed separatist motives, and is, Locke’s annual trips to Europe for thirteen years different from the national- and enabled Locke to begin building his invaluable minorities.” In its able collection of African art, which he later Harlem was the “race bequeathed to Howard University. “Negro American” community That very year (1925) the Harlem Renaissance, Harlem Renaissance, sance was born. It was conceived a year earlier itself to America and to when Locke was asked by the editor of the or self-portraiture of

Cairo. The highlight reopening of the tomb of return from Egypt, campus in upheaval June 1925 Locke was fired

black culture and its experience for all creative outburst during the Harlem Renaissance was self-conscious modern unpublished report on race stated that the New Negro ately aims at capitalizing group inspiration and it has no political or in this one respect, isms of other suppressed mythic and utopian sense, capital” and the largest munity in the world. The consequently, presented the world as a microcosm

Survey Graphic to produce an issue on Harlem, black culture. With its epic scope and lyric depth, the movement was an a community located in Manhattan in New York. That special issue, Harlem, Mecca of the borne of the everyday African American experience. The Harlem Renaissance would establish an anthology, The New Negro: An Interpretation, Locke as the elder statesman of African American art in later life, published in December 1925. A landmark in when his towering prestige wielded enormous black literature, it was an instant success. Locke authority. In principle Locke was an avowed supporter of W. E. B. Du Bois's idea of a cultural elite (the "Talented Youth Speaks," "The Negro Spirituals," and Du Bois in the latter's Tenth") but differed from Du Bois in the latter's "The Legacy of the Ancestral Arts." The New Negro featured five white contributors as well, serve as propaganda. Even so, as Locke reveals in The New Negro, he hoped making this artistic tour de force a genuinely interracial collaboration, with much support sance would provide "an emancipating vision to America" and would from white patronage (not without some strings attached, however). in American culture." He spoke of a "race pride," "race The Harlem Renaissance—known also as the "race pride" was to be the genius," and the "race-gift." This developing a distinctive New Negro Movement, of which Locke was African and African cultivated through Locke's opinion, art both the prime organizer and spokesman— improvement of life—a culture, a hybrid of principle sometimes sought to advance freedom and equality for African and African American elements. In Harlem Renaissance was blacks through art. The term "New Negro" dates back to Booker T. Washington, Norman Barton Wood, and Fannie Barrier Williams's A New Negro for a New Century (1900). From 1925

more an aristocratic
 onward Locke engendered what was called than a democratic approach
 to culture. Criticized
 “race pride” among African Americans by by some African
 American contemporaries,
 fostering a new sense of the distinctiveness of Locke himself came to
 regret the Harlem

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Renaissance’s excesses of exhibitionism as well only four other major
 philosophical articles in a
 as its elitism. Its dazzling success was short- philosophy journal or
 anthology: “Three Carol-
 lived. laries of Cultural
 Relativism” (1941), “Plural-
 A little-known fact is that at the very time ism and Intellectual
 Democracy” (1942), “Cul-
 The New Negro was published Locke went on tural Relativism and
 Ideological Peace” (1944),
 an extended teaching trip in the South, giving and “Pluralism and
 Ideological Peace” (1947).
 public lectures on the Bahá’í vision of race In 1936, under the
 auspices of the Associates
 unity. Between October 1925 and sometime in in Negro Folk Education
 (ANFE), Locke
 the spring of 1926, Locke spoke in the Dunbar established the Bronze
 Booklets on the History,
 Forum of Oberlin, at Wilberforce University, in Problems, and Cultural
 Contributions of the
 Indianapolis, Cleveland, and Cincinnati, and Negro series, written by
 such leading African
 before what the Southern Regional Teaching American scholars as
 Sterling A. Brown and
 Committee in 1926 called “the best Negro Ralph Bunche. Locke
 himself wrote two Bronze
 institutions in the Middle South and Northern Booklets: The Negro and His
 Music (1936,
 Florida,” including the Daytona Industrial Bronze Booklet No. 2) and
 Negro Art: Past and
 Institute and the Hungerford School near Present (1936, Bronze
 Booklet No. 3). Pub-
 Orlando. lished between 1936 and
 1942, the nine Bronze
 Locke returned to Howard under its new Booklets became a standard
 reference for teach-
 black president, Mordecai Johnson, who rein- ing African American
 history. In 1940 the ANFE

stated him in June 1927, although Locke did not resume teaching there until June 1928. and of the Negro (During the 1927–1928 academic year, Locke was an exchange professor at Fisk University.) In a letter dated May 5, 1927, Du Bois had written to Howard administrator Jesse Moorland to lobby for Locke’s reinstatement. Du Bois states: “Mr. Locke is by long odds the best trained promoting interracial and ethnic man among the younger American Negroes.” Locke was subsequently promoted to chair of the philosophy department. He is credited with the Survey Graphic, an issue entitled “Color: of Democracy.” In 1943 Locke was on Exchange Professor to Haiti under the joint auspices of the American Committee for Inter-American Artistic and the Haitian Ministry of Education. Toward the end of his stay there, personally decorated with the National Order of Honor and Merit, grade of Commandeur. There Locke wrote *Le rôle du Negre dans la culture des Amériques* (1943), the nucleus of a grand project that he believed would be his

issued Locke’s *The Negro Record of the Negro Artist Theme in Art*, which was work after *The New Negro* in its field. In 1942 Locke hard J. Stern) *When Peoples Race and Culture*. This tional in scope, contacts through November 1942 Locke served for a special edition of issue entitled “Color: of Democracy.” In 1943 Locke was on Exchange Professor to Haiti under the joint auspices of the American Committee for Inter-American Artistic and the Haitian Ministry of Education. Toward the end of his stay there, personally decorated with the National Order of Honor and Merit, grade of Commandeur. There Locke wrote *Le rôle du Negre dans la culture des Amériques* (1943), the nucleus of a grand project that he believed would be his

Apart from his dissertation Locke published *The Negro in* ALAIN LOCKE / 203

American Culture, was completed in 1956 by Locke said in his Margaret Just Butcher, daughter of Locke's speech: close friend and Howard colleague Ernest E. Just. It is not, however, considered to be an authentic work of Locke. In 1944 Locke became a charter member of the Conference on Science, Philosophy, and Religion, which published its annual proceedings. When in 1945 Locke was elected president and unimposed thinking is the root source of all other emancipations. ... A minority is only safe and sound in terms of its education, he became the first black president of a predominantly white institution. During the 1945–1946 academic year Locke was a visiting professor at the University of Wisconsin, and in 1947 he was a visiting professor at the New School for Social Research. One of Locke's former students at Wisconsin, Beth Singer, Brooklyn, Locke's memo-describes her professor as follows: "Locke was a quiet, extremely scholarly, and well organized lecturer; I do not recall his speaking from notes." After mentioning the fact that Locke was a member of the Bahá'í Faith, Singer

magnum opus. That project, University. On June 5, 1953, unpublished acceptance In coming to Howard in philosophy may be in our culture, for a minority minority leadership, it is because free, independent social intelligence. He moved to New York in cally his entire life, for his rheumatic heart. On a year after moving to New heart failure in Mount 11 at Benta's Chapel, rial was presided over by with cremation following at tory in Little Village, Long notice that appeared in states that

“quotations from the Baha’i Writings recalls that “Dr. Locke seemed somehow aloof, and Baha’i Prayers were read at Dr. Locke’s and my friends and I were pretty much in awe of him.” funeral.”

Among his many other accomplishments, LOCKE’S PHILOSOPHY OF DEMOCRACY

Locke served on the editorial board of the American Scholar, was the philosophy editor Before describing the three principle collections for the Key Reporter of Phi Beta Kappa, and a of Locke’s writings, it is important to explain regular contributor to various national maga- how democracy provided the real basis of

zines and journals, most notably Opportunity Locke’s body of work. To this end, manuscript sources must be drawn on (1929–1940) and Phylon (1947–1953). Locke as well as actual

also contributed articles on Negro culture and full range of Locke’s publications. Access to the

Harlem to the Encyclopedia Britannica from writings permits one to see the breadth of his

1940 to 1954. From 1948–1952 Locke taught vision of America and the world. A survey of

concurrently at the City College (now City Locke’s writings, both published and unpub- lished, reveals his

University) of New York and Howard Univer- sity. Howard granted Locke a leave of absence democracy, and all of his

writings on race are referenced to it. For

for the 1951–1952 academic year to produce Locke, race relations are at

The Negro in American Culture, conceived in the heart of what democracy is all about.

Haiti but left unfinished. Locke retired in June Locke’s grand theory of

democracy provides a necessary framework of

1953 as a professor emeritus with an honorary hending what his views on

analysis for compre- doctorate of human letters conferred by Howard race relations actu-

204 / AMERICAN WRITERS ally were. His multidimensional approach to “It is a sad irony,” Alain Locke wrote, “that

democracy has already been noted. The first the social institution

most committed and potentially most capable

five dimensions are historical; they appear in

of implementing social
 Locke's paradigm of social evolution. In his democracy should
 actually be the weakest and most inconsistent,
 1941 unpublished farewell address at Talladega
 organized religion." Indeed
 College, Locke spoke of local, moral, political, Locke takes Christianity
 to task for what is now
 economic, and cultural stages of democracy. called
 "self-segregation": "Of all the segregated
 Locke traces the origins of democracy back bodies, the racially
 separate church is the sad-
 to Athens, where "democracy was a concept of dest and most
 obviously self-contradicting. The
 local citizenship." By analogy he compares this separate Negro church,
 organized in self-
 "local democracy" to "college fraternities and defensive protest,
 is nonetheless just as anao-
 sororities" in which the bonds are of "like- molous [sic], though
 perhaps, more pardonably
 mindedness," thereby excluding others: so."
 This is where secularism comes in, that is,
 The rim of the Greek concept of democracy was "political democracy."
 According to Locke:
 the barbarian: it was then merely the principle of
 fraternity within a narrow, limited circle. There The third great step in
 democracy came from
 was a dignity accorded to each member on the protestant [sic] lands
 and people who evolved the
 basis of membership in the group. It excluded ideal of political
 equality: (1) equality before the
 foreigners, slaves and women. This concept car- law; (2) political
 citizenship. This political
 ried over into the Roman empire. democracy pivoted on
 individualism, and the
 freedom of the individual in terms of what we
 Christianity would provide spiritual and social know as the
 fundamental rights of man. It found
 resources for the next stage in the evolution of its best expression in
 the historic formula of
 democracy. Christianity gave rise to what Locke "Liberty, equality
 and fraternity."
 calls "moral democracy":
 Here Locke acknowledges the influence of the
 We owe to Christianity one of the great basic ide- French Revolution. "In
 terms of this ideology
 als of democracy—the ideal of the moral equality our country's
 government was founded," Locke

of human beings. The Christian ideal of democracy explains, and continues:

was in its initial stages more democratic than it subsequently became. ... But the Christian church But for generations after[,] many of the fundamen- was a political institution and in making compro- tals of our democracy were pious objectives, not mises often failed in bringing about real human fully expressed in practice. In the perspective of equality.

democracy's long evolution, we must regard our Democracy in America began with a quest country's history as a progressive process of

democratization, not yet fully achieved, but for "freedom of worship and the moral liberty certainly progressing importantly in terms of the of conscience." Yet "it had not even matured to thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth amendments

the adult principle of abstract freedom of [sic], and the amendment extending the right of franchise to women. It is still imperfect.

colonial settlers proved; migrating non-conformists themselves, they still could not political democracy? What, then, is beyond

stand the presence of non-conformity in their we are going to have effec- In Locke's view, "If tive democracy in

midst." Thus Christianity, while representing a America we must have the democratic spirit as necessary advance in the notion of democracy, well as the democratic tradi-

was not a sufficient advance. tion, we must have more

social democracy and
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more economic democracy in order to have or Locke continues in his Talladega speech:

keep political democracy." Economic reform, then, was considered a necessary development A fifth phase of democracy, even if the preceding

of democracy: four are realized, still remains to be achieved in

order to have a fully balanced society. The present The fourth crucial stage in the enlargement of crisis forces us to

realize that without this also democracy began, I think, with the income tax democracy may go into total eclipse. This fifth

amendment. ... The income tax amendment was phase is the
 struggle for cultural democracy, and rests on the concept
 an initial step in social [economic] democracy as that is, the
 of the right of difference,— distinguished from the purely political,—a step
 distinguished from the purely political,—a step that is, the
 guarantee of the rights of minorities. In his small book *World
 View on Race and
 toward economic equality through the partial ap-propriation of surplus wealth for the benefit of the
 View on Race and Democracy: A Study Guide in Human Group
 commonwealth.*

Relations (1943), Locke sums up the problem he is addressing as
 History is the measure of how far America has follows: “Less acute than
 comes. “In this country for many generations we race prejudice, but
 by no means unrelated to it, is the social bias
 thought we had economic equality,” Locke goes on to say. the problem of
 and discrimination underlying cultural minorities. ... Cultural
 on to say. bias, like that directed against the Mexican,
 cultural minorities. ... Cultural What we really had was a frontier expansion Orientals, the Jew, the
 bias, like that directed against the Mexican, American Indian, often
 What we really had was a frontier expansion which developed such surpluses and offered such intensifies into racial
 American Indian, often which developed such surpluses and offered such
 prejudice.” At this stage in practical equality of opportunity as to give us the the social evolution of
 prejudice.” At this stage in practical equality of opportunity as to give us the
 practical equality of opportunity as to give us the illusion of economic equality. We later learned to address the problem
 democracy Locke begins of racism:
 illusion of economic equality. We later learned that we did not have economic democracy, and
 of racism: that in order to have this, we must have guaranteed These contemporary
 that we did not have economic democracy, and problems of democracy can
 that in order to have this, we must have guaranteed to all citizens certain minimal standards of living be vividly sensed if
 problems of democracy can we realize that the race ques-
 to all citizens certain minimal standards of living and the right to earn a living. tion is at the very
 we realize that the race ques- heart of this struggle for cultural
 and the right to earn a living. tion is at the very heart of this struggle for cultural
 heart of this struggle for cultural democracy. Its solution lies beyond even the
 democracy. Its solution lies beyond even the Locke then shows how the New Deal and the realization of
 Locke then shows how the New Deal and the political and economic democracy, although of course
 political and economic democracy, creation of the social security system repre-
 although of course that solution can only be
 creation of the social security system repre- sented further advances in economic democracy, reached when we no
 that solution can only be longer have extreme political
 sented further advances in economic democracy, by which he means economic equality of rights inequality and
 longer have extreme political extreme economic inequality.
 by which he means economic equality of rights and opportunities. In the conclusion of an The first four stages
 extreme economic inequality. of democracy, developmen-

unpublished essay, "Peace Between Black and White in the United States," Locke stresses the historical. Rather, they are importance of economic development: America continues to face. Locke looked beyond political democracy, We used to say that Christianity and democracy were both at stake in the equitable solution of the which is merely the structure and machinery of race question. They were; but they were abstract "Constitutional ideals that did not bleed when injured. Now we civil rights, political think with more realistic logic, perhaps, that action and control are, economic justice cannot stand on one foot; and foundation of democratic reconstruction is the dominant demand of the present-day American scene. but you and I know that attitudes are the flesh and This relatively timeless statement attests Locke's democracy, and that without their vital contemporary relevance. democracy is really moribund

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or dead. That is my reason for thinking that in any bankruptcy we must solve the democracy, ours included, the crucial issue, the test touchstone of democracy is minority status, minority protection, minority rights. Bahá'í convictions. Not only is the race question America's "most dimension is social democracy. In challenging issue," as Locke's fellow Bahá'ís Race: A Review of the Literature would say, it is also the single greatest challenge facing the world. that the contemporary world situation clearly indicates that social democracy "The race question," wrote Locke in 1949, choice for the survival of "has become the number one problem of the Christian civilization." In the

tal in nature, are sions are not merely challenges that the American experiment: guarantees, legal and machinery of democratic of course, the skeleton racy," Locke concedes, blood of reenforcement [sic] States from moral color problem. Locke's rhetoric here The next "Reason and of the Negro for scores "the fact is the only safe Western and

world.” The next statement follows from the Convention and Bahá’í first: “Race really is a dominant issue of our 1925), Locke is reported to thinking about democracy.” In World View on “the great part which America Race and Democracy, Locke states this another establishment of world peace, if way: “Of all the barriers limiting democracy, opportunity.” He went on to say that color is the greatest, whether viewed from a social democracy can be standpoint of national or world democracy.” To this end we should not And in an unpublished report on racism Locke of experience, but in the big, writes: comprehensive way. ... In final analysis, peace cannot exist anywhere without existing every- So, as between the white and the black peoples, national democracy to the American situation is the acid test of the whole world will have to be problem; and will be crucial in its outcome for the rest of the world. This makes America, in the judgment of many, the world’s laboratory for the attention. In “The Gospel for the progressive solution of this great problem of social adjustment. Bahá’í essay, Locke expresses his conviction that spiritual democracy is our greatest resource Thus Locke defines America’s world role. full range of democracy: “The Locke speaks of “religious liberals” who Twentieth Century rises out of represent “renewed hope for some early progress greatest problems. ... Much has toward racial and social and cultural democracy the name of Democracy, racy.” In a letter dated November 7, 1943, to Democracy, its largest and most the editor of the Washington Star Locke cites, below our common horizon with approval, a story that appeared in the with this telling criticism

Seventeenth Annual Congress (July 5, have remarked on can play in the alive to its “the working out of accomplished here. think in little arcs where.” To get from world democracy, the spiritualized. Locke’s views on received scant Twentieth Century,” an for realizing the gospel for the the heart of its been accomplished in but Spiritual inner meaning, is so zons.” Locke follows

November 2nd Salt Lake Tribune, which quoted of American materialism: “The land that is near-him as saying: est to material democracy is furthest away from spiritual democracy.” Then, presumably for the There must be complete consistency between what benefit of his Bahá’í audience, Locke cites Bahá’í scripture: democracy professes and what democracy practices. ... Public opinion in America has got to be sold on racial democracy. Now is the time for the The word of God is still insistent, ... and we have ... people to face this question. Race equality alone Bahá’u’lláh’s “one great trumpet-call to can secure world peace. ... To save the United humanity”: “That all nations shall become one in

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faith, and all men as brothers; that the bonds of Note that Locke has not only redefined the idea of manifest destiny—he affection and unity between the sons of men has revolutionized it. should be strengthened; that diversity of religion In “Moral Imperatives for World Order” should cease, and differences of race be annulled. ... These strifes and this bloodshed and discord (1944), Locke incorporates nation, race, and religion as the three must cease, and all men be as one kindred and “basic corporate ideas” that are integral to family.”

America’s world role. Locke explored the relationship between America and Locke’s direct citation of Bahá’u’lláh (1817– world democracy. In “Color: The Unfinished Business of Democracy” (1942) he states: 1892), prophet-founder of the Bahá’í Faith, “World leadership ... must be moral leadership makes his point abundantly clear: spiritual in democratic concert with humanity at large.” democracy is democracy taken to heart, internal- In so doing, America must perforce “abandon ized and universalized. This alone can ensure racial and cultural prejudice.” “A world democ- world democracy. racy,” he adds, “cannot possibly tolerate what a national democracy “World democracy,” writes Locke, “presup- has countenanced too long.” Beyond these nine poses the recognition of the essential equality

dimensions of democ-
 of all peoples and the potential parity of all racy—or collateral
 with them—is the contribu-
 cultures.” On a radio program, “Woman’s Page tion of youth.
 On May 28, 1946, in his com-
 of the Air” with Adelaide Hawley, broadcast mencement address at
 the University of Wisconsin High School,
 August 6, 1944, while World War II was in full
 Locke spoke of “the
 furor, Locke said: “Just as the foundation of gallant natural
 democracy of youth,” stating as
 democracy as a national principle made neces- its cause the simple
 sary the declaration of the basic equality of ally speaking, are
 typically the most free of
 persons, so the founding of international deeply engrained
 prejudice.” Another variation
 democracy must guarantee the basic equality of on the theme of
 democracy is Locke’s use of
 human groups.” This is where Locke registers the term
 “practical democracy” in a variety of contexts. For
 his support for the United Nations:
 instance, in reporting on a Bahá’í-
 sponsored race amity convention, Locke wrote:
 Significantly enough, the Phalanx of the United “Washington, which the
 penetrating vision of
 Nations unites an unprecedented assemblage of
 Abdul Baha [Bahá’í leader, 1844–1921] in 1912
 the races, cultures and peoples of the world. Could
 this war-born assemblage be welded by a construc- saw as the crux of the
 race problem and
 tive peace into an effective world order—one therefore of practical
 democracy in America,
 based on the essential parity of peoples and a truly was for that reason
 selected as the place for the
 democratic reciprocity of cultures—world democ- first convention under
 Bahá’í auspices for amity
 racy would be within reach of attainment. in inter-racial
 relations.”
 Democracy has always been a creative hu-
 He then draws a moral analogy: man project, according
 to Locke. We should
 “keep constantly in mind how indisputably
 Moreover, the United States, with its composite democracy has
 historically changed and en-
 population sampling all the human races and
 larged its meaning, acquiring from generation to

peoples, is by way of being almost a United Nations by herself. We could so easily and naturally, added objectives, fresh generation new scope, with the right dynamic, become the focus of sanctions.” Democracy, of course, has not always been thoroughgoing internationalism—thereby real-democratic. Locke shows the dissonance between the ideal and the real in the

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inherent contradictions of democracy as practice of the concept. exhaust his expansive

ticed by the founding fathers: Perhaps the summary

lies in Locke’s felicitous expression “equalitarian democracy.” At the heart of this view of We can scarcely make a fetish of our own or even democracy is interracial

our generation’s version of democracy if we recall unity, Locke’s paramount Bahá’í ideal. In The

that once in the minds of all but a few radical Negro in America (1933), Locke explains:

democrats like Jefferson, democracy was compatible with such obvious contradictions as slavery If they will but see it, because of their complementary qualities, the two racial groups [blacks and whites] have great spiritual need, one of the other.

the disenfranchisement of women, complete It would be truly significant in the history of human culture, if two races so diverse should so provision for social security and the like.

happily collaborate, and the one return for the gift of a great civilization the reciprocal gift of the Democracy is ongoing in its development. In an spiritual cross-fertilization of a great and distinctive national unpublished essay, “Creative Democracy,” culture.

Locke rhetorically asks:

In his speech “America’s Part in World Peace” (1925) Locke reportedly said:

how can we be so sure that its present compass of meaning is so permanent or so fully adequate? It America’s democracy must begin at home with a

seems absolutely essential, then, to treat democracy as a dynamic, changing and developing actual mutuality of life. Until democracy is worked out in the vital small scale of practical concept, to consider it always in terms of an order to keep alive. Except as progressive and international basis. Until it establishes itself in human embodiment of human values, it must grow in formula, prevail on the national or order to keep alive. Except as progressive and international basis. Until it establishes itself in human ideologically stagnates. flourish. Moreover, America's reputation and moral influence in the world depends on the successful achievement of In one of his formal philosophical essays, this vital spiritual democracy within the "Pluralism and Intellectual Democracy," Locke (Material lifetime of the present generation. declares: "The intellectual core of the problems civilization alone does not safeguard the progress of a nation.) Bahá'í Principles and the of the peace ... will be the discovery of the leavening of our national life with their power, is necessary common denominators and the basic to be regarded as the salvation of democracy. In this way only can equivalences involved in a democratic world the fine professions of American ideals be order or democracy on a world scale." To this realized. This rare religious end Locke advocated a "democracy of values"—that is, value pluralism. In this essay Locke should not be sentiment by Locke should Bahá'ís were argues for the "re-vamping of democracy" and misconstrued. In his own lifetime the group, with the advocates the adoption of "'cultural pluralism' the only predominantly white ers, who as a proposed liberal rationale for our national possible exception of the Quakers, who democracy." Conceived differently, Locke sees Americans for the collectively reached out to African pluralism as an extension of eighteenth-century purpose of fostering inter- racial unity—a democratic values. sacred Bahá'í value. Far from

This inventory of the dimensions of democracy in the philosophy of Alain Locke does not promote the principle of inter-racial unity within the broader context of “The Theoretical and Democracy. Evidence suggests that he first encountered Bahá’ís in 1915, which, if true, “What is race?” He then coincides with his remarkable series of five race theory to Joseph Arthur lectures, first delivered in 1915 and again in (1816–1882), the founder March and April of 1916, “Race Contacts and “We should expect naturally,” said Locke, stating the obvious, “that race theory should be a philosophy of the dominant groups.” Apart from the serious social “RACE CONTACTS AND INTERRACIAL RELATIONS” issues involved, the integrity of the scientific method itself was at stake. Scientific racism could no longer maintain its scientific pretense. Jeffrey Stewart edited Race Contacts and Inter-Addressing the connection between bias and racial Relations: Lectures on the Theory and Practice of Race (1992) from transcripts of racial difference and racial inequality. Racial Locke’s 1916 lectures preserved in the Alain Locke Papers, held in the archives of the Manuscript Division of the Moorland-Spingarn Research Center at Howard University. Locke drew heavily on the work of Franz Boas (1858–“Consequently, any true history of race,” Locke 1942), whose paper “The Instability of Race Types” Locke may have heard at the Universal of race.” The paradox is that race “amounts

asserting any parochial

Locke wanted to

In the first lecture,

Scientific Conceptions of

with the question,

traces the origins of

Comte de Gobineau

of scientific racism.

ally,” said Locke,

“RACE CONTACTS AND INTERRACIAL RELATIONS” issues involved, the integrity of the

scientific

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Addressing the connection between bias and

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theory, Locke stresses Boas’ distinction between

Practice of Race (1992) from transcripts of

racial difference and racial inequality. Racial

Locke’s 1916 lectures preserved in the Alain

difference is biological; racial inequality is

Locke Papers, held in the archives of the

social. Race, therefore, is socially—not biologi-

Manuscript Division of the Moorland-Spingarn

cally—determined. There may indeed be a

Research Center at Howard University. Locke

cause-and-effect relationship between the two.

drew heavily on the work of Franz Boas (1858–

“Consequently, any true history of race,” Locke

1942), whose paper “The Instability of Race

goes on to say, “must be a sociological theory

Types” Locke may have heard at the Universal

of race.” The paradox is that race “amounts

Race Congress (July 26–29, 1911). In the fourth practically to social inheritance[,] and yet it lecture Locke directly cites Boas’ pioneer work, parades itself as biological or anthropological The Mind of Primitive Man (1911), which, as inheritance.” Races are socially constructed, Stewart observes in the introduction to his book, and their cultures expressive of core values, “revolutionized theories of race and culture.” even though those values themselves are in flux. Stewart goes on to acknowledged that Boas, the “father of American anthropology,” exploded theoretical reversal of the old-school the myth that race had any real basis in scientific to race. Locke de- fact, and sought to establish “culture” as a Darwinism, the belief that distinct “central social science paradigm.” In so doing Boas was widely regarded by intellectual Science must be brought historians as one who did more to combat the question, to dispel “false ideological rationalization of race prejudice than And he predicts that “sci- any other person in history. Yet in 1916 only a arrive” at the conclusion handful of Americans knew of Boas’ work. static factors of race.” Locke Stewart notes that Locke “was the intellectual race from its biological who most fully comprehended the implications is culture. Accordingly of Boas’ theories for African Americans.” Boas, move from “biological” who had significant contacts with Bahá’ís, was cultural anthropology. a touchstone of truth for Locke. His lectures “The Political and thus represent a further development of ideas of Race,” Locke states Boas, whom Locke eulogized as a “major are “imperialistic.” He prophet of democracy.” as a perfect example.

This is a anthropological approach bunks Social races exist and are express certain traits. to bear on the race conceptions of race.” ence will ultimately that “there are no successfully removed basis, arguing that race Locke supported the anthropology to In the second lecture, Practical Conceptions of that dominant groups gives the Roman Empire

Then there are “the exploitations of modern American culture. Segregated imperialism.” On a personal note, Locke says, “I lived for three years in close association with American life. Paradoxically, race pride is a loyalty that can coexist within a larger civilization type.” The reader is left to presume that America is its own his own theory of social conservation, Locke goes so far as to propose “race type,” “secondary race ally leads to contribution to a joint type blends into the pride is analogous to self-respect. Here Locke his theory of race in maintaining race gro’s Contribution Locke projected that race less in the future, when destiny, perhaps, of the mulatto, or mixed, Sadly Locke’s

imperial folk at the ‘Imperial Training School’ at the University of Oxford. Oxford and Cambridge rule the English Empire.” Imperialism generates its own race myths. Anglo-Saxon superiority is a rationalization and justification of its own imperialism. Another form of imperialism is “commercial imperialism,” exercised advocating the development of a “to further trade dominance.” In the modern age, “empire is the political problem.” As a “culture-citizenship,” or group corollary to this problem, Locke discusses race and class in the third lecture, “The Phenomena ‘civilization type.’” Racial and Laws of Race Contacts.” an individual’s sense of In the fourth lecture, “Modern Race Creeds and Their Fallacies,” Locke compares “racial that Locke saw value in antipathy” with Francis Bacon’s concept of consciousness. In “The Negro’s Contribution to American Culture” (1939) District (French and German), the Alsace-Lorraine question, the Brown Provinces of Austria, to anti-Semitism in Prussia. Locke then enumerates a series of social fallacies: the “biological fallacy,” the “fallacy of the masses,”

lectures had no influence on his
the “fallacy of the permanency of race types” philosophical
contemporaries.

(which Locke takes to be a “race creed”), the
“fallacy of race ascendancy,” and the fallacy of
“automatic adjustment.” In the end prejudice “is
TEMPER OF ALAIN LOCKE THE CRITICAL

simply an abnormal social sense, a [perversion]
of a normal social instinct.” Stewart has again made
Locke far more avail-

In the fifth and final lecture, “Racial Progress able than ever before,
with the publication of
and Race Adjustment,” Locke concludes the his anthology of
Locke’s essays on art and
series with a discourse on “social race,” citing culture. The book is
organized in sections:

the Hindu caste system as the oldest instance of “Renaissance
Apologetics”; “Poetry”; “Drama”;

it. Then he baldly states: “Every civilization “African Art”;

“Contemporary Negro Art”;
produces its type.” He goes on to say that “Retrospective
Reviews”; “Race and Culture.”

“conformity to civilization type is something The majority of these
reprinted articles origi-

which society exacts of all its members.” What nally appeared in the
journals Phylon and Op-

does Locke mean by this? America’s social portunity. In these, as

in other works by Locke,
metaphor of the melting pot instantly comes to the reader must hunt for

the occasional “gold
mind. The pressure to conform is the pressure nugget”—when Locke is

at his timeless best.
to assimilate. Historically, because they were Otherwise the reviews can

be somewhat tedious.
forcibly cut off from their African traditions, Locke’s prefatory

remarks in each article often
African Americans were exposed to, immersed repay the effort,
however.

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In the opening paragraph of “Dawn Patrol: A and eccentric
exhibitionism.” This was followed

Review of the Literature of the Negro for 1948” by a period of folk
realism (which the depres-

(1949), Locke states that “the race question has sion intensified), giving
rise to a school of

become [the] number one problem of the “iconoclast” social

protest literature. (In his own world.” This is this crisis of Western civilization. Art, literature, and drama counteract race fact romance.”) Ideally ism through creating “new sensitivities of social conscience, of radically enlarged outlooks of enlightenment and human understanding.” “Race and Culture,” the last section in Stewart’s collection, is the most interesting from the standpoint of understanding Locke’s thought. “The American Temperament” (1911) is a critique of American popular culture, which failed to live up to Locke’s belief that the function of art is to enlighten, to engender social change. “Race Contacts and Inter-Racial Relations” was a privately printed syllabus of Locke’s 1915–1916 lectures. “The Ethics of Culture” (1923) is an address by Locke to freshmen at Howard University. This is one of Locke’s most straightforward talks, in which he tells his students that “a brilliant Englishman attitudes” and “anti-democratic once characterized America as a place where sees the effort to remedy everything had a price, but nothing a value. ... There is a special need for a correction of this historical and inescapable on your part.” America is largely a cultural wasteland, with “Saharas of culture” across the conspicuous symbol ... of democ-

iconoclastic vein, Locke refers to *Gone With the Wind* as a “contrary to fact romance.”) Ideally “Negro art” should fulfill its primary purpose as “an instrument for social enlightenment and constructive social reform.” This is what Locke means by “culture politics.” But this is not a “racially exclusive” goal of cultural democracy, the historic process of American acculturation.” In “The Negro in the Three Americas” (1944), the English version of a May 1943 lecture given in French while in Haiti, shared historical legacy America, the effects of slavery Poverty, illiteracy, and the direct consequence of cratic social policies.” Locke this situation as a expanding it. “For reasons,” Locke become ... a

country. Locke exhorts his students to strive for excellence, to be “well-bred.” “In fact,” Locke concludes, “one suspects that eventually the most civilized way of being superior will be to excel in culture.” Locke concedes that the emergence and influence of the elite remains a necessary though painful condition for mass progress.” The reader can see that Locke placed a great deal of faith in the power of the elite to amplify social democracy through the instrumentality of cultural democracy. of Negro cultural expression” appeared in succession. The first was the “enthusiastic cult of idealistic racialism” that characterized the “Negro renaissance” (Locke’s preferred term of reference to the Harlem Renaissance in his later writings). The movement was marred by a certain degree of “irresponsible individualism

THE PHILOSOPHY
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Leonard Harris has done an invaluable service in assembling The Philosophy of Alain Locke:

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Harlem Renaissance and Beyond (1989), a truly representative selection of Locke’s work. Harris even includes two of Locke’s Bahá’í essays, “The Orientation of Hope” (1933) and “Unity through Diversity” (1936). This volume is and the basic equivalent divided into four parts: “Epistemological Foundations”; “Valuation: Commentaries and Reviews”; “Identity and Plurality”; “Identity

racy.” Locke is optimistic about the “radiant” prospects for “inter-American cultural democracy,” but achieving a racy,” but achieving a broader issue. is a broader issue. Locke concedes that the emergence of the elite remains a painful condition for mass progress.” The reader can see that Locke placed a great deal of faith in the power of the elite to amplify social democracy through the instrumentality of cultural democracy.

THE PHILOSOPHY
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Harlem Renaissance and Beyond (1989), a truly based “on an enlarged pattern of our own.” Rather, “the intellectual core of the problems of the peace, should even includes two of Locke’s Bahá’í essays, ship, will be the it lie in our control and leadership, will be the discovery of the necessary common denominators through Diversity” (1936). This volume is lences involved in a and the basic equivalent divided into four parts: “Epistemological democratic world order or Foundations”; “Valuation: Commentaries and democracy on a world scale.” Some of the dogmatisms to be Reviews”; “Identity and Plurality”; “Identity

overcome are “culture bias, and Education.” Each section is ordered historically, with three of the essays in the first section reconstruct democracy to make it published for the first time. Locke did not publish a formal philosophical Relativism and Ideological essay until he was fifty. Accordingly Harris has chosen “Values and Imperatives” as the first pluralism. It is a “new age,” say. In many ways the essay is a condensation of Locke’s doctoral dissertation. His classification of “value types” and their associated “value basic corollaries: “the principle predicates” and “value polarity” are reduced to equivalence” (a search for “culture-a schematic chart. Locke’s theory of values provides the epistemological foundation for his principle of limited cultural subsequent philosophical formulations. In scholarly “task of the hour” is “Pluralism and Intellectual Democracy,” Locke underlying “unity in diversity.” posits a “vital connection between pluralism however, have a functional rather and democracy” that can give rise to “a flexible, more democratic nexus, a unity in diversity.” Crediting William James with rejecting Ideological Peace,” Locke “intellectual absolutism,” Locke outlines his vision of “intellectual democracy.” Radical empiricism leads to “anarchic pluralism.” and individual rights” to Midway between these two extremes, Locke essay Locke repeats proposes a “systematic relativism.” Through he made in “Cultural objective comparison of different value systems, “Utopian dream of the

nation worship, and
 lectuals is to
 truly pluralistic.
 In “Cultural
 Peace,” Locke is
 tation of cultural
 and a “new
 relativity is, in
 is based on three
 of cultural
 correlates”), “the
 ity,” and “the
 vertibility.” The
 to discover an
 These unities,
 than content
 than ideological.
 In “Pluralism and
 argues that cultural
 reciprocity are
 beyond individuals
 group rights. In this
 verbatim a statement
 Relativism” that the

one may discover “functional constants” that idealist” is
 “that somehow a single faith, a com- mon culture, an
 can “scientifically” supplant arbitrary universals, and its
 all-embracing institutional life and its
 such as “sole ways of salvation” and “perfect by merging all his
 confraternity should some day unite man
 forms of the state or society.” In so doing, not But that day seems
 loyalties and culture values.” cultural pluralism
 only will traditional value systems “make peace
 distant, which is why The second
 with one another” but will also make “an honor- able peace with science”—an echo of the Bahá’í
 is far more attainable. section of this anthology opens
 able peace with science”—an echo of the Bahá’í with “The Orientation
 section of this anthology opens Bahá’í, Locke gives
 ideal of the harmony of science and religion, an oblique testimony of
 of Hope.” As a professed which Locke professed.
 which Locke professed. The practical corollaries of value pluralism
 an oblique testimony of faith in saying that “the
 The practical corollaries of value pluralism true principles and
 are tolerance and reciprocity. World democ- hopes of a new and
 universal human order” may be realized
 racy—a “democratic world order”—cannot be
 through “an inspired extension of
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 the potent realism of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá by which he In “Frontiers of
 Culture” (1950), Locke reflects on how
 crowned and fulfilled the basic idealism of “culture” was “once a favorite
 “culture” was “once a favorite theme-song word
 Bahá’u’lláh.” In “Unity through Diversity: A with me. Now I wince at its
 Bahá’í Principle,” Locke urges Bahá’ís to apply mention.” In
 retrospect Locke claims the New Negro Movement as his
 “the precious legacy of the inspired teachings signed that
 “brain child.” “Having of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and Bahá’u’lláh” by translat-
 ‘New Negro’s’ birth certificate, I as- some some right to
 ing the Bahá’í principles into action and carry- participate in the post-
 participate in the post- mortem findings.”
 ing them into “the social and cultural fields” The movement died because
 where “the support and adherence of the most of “exhibitionism and
 racial chauvinism.” Late in life Locke believed
 vigorous and intellectual elements in most that “there is no room for
 that “there is no room for any consciously
 societies can be enlisted.” This will result in the

maintained racialism in matters

“application and final vindication of the Bahá’í cultural.” Locke then questions the utility of

principles” and “a positive multiplication of self-segregation:

“Let us ask boldly and bravely, spiritual power.” In “Moral Imperatives for what then are the

justifications of separate World Order,” Locke abandons his role as an Negro churches, of

separate Negro fraternities, advocate of the rights of African Americans to schools, colleges?”

Thus the new “frontier of address the current world crisis. He identifies culture” is

integration. The enemies remain the nation, race, and religion as the three basic same—class bias and

group bias. group loyalties. “The moral imperatives of a

new world order,” Locke concludes, “are an internationally limited idea of national sover-

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previous literature never
beyond the domain of science ... to all other holistically described,
is the key to integrating the various facets of
intellectual domains.” He attempted to provide
his thought. As a philosopher Locke had no
a model for this in coediting *When Peoples*
appreciable impact in his own lifetime. In the end,
Meet: A Study of Race and Culture (1942),
however, he may enjoy a delayed
which was “an integrated analysis” of “basic
influence. That will depend largely on
problems of human group relations” and a
information that recent scholar- whether the new
“wide-scale comparative study of universal ship has provided can
bring Locke back to
forces in group interaction.” influential life as a
prophet of democracy.

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