

International Baccalaureate

English Extended Essay

---

*How do the speeches of Shoghi Effendi,  
Barack Obama, and Oprah Winfrey inspire  
hope through the creative use of rhetoric?*

---

*Tala Katarina Ram*

Candidate Number: 000862029

Supervisor: Ms. Sandy Landis

May 2011

Word Count: 3992

Language B, category 2B Essay

## Abstract

This essay investigates how the speeches of Shoghi Effendi, Barack Obama, and Oprah Winfrey inspire hope through the creative use of rhetoric. This is done through an in-depth study of the literary devices used in their speeches and how these devices help convey the speakers' message of hope to their intended audiences and target culture, namely the American people and culture. The essay explores the various techniques used to inspire, where some are reoccurring, while others remain unique to that specific speaker. Shoghi Effendi, a spiritual leader, uses romantic language such as chivalrous images to inspire, whereas Obama, a political leader, uses more culturally specific allusions, such as historical references to events and documentation. In turn, Oprah Winfrey as a social leader tends to use more personal anecdotes to inspire her audience. However, despite the varying approaches, each speaker accomplishes their ultimate aim of inspiring hope, occasionally sharing techniques such as parallelism, to help them do so. Through the analysis of their speeches to the American people, it can be seen how they effectively communicate a long-lasting message of hope intended to last throughout multiple generations to come. In a world in need of inspirational leaders, these people have found the words to draw people into their message of hope. They each play a role in portraying a rewarding future which, despite difficulties and hardships, is worth working for, supporting the American people in the maintenance of hope. In this way, the essay concludes that the language and rhetoric is used by Shoghi Effendi, Barack Obama, and Oprah Winfrey to motivate and reveal to people that the common good and betterment of a nation and community is the criteria for each individual's own happiness, ultimately inspiring hope.

Word Count: 287

## *Table of Contents*

<b>Abstract</b> .....	2
<b>Introduction</b> .....	4
<b>Body Paragraphs</b> .....	<b>Feil! Bokmerke er ikke definert.</b>
<i>Shoghi Effendi</i> .....	5
<i>Barack Obama</i> .....	8
<i>Oprah Winfrey</i> .....	12
<b>Conclusion</b> .....	15
<b>Appendix</b> .....	16
<i>Background Information:</i> .....	16
<b>Bibliography</b> .....	18

## Introduction

In a world where there are countless tragedies, it is difficult to maintain hope. All around us we can see destruction and violence, be it in the animosities of life, or in humankind itself. With such an attitudinal climate, there might be reason to allow for the most grievous of emotions: Despair. As a counterpart to hope, despair saps the very motivation that hope inspires, making our attitude apathetic and our outlook that much more tragic. It is not surprising, then, that the world leaders of this day and age look to Hope for the way forward. For as the peoples of the world tether at the edge of despair, it is to the inspirational leaders in various roles they turn to seek hope and combat their despair.

Three such leaders are Shoghi Effendi as a spiritual leader, Barack Obama as a political leader, and Oprah Winfrey as a social leader, as determined by the media and popular culture of America. Being a leader means having the ability to influence an audience. The common target culture specific to all three leaders is the American culture. As leaders, their role is to use inspirational words to lead the American masses, inspiring hope and provide their audiences with guidance and direction. All three use speeches as their medium for communication, where persuasive speaking is used as means for inspiration and the creative use of rhetoric contributive to conveying their message of hope. Each leader accomplishes this common goal of inspiring hope by various means, sharing certain similarities and differences with regard to their respective areas of influence. To explore these means, this essay investigates how hope is inspired by Shoghi Effendi, Barack Obama, and Oprah Winfrey through the creative use of rhetoric.

## Shoghi Effendi

Shoghi Effendi<sup>1</sup>, Guardian of the Baha'i Faith<sup>2</sup> from 1897 to 1957, was known as a compelling speaker, implementing numerous rhetorical devices to inspire hope in his audiences at a time when there was much destruction and suffering and little hope to be found. In one of his addresses to the American Baha'is, he uses allusion, indicated by capitalization, to make references to God, his manifestations, and to divinity to enhance his message of hope. In his address, he speaks about the necessary "whole-hearted support" needed to further "the course of progress of the Cause"<sup>3</sup> not only in Northern America but throughout the Bahá'í world"<sup>4</sup> and "lend a helping hand to the Plan"<sup>5</sup>. The capitalization of 'Plan' conveys to the reader that the word contains a divine meaning. For the Baha'is, 'Plan' refers to a series of tasks to be accomplished in order to unify all the peoples of the world in one universal Cause, one common Faith, and the establishment of a divine civilization on Earth. By providing his audience with a 'Plan', Shoghi Effendi offers direction and promises that such a daunting task is not only plausible, but inevitable and destined to be fulfilled. Similarly, when Shoghi Effendi refers to "the Hand of an inscrutable Providence"<sup>6</sup> the capitalized letters again indicate that he is referring to divinity. "Hand", in this case, refers to Bahá'u'lláh, the founder of the Baha'i Faith and who, in the Baha'i tradition, is the manifestation of God for this day and age sent to humanity to provide the people with guidance and direction, and to make God's will known unto man. 'Providence', by definition meaning "a manifestation of God's foresightful care for his

---

<sup>1</sup> The full name "Shoghi Effendi" is used throughout the essay as a sign of respect.

<sup>2</sup> The Baha'i Faith is a world religion whose purpose is to unite all the peoples of the world in one universal Cause, one common Faith.

<sup>3</sup> 'Baha'i Cause' is synonymous with 'Baha'i Faith'

<sup>4</sup> Effendi, Shoghi. *The dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh: a supplement to Bahai administration..* New York: Bahai Publishing Committee, 1934. 107. Print.

<sup>5</sup> *ibid*

<sup>6</sup> Effendi, Shoghi. *The advent of divine justice.* 1st rev. ed. Wilmette, Ill.: Bahá'í Pub. Trust, 1963. 89. Print.

creatures”<sup>7</sup>, is in turn an allusion to God. In this way, Baha’u’llah becomes the hand of God, where ‘Hand’ is also closely linked to the concept of guidance, which further enhances Bahá’u’lláh’s role as a messenger of God. Such references have strong emotional connotations for Shoghi Effendi’s intended audience and he uses these culturally accepted connotations to inspire hope, reminding them that they are never left without guidance or direction in their lives.

In his addresses to the American people, Shoghi Effendi often uses tautology, repeating his message by using synonyms in threes or more. In his description of the world and America’s role in the interwar years before the Second World War, Shoghi Effendi portrays how the countries, although “exhausted and disillusioned, have seemingly begun to cherish anew the spirit of revenge, of domination, and strife”<sup>8</sup>. By using three different words to describe the same concept, the message becomes stronger and more memorable to the listener or reader. Furthermore, he describes the state of the world in threes, firstly the “menace of social chaos, class hatred, and worldwide ruin” before moving into specific problems like races, filled with “mistrust, humiliation and fear”<sup>9</sup>. These in turn all contribute to the common-held outlook of “impotence and despair at this spectacle of unceasing turmoil”<sup>10</sup> harassing the world. By using three words to describe one situation or feeling, Shoghi Effendi gives his concepts additional weight and therefore demanding additional attention from his audience. In addition, the repetition of a concept in threes is often committed to memory more easily than if only mentioned once, because of its poetic touch and auditory appeal. By implementing tautology, the task that needs to be undertaken is effectively conveyed to the listener and inspires action – action that would not been taken had there not been an underlying conviction that it will result in an ultimate triumph.

---

<sup>7</sup> Princeton University "About WordNet." WordNet. Princeton University. 2010.  
<<http://wordnet.princeton.edu>>

<sup>8</sup> Effendi, Shoghi. *The dispensation of Bahá’u’lláh: a supplement to Bahai administration..* New York: Bahai Publishing Committee, 1934. 67. Print.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p.68.

Another linguistic device that Shoghi Effendi uses is a combination of anaphora and mesodiplosis. His frequent repetition of phrases and words helps to emphasize his conveyed messages, while at the same time achieving a subtle poetic impression in his language. He conveys that if you “redouble your efforts”, “keep your vision clear, your hopes undimmed”, and “your determination unshaken”<sup>11</sup>, much can be accomplished, not only collectively but individually. The repeated use of ‘your’ addresses each member of his audience, asking them to reflect over their personal attitudes. Similarly, he tells his audience that “Nothing but the abundance of our actions, nothing but the purity of our lives and the integrity of our characters” can translate into “a long-cherished ideal into an enduring achievement”<sup>12</sup>, again using parallelism to highlight his message and what exactly needs to be done. This can again be observed in Shoghi Effendi’s address to the Baha’i community in America revealing that the American nation must “proclaim the solidarity, the unity, and maturity of mankind, and assist in the establishment of the promised reign of righteousness on earth”<sup>13</sup>. The parallelism, found in the repeated use of ‘the’, depicts the vision behind such action – a vision which at the same time is portrayed as appealing to the eye and ear. By using anaphora and mesodiplosis, Shoghi Effendi is able to maintain a subtle poetic notion, making his words appealing to listen to, while at the same time emphasizing the importance of the task the people of the world must undertake yet confident of its success, inspiring hope.

Furthermore, the rhetoric device pathos inspires emotional reactions to Shoghi Effendi’s words, prominent among which is the example of vivid chivalrous images. These images are used in order to inspire individuals to take action and not wait for another day, time, or individual to solve the conflicts currently disrupting the world. He addresses the Baha’is as “The champion builders of Bahá'u'lláh’s rising World Order<sup>14</sup>”, warning them that they “must scale nobler heights of heroism as

---

<sup>11</sup> Effendi, Shoghi. *The dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh: a supplement to Bahai administration*.. New York: Bahai Publishing Committee, 1934. 67. Print.

<sup>12</sup> *ibid*

<sup>13</sup> Shoghi Effendi, *The Advent of Divine Justice*, p. 89. December 25, 1938. (Wilmette: Baha’i Publishing Trust, 1984) (Compilation of Compilations vol II, p. 186)

<sup>14</sup> “World Order” refers to a system of teachings enunciated by Baha’u’llah to establish a world commonwealth based core principles such as equity and justice.

humanity plunges into greater depths of despair, degradation, dissension and distress.”<sup>15</sup> The phrase “scale nobler heights of heroism” reveals a vivid image of the daunting task ahead of those dedicated to service of mankind, yet at the same time making it an appealing task in the sense that every human wishes to somehow be a hero. Moreover, by addressing the American Baha’is as champions, Shoghi Effendi suggests that the success of the cause is inevitable, and that humanity will only move forward as an ever advancing civilization, hence illustrating a hopeful image of the future. Furthermore, Shoghi Effendi illustrates that only when “the American nation” has learned its lesson from the world wars can it lay the “cornerstone of a universal and enduring peace” and “assist in the establishment of the promised reign of righteousness on earth”<sup>16</sup>, giving America a leading and heroic role in international affairs, and the tremendous task of establishing ‘righteousness’, while simultaneously suggesting she is capable of it. The use of chivalrous images evokes emotional responses in his audience, furthering Shoghi Effendi’s aim in inspiring hope, as a hero is a figure which accomplishes and succeeds, and not someone who gives in to despair.

## Barack Obama

Barack Obama, the forty-fourth president of the United States, rose to prominence after an inspirational speech at the Democratic National Convention in 2004. Like Shoghi Effendi, he is also known as an inspirational speaker, implementing rhetoric devices to inspire hope in a climate of despair related to economic issues and war. One literary device similar to Shoghi Effendi is his use of anaphora and mesodiplosis to convey his message of hope. In his inaugural address on the 20<sup>th</sup> January 2009 he depicts how “that precious gift, that noble idea” is a “God-given promise that all are equal, all are free, and all deserve a chance to pursue their full measures of happiness”<sup>17</sup>. The

---

<sup>15</sup> Effendi, Shoghi. *Citadel of faith: messages to America, 1947-1957*. Wilmette, Ill.: Bahá’í Pub. Trust, 1965. 56. Print.

<sup>16</sup> Effendi, Shoghi. *The advent of divine justice*. 1st rev. ed. Wilmette, Ill.: Bahá’í Pub. Trust, 1963. 89. Print.

<sup>17</sup> Obama, Barack. *Inaugural address of the 44th President of the United States: January 20th 2009*. Neufahrn: Miniaturbuchverl. Leipzig, 2009. Print.



repetition of 'all' emphasizes his claim that the promise of hope is all-encompassing, including the past promise of a future where peace and harmony will be established on earth and humankind live in prosperity. He gives the American people a glimpse of the vision when he expresses that they as a collective community have chosen "hope over fear, unity of purpose over conflict and discord"<sup>18</sup> where the repetition of 'over' furthers Obama's motive in inspiring hope in his audiences by portraying them as already having made the choice to maintain hope - hope in recreating a history to be proud of; in universal equality; in freedom; and in pursuit of that which all men ultimately seek: happiness. Furthermore, Obama uses anaphora to highlight which of the American people contribute to society, namely that it is "the risk-takers, the doers, the maker of things [...] who have carried us up [...] towards prosperity and freedom"<sup>19</sup>. The anaphoric use of 'the' helps distinguish these three types of people as those celebrated in society, inspiring his listeners to also be amongst those who carry America forward. By providing his audience with this aim, Obama offers a goal which is driven by hope rather than let the people of America become apathetic and crushed by despair.

With the example of Shoghi Effendi and his implementation of chivalrous imagery, it was examined how world leaders use emotionally charged language to evoke responses in their audiences. As a political leader, Obama implements the same concept through the use of allusions to historical figures and events, consequently creating an evocative connection to the proud past of the American nation. In his inaugural address Obama speaks about the "Founding Fathers", who, although "faced with perils", "drafted a charter to assure the rule of law and the rights of man"<sup>20</sup>. By specifically mentioning both the 'Founding Fathers' and the declaration of independence, Obama evokes an emotional response in his audience, linking his words with memories and experiences that lie close to the American heart. The capitalization of 'Founding Fathers' also suggests an abiding respect for their history and producing added importance to the reference. Obama uses the allusion

---

<sup>18</sup> Obama, Barack. *Inaugural address of the 44th President of the United States: January 20th 2009*. Neufahrn: Miniaturbuchverl. Leipzig, 2009. Print.

<sup>19</sup> *ibid*

<sup>20</sup> *ibid*

of ancestry again when he bridges history with the present, explaining how they “saw Americans as bigger than the sum of our individual ambitions; greater than all the differences of birth or wealth or faction”, indicating that it is only through unity of vision, purpose and collective action that America can be carried forward like their ancestors did in their time. Moreover, Obama recounts that “For us, they fought and died, in places like Concord and Gettysburg; Normandy and Khe Sanh”, referring to historical events, including internal revolutionary and civil wars as well as external wars. All these wars are associated with sacrifice, suggesting the path forwards will be painful, however it also suggests that at the end of the path lays an ultimate victory. By reminiscing about the past through these allusions, and portraying the many successful aspects embedded in history, hope for the future is also achieved, creating a historical premise for the conception of hope.

Furthermore, metaphors in Obama’s speeches serve to construct analogies between his language and the meaning behind them. When speaking about the future, Obama explains that the “journey”<sup>21</sup> now to be undertaken is one which must be built on hard work and determination. In this way, ‘journey’ becomes a metaphor for the future of America. A journey is characterized by excitement, challenges, and unexpected obstacles, foreshadowing that the task ahead of America is an eventful and demanding one. And yet, above all, a journey holds a promise of an ultimate destination being reached, suggesting hope to the one undertaking the journey; that one’s efforts mount to an eventual accomplishment. Similarly, Obama goes on to define this journey as a “rugged path”, speaking not about a physical path, but the collective effort the American community must exert to make the journey towards “prosperity and freedom”, a journey which “we continue today”<sup>22</sup>. In order to accomplish the tasks, Obama provides examples, among which the idea to “harness the sun and the winds and the soil to fuel our cars and run our factories”<sup>23</sup>. As neither the sun, the wind, nor the soil can be physically harnessed, ‘harness’ becomes a metaphor for utilizing

---

<sup>21</sup> Obama, Barack. *Inaugural address of the 44th President of the United States: January 20th 2009*. Neufahrn: Miniaturbuchverl. Leipzig, 2009. Print.

<sup>22</sup> *ibid*

<sup>23</sup> *ibid*

the powers of natural resources, suggesting a solution to one of the world's most pressing global issues, where the future lack of resources and the hazard of global warming looms as a tangible threat to the future. In contrast, then, Obama's proposal to find solutions by harnessing natural resources is a statement of hope and faith in humanities ability to overcome these challenges. By implementing metaphors, Obama is able to compare concepts in a way that contributes to preparing and enabling America to overcome the challenges ahead.

Evocative vocabulary is another rhetoric device incorporated in Obama's speeches, where he implements specific word choice in speeches addressing the American people in order to compliment his message of hope with additional weight and importance. When he speaks about the state of crisis in which America is currently embedded, he uses words such as "war", "greed", "irresponsibility", "collective failure to make hard choices" and "sapping of confidence"<sup>24</sup> as indicators of the crisis "we are in the midst of"<sup>25</sup>. These negatively charged words are meant to evoke emotional responses in his audience, and inspire them to prevent the crisis from escalating any further. To further enhance the effect, he depicts the positives and overruling capacity to overcome the crisis, using words such as "enduring spirit", "choose our better history", "carry forward that precious gift" and "noble idea"<sup>26</sup> to emphasize the potential for combating and championing crisis. Words like "courage" and "ability to extend opportunity to every willing heart" are loaded with emotion and connections to heroism, where personal effort is encouraged rather than welfare, appealing to the cultural notions. Another clear indicator of diction in his work is when he distinguishes two opposing parts, creating an 'us' and 'them' effect. While speaking about the future of America, he uses plural first person, depicting how "we reject as false the choice between our safety and our ideals"<sup>27</sup> where both 'we' and 'our' suggest two counterparts. This in turn gives a sense of collectivity and community feeling where everyone's

---

<sup>24</sup> Obama, Barack. *Inaugural address of the 44th President of the United States: January 20th 2009*. Neufahrn: Miniaturbuchverl. Leipzig, 2009. Print.

<sup>25</sup> *ibid*

<sup>26</sup> *ibid*

<sup>27</sup> *ibid*

efforts are centered on a common goal. Lastly, Obama uses the word “friend”<sup>28</sup> as a form of personification of the American nation, giving her the sense of a human being whose character is formed by its people and culture – a tangible identity that is friendly to all nations of the world.

## Oprah Winfrey

Oprah Winfrey, celebrated talkshow host, also uses language via the media of television and print journalism to convey inspirational messages to her audiences. These inspirational messages have been repeatedly linked to hope, where, like Shoghi Effendi and Obama, the use of rhetoric devices contributes to inspire. In one of her speeches on her talkshow, Winfrey recounts some painful events she experienced as a child, using pathos to evoke emotional responses in her audience. While speaking about how she overcame these challenges, she states that “You don’t get out alone”<sup>29</sup>, suggesting that friendship is vital, and highlighting how everyone needs to be supportive of one another, working together for the common good of all. As a social leader, this message is one that corresponds with her aim, illustrating how despite her painful memories and struggle, Winfrey, in having overcome these hardships, is the embodiment of hope. Her message of collective support is one that is therefore respected and believed. Similarly, Winfrey reveals that though she is now a successful multibillionaire woman with the world’s luxuries at her fingertips, she insists that “Nothing has been more rewarding to me than knowing my life has touched another life,”<sup>30</sup> revealing that the most important benefit of her fame is its enablement of her service to others. This message is contrary to many stereotypes tied to fame, where Winfrey inspires others to use their advantages in life for the good of others rather than satisfy their own selfish desires. Because Winfrey embodies this lifestyle, her use of pathos is effective in persuading others to do the same, not only maintaining hope, but spreading it to others for them to partake in as well.

---

<sup>28</sup> *ibid*

<sup>29</sup> Tolson, Andrew. "Media Talk: Spoken Discourse on TV and Radio." *Questia - The Online Library of Books and Journals*. Version p. 157. Edinburgh University Press, n.d. Web. 10 Dec. 2010.

<<http://www.questia.com/read/113330181?title=Media%20Talk%3a%20Spoken%20Discourse%20on%20>

<sup>30</sup> Winfrey, Oprah. "Oprah Winfrey Gives Another Million to Morehouse College." *Jet magazine* 8 Dec. 1997: 22-24. Print.

Because she is a social leader, Winfrey, unlike Shoghi Effendi and Obama, uses retrospection to link her past with the present problems. By doing this, Winfrey relates the issues to herself and illustrates how if she was able to overcome such problems, then surely others must retain that same capacity. This in turn, inspires hope in her audiences, as Winfrey's personal history deepens their appreciation of the strength overcoming hardships can offer. In one of her shows, Winfrey speaks about her childhood, recounting how "I remember one day... seeing my grandmother boiling the clothes[...] And I remember thinking [...]I'm not going to be doing this," but instead "just knew in my spirit" that a better life awaited her. The repetition of 'I remember' signifies the use of retrospection, where in this case her complete faith and hope for a brighter future is a vision she effectively conveys to her audience, simultaneously personalizing her story and making her advice more reliable. Winfrey also recounts how "My father turned my life around by insisting I could be more than I was," pushing her to read books and get an education, which she admits helped her develop greatly. By portraying her own personal and true rags-to-riches story, Winfrey gives the American people a glimpse of the American Dream in reality, suggesting the same is possible for their own lives and futures. By relating problems first to herself and then expanding to others, retrospection effectively conveys not only a personal story, but one of determination, hope, and ultimate accomplishment.

Another stylistic device used is inspirational word choice. As a social leader, Winfrey consistently portrays herself as a friend rather than a preacher, which is largely accomplished through her informal and sympathetic circularity language, such as the repetitive use of "you know"<sup>31</sup> to be closer to her audiences. Additionally, Winfrey demonstrates she is conscious of the varying capacities and abilities of people, seeing them as individuals rather than a collective population, when she explains that her goal for herself is "to reach the highest level of humanity that is possible to me," encouraging others to reach *their* highest level of humanity respectively. This communicates an intimate sense of acceptance for every individual and their corresponding capacities. Moreover,

---

<sup>31</sup> Tolson, Andrew. "Media Talk: Spoken Discourse on TV and Radio." *Questia - The Online Library of Books and Journals*. Version p. 157. Edinburgh University Press, n.d. Web. 12 Oct. 2010.  
<[http://www.questia.com/read/113330181?title=Media%20Talk%3a%20Spoken%20Discourse%20on%](http://www.questia.com/read/113330181?title=Media%20Talk%3a%20Spoken%20Discourse%20on%20)>

the concept of reaching a high level of humanity communicates that Winfrey wishes to be as human as she can, attaining the virtues and qualities a human should possess, irrespective of status, wealth, or occupation. When Winfrey shares that “I live my life and I do this show to try to raise people’s consciousness, to give people hope in their lives,” the word ‘consciousness’ speaks of a higher awareness that will allow them to become better people, appreciating the details in their lives, and giving hope for the future. Hope is additionally enforced by the mention of “young people” and education as “the key” empowering them to “create a better world”<sup>32</sup> where ‘young people’ become the means through which hope is possible. This specific word choice strives to inspire hope rather than despair, suggesting that it is through a vision that challenges can be overcome.

The use of repetition and parallelism in her speeches strengthens Winfrey’s message of hope. When recounting how she overcame the challenges of her difficult childhood to her American audience, she states that “I always believed my life would get better,”<sup>33</sup> where the repetition of ‘I always believed’ portrays an unconditional and consistent belief vital in the way the American community should go about their lives if they wish to achieve like Winfrey did and still does. Winfrey communicates that her motive is to “give hope, because where there is no hope, there is no vision, and where there is no vision, people will perish”<sup>34</sup> where the parallelism of ‘hope’ and ‘vision’ convey the importance of what she is stating; that the essential aspect of life are hope and maintaining a vision for the future. This form of speaking can again be seen when she states that “In a vision there is sharing. In sharing there is growth. In growth there is prosperity... At the basis of prosperity is the spiritual realization of who we all are”<sup>35</sup> where each parallelism gives the phrase added importance, linking ‘sharing’, ‘growth’, and ‘prosperity’ together before connecting them all to

---

<sup>32</sup> Winfrey, Oprah. "Oprah Winfrey endows NYU program for African women - noteworthy news - Brief Article | Black Issues in Higher Education | Find Articles at BNET." *Find Articles at BNET | News Articles, Magazine Back Issues & Reference Articles on All Topics*. Version 1. 2002 Cox, Matthews & Associates, 6 June 2002. Web. 12 Nov. 2010. <[http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_m0DXK/is\\_8\\_19/ai\\_87853134/?tag=content;col1](http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0DXK/is_8_19/ai_87853134/?tag=content;col1)>.

<sup>33</sup> Tolson, Andrew. "Media Talk: Spoken Discourse on TV and Radio." *Questia - The Online Library of Books and Journals*. Version p. 157. Edinburgh University Press, n.d. Web. 12 Oct. 2010.

<<http://www.questia.com/read/113330181?title=Media%20Talk%3a%20Spoken%20Discourse%20on%20>>

<sup>34</sup> Lawrence, Ken. "On Television and Her Show ." *The world according to Oprah: an unauthorized portrait in her own words*. Kansas City: A. McMeel Pub., 2005. 18. Print.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 95.

'who we all are'. This use of parallelism, like Shoghi Effendi, creates added importance for those concepts which Winfrey wishes to highlight, making easier for her audiences to understand and take to heart her message of hope.

## Conclusion

The three leaders, Shoghi Effendi as a spiritual leader, Barack Obama as a political leader, and Oprah Winfrey as a social leader all implement the creative use of rhetoric to inspire hope in their audiences. Shoghi Effendi uses specifically allusion, tautology, chivalrous imagery, anaphora and mesodiplosis to convey his hopeful message to the American Baha'is. Like Shoghi Effendi, Barack Obama uses chivalrous imagery, anaphora and mesodiplosis, as well as metaphors, and evocative vocabulary through word choice to attain the same goal. Oprah Winfrey, in turn, also uses word choice to convey her message of hope, along with parallelism, pathos, and the unique use of retrospection. All three leaders use what they deem effective in helping convey their message, for although their target culture is the same, they reach these audiences through different means. However, regardless of which features they adopt, it can be seen how each one creatively implements rhetoric to further their aim of inspiring hope.

Hope is a theme which continues to grow increasingly important in the American society. For despite America's current state of spiritual, political, and social crisis, there is great potential for a successive victory. However, this victory can only be enabled if a hopeful vision of the future is maintained along with the motivation to work for a brighter future. The American culture, having become accustomed to instant gratification, now struggles to appreciate the value of delayed gratification and short term sacrifices. However, it is the role of inspirational speakers to portray a future worth sacrificing and working for, and each inspirational speaker portrayed in this essay fulfills their duty of inspiring hope that may outlive the current generation and continue to influence generations to come. Through their creative use of rhetoric, they contribute to mobilizing the American people to see the long term benefits of delayed gratification, ultimately revealing that the

betterment of the American society is the criteria for every individual's happiness, and inspiring hope to an entire nation.

## Appendix

### Background Information:

Shoghi Effendi, born in 1897 in Persia, was a conscientious man who dedicated his whole life to the service of humanity. Born and raised in Palestine, Shoghi Effendi experienced first-hand the destruction and suffering war was capable of evoking, and most of his writings were written under World War II. At the age of ... while he was studying at Oxford University in London, Shoghi Effendi was appointed the Guardian of the Baha'i Faith, a world religion whose purpose is to unite all the peoples of the world in one Universal Cause, one common Faith. As the Guardian, he wrote extensive writings to believers across the globe, translating many of the writings to English and setting the contemporary standard for translated work. After having dedicated a whole lifetime to service to the Cause, and having inspired hope to countless Baha'is and non-Baha'is alike, Shoghi Effendi passed away in 1957 in London, England.

Barack Obama, currently the 44<sup>th</sup> President of the United States of America, was born in Honolulu, Hawaii, on August 4<sup>th</sup> in 1961.<sup>36</sup> Elected as President on November 2008, Obama is the first African American to hold the office. Prior to his election, he served as a Senator, studied at Columbia University and Harvard University Law School, worked as a community organizer and a civil rights attorney. In his Inaugural Address on the 20<sup>th</sup> January 2009 Obama spoke about the future of America as he saw it, acknowledging the crisis yet determinedly maintaining his positive and hopeful outlook, encouraging his audiences to do the same. After his election there have been accusations as to how Obama's power lays in his words alone, where the practical effort never accumulated.

---

<sup>36</sup> Obama, Barack. *Dreams from my father: a story of race and inheritance*. New York: Three Rivers Press, 2004. Print.



However, regardless of whether his words are backed by action or not, it can be seen how he was able, through his words, to inspire hope in the political outlook of a whole nation.

Oprah Winfrey, born January 29<sup>th</sup>, 1954 in Kosciusko, Mississippi, is a world recognized figure known as one of the richest woman in the world, but more importantly as one who has inspired hope to millions across the globe. Her main target culture is the American people, though her talk shows and magazines are distributed throughout the international world. What is significant about Oprah, is her embodiment of a fairytale story, leading her from the being a poor farm girl in Mississippi to a most beloved and world recognized figure. As a child she was sent back and forth between her grandmothers, her mothers, and her father's homes, at one point repetitively sexually abused by a relative. Winfrey's ability to overcome this traumatic past and limiting poverty and to remain hopeful has influenced her determination to convey her own message of hope, which she does through her talks show, magazines, print journalism, movies, and book clubs. Though Oprah uses television as her main medium for communication with her audience, her ultimate aim is to use the media to better people's lives<sup>37</sup> in a society which is primarily media controlled, feeling strongly that her life should be an example for others who wish to be hopeful about their future.<sup>38</sup>

---

<sup>37</sup> Lawrence, Ken. "On Television and Her Show ." *The world according to Oprah: an unauthorized portrait in her own words*. Kansas City: A. McMeel Pub., 2005. 18. Print.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid*

## Bibliography

Effendi, Shoghi. *The dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh: a supplement to Baha'i administration*. New York: Baha'i Publishing Committee, 1934. Print.

Effendi, Shoghi. *The advent of divine justice*. 1st rev. ed. Wilmette, Ill.: Bahá'í Pub. Trust, 1963. Print.

Effendi, Shoghi. *Citadel of faith: messages to America, 1947-1957*. Wilmette, Ill.: Bahá'í Pub. Trust, 1965. Print.

Lawrence, Ken. "On Television and Her Show ." *The world according to Oprah: an unauthorized portrait in her own words*. Kansas City: A. McMeel Pub., 2005. Print.

Obama, Barack. *Dreams from my father: a story of race and inheritance*. New York: Three Rivers Press, 2004. Print.

Obama, Barack. *The audacity of hope: thoughts on reclaiming the American dream*. New York: Crown Publishers, 2006. Print.

Obama, Barack. *Inaugural address of the 44th President of the United States: January 20th 2009*. Neufahrn: Miniaturbuchverl. Leipzig, 2009. Print.

Tolson, Andrew. "Media Talk: Spoken Discourse on TV and Radio." *Questia - The Online Library of Books and Journals*. Version p. 157. Edinburgh University Press, n.d. Web. 12 Oct. 2010.

<<http://www.questia.com/read/113330181?title=Media%20Talk%3a%20Spoken%20Discourse%20on%20n%20>>

Winfrey, Oprah. "Oprah Winfrey Gives Another Million to Morehouse College." *Jet magazine* 8 Dec. 1997: 22-24. Print.

Winfrey, Oprah. "Oprah Winfrey endows NYU program for African women - noteworthy news - Brief Article | Black Issues in Higher Education | Find Articles at BNET." *Find Articles at BNET | News Articles, Magazine Back Issues & Reference Articles on All Topics*. Version 1. 2002 Cox, Matthews & Associates, 6 June 2002. Web. 12 Nov. 2010.

<[http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_m0DXK/is\\_8\\_19/ai\\_87853134/?tag=content;col1](http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0DXK/is_8_19/ai_87853134/?tag=content;col1)>.