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The Role of Emerson's Writings in the Shaping of America's Social and Political Life

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Declaration

I declare that this work has not already been accepted in substance for any degree, and is not concurrently being submitted in candidature for any other degree. I assert also that the whole work (research, planning, method, and presentations) has been undertaken entirely by the author.

Mohammed ALI TALHA

Dedication

To My Beloved Mother,

And in Loving Memory of My Father,

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Abstract

Since the 1840's until his death in 1882, Emerson was renowned as the United States' leading visionary and, in some way, one of the American Dream forefathers. In spite of having strong feelings regarding the rights of personal freedom in every man, his role as an abolitionist is less understood. This thesis focuses on Emerson's transcendental philosophy and the impact of his far-sighted ideas about the American society. It also aims at evaluating Emerson's prophecies about the American future by drawing attention to the major intellectual, social, and political shifts that occurred after the publication of his writings, mainly those related to the emancipation of slaves, the pursuit of the American Dream, and the quest for a new form of freedom and social justice. His writings sparked the urge for a change through pointing out the failure of the classical social structures, and systems of governance.

His writings dealt with the most challenging issues that his nation had to face such as the criticism of the traditional religious teaching, slavery and women's rights. Through his works, conservatism, in all its forms, was unreservedly attacked at its core, thus stimulating the elite into reconsidering everything about the *status* quo. The transcendental ideas eventually infiltrated politics and set up the stage for an unprecedented democratic system that would bring morality into political thought, thus demonizing slavery and all forms of subjugation. Moreover, by categorizing the American problem as being primarily cultural, he preached individualism and self-reliance as the only means to achieving social progress, authenticity and, therefore, cultural independence.

Key words: Transcendentalism; social reform; abolitionism; women's rights; cultural independence.

ملخص

منذ أربعينيات القرن التاسع عشر وحتى وفاته في عام 1882، اشتهر إيمرسون بأنه صاحب الرؤية الرائد للولايات المتحدة، وبطريقة ما، أحد أسلاف فكرة الحلم الأمريكي. على الرغم من وجود مشاعر قوية فيما يتعلق بحقوق الحرية الشخصية لكل رجل، فإن دور إيمرسون كداعية لإلغاء الرق أقل فهمًا. تركز هذه الأطروحة على فلسفة إيمرسون المتعالية وتأثير أفكاره بعيدة النظر حول المجتمع الأمريكي. كما يهدف إلى تقييم نبوءات إيمرسون حول المستقبل الأمريكي من خلال لفت الانتباه إلى التحولات الفكرية والاجتماعية والسياسية الكبرى التي حدثت بعد نشر كتاباته، وخاصة تلك المتعلقة بتحرير العبيد، والسعي لتحقيق الحلم الأمريكي، و البحث عن شكل جديد من الحرية والعدالة الاجتماعية. ألهمت كتاباته الرغبة في التغيير من خلال الإشارة إلى فشل الهياكل الاجتماعية وأنظمة الحكم الكلاسيكية.

في غضون بضعة عقود، غطت كتاباته أكثر القضايا تحديًا التي كان على أمته مواجهتها مثل نقد التعاليم الدينية التقليدية والعبودية وحقوق المرأة. من خلال أعماله، تعرضت المحافظة بجميع أشكالها للهجوم بلا تحفظ في جوهرها، مما دفع النخبة إلى إعادة النظر في كل شيء عن الوضع الراهن. تسللت الأفكار المتعالية في نهاية المطاف إلى السياسة ومهدت الطريق لنظام ديمقراطي غير مسبوق من شأنه أن يجلب الأخلاق إلى الفكر السياسي، وبالتالي شيطنة العبودية وجميع أشكال القهر. علاوة على ذلك، من خلال تصنيف المشكلة الأمريكية على أنها مشكلة ثقافية في المقام الأول، دعا إلى الفردية والاعتماد على الذات باعتبارهما الوسيلة الوحيدة لتحقيق التقدم الاجتماعي والأصالة وبالتالي الاستقلال الثقافي.

الكلماتالمفتاحية: الفلسفة المتعاليه، الإصلاح الاجتماعي،إلغاءالعبودية، حقوق المرأة، الاستقلال الثقافي.

Résumé

Depuis les années 1840 jusqu'à sa mort en 1882, Emerson était reconnu comme le plus grand visionnaire des États-Unis et, en quelque sorte, l'un des fondateurs de l'idée du rêve américain. Bien qu'il ait des sentiments forts concernant les droits à la liberté personnelle de chaque homme, le rôle d'Emerson en tant qu'abolitionniste est moins compris. Cette thèse porte sur la philosophie transcendantale d'Emerson et l'impact de ses idées clairvoyantes sur la société américaine. Il vise également à évaluer les prophéties d'Emerson sur l'avenir américain en attirant l'attention sur les grands changements intellectuels, sociaux, et politiques qui se sont produits après la publication de ses écrits, principalement ceux liés à l'émancipation des esclaves, à la poursuite du rêve américain, et la quête d'une nouvelle forme de liberté et de justice sociale. Ses écrits ont inspiré le besoin de changement en soulignant l'échec des structures sociales classiques et des systèmes de gouvernance des Etats-Unis.

Ses écrits ont traité les problèmes les plus difficiles auxquels sa nation a dû faire face, comme la critique de l'enseignement religieux traditionnel, l'esclavage et les droits des femmes. À travers ses œuvres, le conservatisme, sous toutes ses formes, a été attaqué sans réserve, incitant ainsi l'élite à tout reconsidérer sur le statu quo. Les idées transcendantales ont finalement infiltré la politique et préparé le terrain pour un système démocratique sans précédent qui amènerait la moralité dans la pensée politique, diabolisant ainsi l'esclavage et toutes les formes d'assujettissement. De plus, en identifiant le problème américain comme étant principalement culturel, Emerson a prêché l'individualisme et l'autonomie comme les seuls moyens de réaliser le progrès social, l'authenticité et, par conséquent, l'indépendance culturelle.

Mots clés: Transcendantalisme; Réforme sociale; abolitionnisme; les droits des femmes; indépendance culturelle.

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General Introduction

General Introduction:

Emerson was a persuasive and persistent spokesman for intellectual freedom and self-determination. He contributed considerably to the emancipation of American thought and attained international recognition during his lifetime as the leader of the Transcendentalist movement. He inherited a broad culture and a deep devotion to chasing moral excellence from his predecessors. An enthusiastic advocate of the abolitionist cause, Emerson constantly had his say in favor of the subjugated and the exploited.

This thesis traces the life, thought and work of Ralph Waldo Emerson, a giant of American intellectual history, whose transforming ideas greatly strengthened the two leading reform issues of his day: abolition of slavery and women's rights. A broad and deep, yet cautious revolutionary, he spoke about a spectrum of inner and outer realities, personal, philosophical, theological and cultural, all of which gave his mid-career turn to political and social issues their immediate and lasting power.

The first chapter deals with how Emerson's religious perspective changed throughout his career, shifting from a form of a conservative Unitarian to a liberal thinker, independent from the Church. Unitarianism had large implications for students and faith seekers in Emerson's epoch. Unlike Calvinism, the Unitarian system of faith insists on the perfectibility of man and puts a fundamentally optimistic outlook on the human nature. He fused his self-reliance principles with the new liberal faith of individual spiritual experiences, dismissing the dictations of the traditional religious preaching. Despite the fact that Unitarianism defied

most of the conventional Christian values, it still controlled the minds of its adherents. Though Emerson was opposed to all organized forms of faith, he trusted the sense of spiritual guidance stemming from religious teachings. The belief in the presence of a superpower in each individual's soul was the foundational notion of his religious principles and the most important element in most of his intellectual contributions. This very Transcendental idea is best expressed by him when maintaining that there is "an influx of the Divine mind into our mind. It is ebb of the individual rivulet before the flowing surges of the sea of life (Complete Works, p. 166). The first chapter deals extensively with Emerson's religious background and how he ended up disapproving of all traditional religious teachings. This was, in part, owed to the changing religious climate in New England, and, in the process, the Calvinistic Doctrine was being opposed, redefined and in a number of neighborhoods rejected. On the other hand, the idea that was gaining ground was that God exists in every man, and that there should be no mediator to seek His grace. This idea that was pushed mainly by Emerson and his peers marked a shift in the history of American religion. As a result, the office of the preacher started to look archaic, and the church was "tottering to its fall" (Cooke, p. 7). This being so, the scientific discourse became the new voice that could provide a unique sense of perception to the human mind, that would inspire a rerouting of human history towards greater prospects.

As the differences between the Antebellum North and the South grew bigger and bigger and the cultural gap between the two widened, America was fatally heading towards a clash that would almost rip it apart before uni ting it for good. This thesis, especially in the second and third chapters, retraces the development of the conflict in the North and how the literary activity of the Transcendentalists helped shape the scenario leading up to the war and, more importantly, to the emancipation of the African Americans. Moreover, as the nation split

between abolitionists and supporters of slavery, literary works that condemned slavery inspired both the public and the politicians. As for reform in general, the Transcendentalists had their own approach to issues such as women's rights and social justice as the analyses of works by Emerson will show. As a fervent advocate of individual rights, Emerson was always on the side of the disadvantaged segments of society. On the topic of women though, his early approach was almost in contrast to that of his latter part of his career as an essayist and a poet. He held the clichéd opinion that the women's physical nature would not allow them to take up the challenges of the complicated world. These instances were predominant in his early writings. Emerson's thoughts on women kept changing throughout his career, taking a full swing, from a firm conservative to an advocate of women's rights. Therefore, the fourth chapter takes into consideration the ideas of fellow transcendentalist, Margaret Fuller, whose opinion about freeing women from social repression stayed fixed.

Though, on the subject of women, Emerson's early attitude was somehow traditional. He sometimes praises them but he also demanded their obedience. Ultimately, he rose as a prevalent defender of women's rights and became the Vice President of the New England Women's Suffrage Union. However, Emerson's opinion evolved in accordance with the historical context as he became more and more supportive of putting women in a place that is relatively parallel to that of men. Having beginnings of a traditionalist who insisted on women's obedience, he eventually became a strong defender of their rights. In modern terms, this attitude is known as empowerment, and, in order to make his new statements strong, he collected arguments that had a sociological and philosophical basis. Emerson departed from the point of acknowledging the natural differences between men and women in every aspect, but deployed these features to give women more challenging roles in society instead of using them as prejudices to demoralize the strong-minded and motivated women. As the fourth

chapter follows right after the topic of slavery and abolitionism, the comparison between slaves and women, from Emerson's perspective, can easily be noticed as he sometimes fused both topics when opposing the local institutions of the time. Just as he believed that the women's true capacities can place them among the elite, he expressed the same view about the subjugated in general and slaves in particular.

Emerson is still considered as one of the nation's most important thinkers. The infinitude of the private man is the central theme of all Emerson's writings and lectures. In this subject, he both mirrored and formed the new American spirit. He and the Transcendentalists triggered a revolution that promoted the development of political ideals and intellectuality by insisting on independence, self-sovereignty, and the ultimate rights of the individual. It was through this scope that he approached every theme. His career consists of collecting his personal thoughts about history, science, politics, fate, nature, and the universe, in addition to the human experiences of childhood, friendship, love, and death. He was aware of the intellectual shifts of his time that he, needless to say, helped bring about.

As the revolutions of 1848 swept across Europe with the abdication of Louis Philippe in France and the German uprisings, Emerson, philosopher and founding father of the modern American intellectual tradition, was profoundly touched by the changes occurring there. This work aims at revealing the ways in which Emerson's experience deeply shaped the future works on race, slavery and politics mainly during the 1850's and 1860's. Just as his case with women's rights, Emerson's opinion on the African Americans did not follow a streamline as he happened to refer to them as primitive and secondary. He questioned the very nature of blacks and whether they were intrinsically inferior humans. At this stage, he was sought to deliver a speech to support the antislavery movements and reformers. When seen from a Transcendental perspective, that insists that every individual possesses the same natural

abilities regardless of race, gender, or class, approving the notion of universal justice. This very notion awakened the Transcendentalists and made them see the inequalities forced in the name of law. The way Transcendentalists approached reform is thoroughly dealt with in the second chapter as it took account of the political and social situation of the time.

In fact, Emerson eventually became an open abolitionist and libertarian. Therefore, the third chapter deals thoroughly with his antislavery background and how he adhered to the cause of slavery to become a mature abolitionist prophesying the end of it as an institution. In "Boston Hymn," (1863), Emerson dealt with this poetically in the form of a hymn to celebrate the end of slavery prematurely. It was written as a call to a mission for the Americans in a typical Transcendental tone with a divine voice that dictates things with authority to the addressees, sounding in some way like a voice in The Old Testament.

Unquestionably, Emerson has maintained his position as one of the influential figures in American history and literature. During his lifetime, he, the approved leader of the Transcendentalist movement and his education ideals, and religious concepts were vital to the development of the American intellectual life. Therefore, this thesis focuses on Emerson's impact on American life mainly his approach to antislavery and women's rights and thus reviving his legacy as a political activist and thinker. Since the late 1850's, Emerson became the leading visionary of America's liberal and democratic future. The chapter that deals with Transcendental Politics is mainly based on analyzing Emerson's writings on the subject, particularly the essay "Politics" (1844). In it, he makes an important historical remark that every governing system was the initiative of one individual and that the institutions are original. Thus, these institutions are changeable and efficiently replaceable. He sometimes even openly denounces the state as he states that "every actual State is corrupt. Good men

must not obey the laws too well" (Complete Works, p. 234). The moral norm is that every man's natural feeling is a suitable announcement to him and the character of his peers.

This work also aims at demonstrating the importance of Emerson's involvement in politics and investigates the lasting impact of his thought for liberal democracy. Owing to his background of a Unitarian minister, Emerson often brought morality to his political arguments. He also argued that each individual should listen to his inner voice and take decisions based on his personal insight rather than blindly abiding by the governmental institutions and society's beliefs. More importantly, this idealization of the individual is taken seriously when analyzing the essay "Politics," as Emerson endeavors to prove that the state cannot be superior to the citizens and that democracy was put in place to protect individual rights. In this context, democracy was the result of having a type of minds that allowed it to be realizable, and the individual's character and integrity provide the important principle of society. For, civilization was still at its fetal stage and it possessed the potential to stretch to every part of the world if the ethical forces do their part for its expansion. Within a democratic system, as perceived by a Transcendentalist mind, the government should promote individual growth for the citizens who would ultimately enjoy being employed, trusted, and respected. If a supposed democracy cannot guarantee this, it would naturally be eliminated by a society made up of self-reliant individuals.

Throughout the 1840's and 1850's, Emerson spoke publically against slavery on numerous occasions. However, he remained reluctant to be part of any anti-slavery organization because of his idea that actual reform starts with self-reform. Emerson was an advocate of social reforms nevertheless suspicious of reform and reformers. This argument is repeated in his multiple writings on a variety of topics about reform mainly education and women's rights. Although he never considered himself a political thinker, Emerson rose to

prominence during one of the most turbulent times of U.S history. In fact, political matters became so important for him.

Emerson's writings had an impact on America's social and political life during his own time and beyond especially as far as ethical political thought was concerned. He is considered as the democratic intellectual in American history and thus this thesis offers analyses of Emerson's works which pose the question of human freedom and fate such as his 1860 book "The conduct of Life." It also emphasizes Emerson's philosophy and thought on such issues as moral law, wealth and success.

The American Dream is steeped in the ideas of self-reliance and self-determination. In other words, it is the dream of a society of individuals who believe in the right to shape the course of their future. As a Transcendentalist, Emerson was not fascinated by America's wealth but he wanted to show the significance of man's inner life. Hence, this work provides in-depth analyses of the works which advocate individualism and prophesies about the conditions of a prosperous future for the Americans. However, "The Divinity School Address," was denounced for its open disapprovals of traditional religious education. Even with the controversies provoked by some of his works, Emerson's impassioned calls for Americans to put an end to their attachment to old European traditions and to embrace the new trend of thinking were received with enthusiasm by a generation of writers, artists, and thinkers who strove to embody his ideals of American art. Therefore, the second chapter explains how Transcendentalism adopted the ideals of the American Dream and redefined them in the way it became known back in the nineteenth century.

Though the notions of the American Dream originated simultaneously with the early settlements in America, Transcendentalism, as a nineteenth century current made them

noticeably prominent. As Emerson was mainly known for his concept of self-reliance, it was thus the great idea that resembled the American Dream that would become the core of its foundation. Moreover, the Transcendentalist's redefinition of the Dream brought up the practical side of it, and made it seem feasible. It was through emphasizing the importance of individual thinking and individual principles. Hence, the analysis of the essay "Self-Reliance" shows that, in order for the American Dream to be realized, individuals should break free from the restrictions of society. Another aspect that is dealt with in the second chapter is Kantian apriorism which is the actual root of American Transcendentalism. Though that German philosophy asserts that there could be no pure reason with no prior experience, the foundation of the Transcendental philosophy tends to take innate knowledge for granted. These ideas are explored through the analysis of the essay "Nature" (1836), in which Emerson asserts there are some essential realities that are sensed spontaneously by the human mind, and from it, stems the idea of the "Over-Soul." The latter suggests that man can be at the heart of the universe since he can have a direct perception of the truth.

My approach consists of interpreting Emerson's writings on politics and social reform. I will also use historical material in order to determine the social and political climate amid which he wrote and to compare the mood of his pre-Civil War writings to that of the latter part of his career. I will support my findings with a significant number of critical essays and books about Emerson's political and social activism.

Chapter One

Emerson's Evolving Religious Perspective

I. Chapter I. The Evolving Religious Perspective

I. 1. Introduction:

Emerson is remembered essentially for his efforts to promote the spiritual facility of the American psyche. He also helped define US identity in the nineteenth century by his rejection of Old Europe and his views on the individual's power. The movement to which Emerson's personality and literary production have been closely associated with the cultural independence of his nation. His transcendental ideas integrated complex philosophical notions and religious views. Transcendentalism is generally thought of as being the other extreme of pragmatism. Many of his contemporaries were in common agreement on a number of points. They were collectively displeased with the state of philosophy, religion, and literature in America.

His special spiritual poise and the type of career he was inclined to are owed greatly to his ancestry and his immediate circle of family members and friends.[1] However, he is a firm believer in heredity, "that people are born with the moral or the material bias" (Cook 1). Emerson grew up amidst the Unitarians and was himself a Unitarian minister. Unitarianism came as a reaction against Calvinism, a religious doctrine which was based on strict beliefs

[1]Eight generations of cultured contentious, and practical ministers preceded him. In each generation they had the most advanced positions in religious though; and to write their history especially in their relations to the religious movements with which they were connected, would be to write the history of New England religion. Emerson is no more physically the child of his Puritan ancestors than he is intellectually and spiritually.

such as Man's original fall and the inherent corruption of human nature or Man's predestination: the individual had definitely no influence over his own spiritual fate by means of his actions in life. Calvinist doctrine included the notion of the inherent corruption of human nature.[2] Unitarianism was a revolt against the profound impact that Calvinism had on American intellectual life.

The Unitarian system of belief had broad implications for students and faith seekers in Emerson's epoch. Surprisingly, the fundamental Calvinist belief in humanity's dependence on God's grace was displaced by the Transcendentalist code of belief of the "God within each individual". The Transcendentalists suggested that Calvinist ideals hampered the individual's moral development. The proponents of this doctrine prospered so much in New England that Unitarianism became an unconnected denomination. Unlike Calvinism, Unitarianism emphasizes the perfectibility of humankind and posits an essentially optimistic view of human nature. They look forward to a more brilliant future that would be the result of effective education. Nevertheless, this optimism should not be confused with religious unimportance. In other words, American Transcendentalism emphasized morals and principled manners drawn from Puritanism. Hence, even though Emerson was against institutional forms of faith, he counted on a sense of spiritual guidance inspired by religious teachings.

I. 2. Emerson's Religious Background

Emerson believed in the presence of a superpower in the soul of every individual and this is the core idea of his religious thoughts and the fundamental principle of most of his intellectual contributions;

[2] See Robinson. D. M, *"Grace and Works: Emerson's Essays in Theological Perspective."* American Unitarianism: 1805-1865. (1989): 121-42. Excerpted and reprinted in Nineteenth- Century Literature Criticism Ed. Joann Cerrito. Vol. 38. Detroit: Gale Research Inc., 1993. , p.14.

> *We distinguish the announcements of the soul, its manifestations of its own nature, by the term Revelation. These are always attended by the emotion of the sublime. For this communication is an influx of the Divine mind into our mind. It is an ebb of the individual rivulet before the flowing surges of the sea of life (Complete Works, 2:166).*

He fused the Unitarian principles with the spiritual and idealistic ideas of Neoplatonic, oriental, French and English Romanticism and most importantly his fascination by the scientific discoveries of his time. His doctrine of the soul flourished into an enthusiastic and farsighted expression of the foundation of Transcendentalism in major works in the period spanning from the late 1830s to early 1840s. Yet, from the 1840s on, Emerson's religious perspective started little by little to change to contain the fading of his euphoric vision. Therefore, he started building up a more pragmatic theory without disregarding the fact that religion can still be a source of ethical principles. His "preaching is said to have been eloquent and effective…he took a considerable share in the public affairs of the city and a deep interest in all philanthropic movement" (Cooke 27-8).

The origins of Emerson's spiritual sensibility date far back to the Puritan era of New England. His ancestry is a long line of New England ministers and spiritual leaders. As a matter of fact, his father was the minister of the First Church of Boston;

> *The death of his father in 1811, when Waldo was seven, left him in the care of his mother, Ruth Haskings Emerson, a deeply pious woman, and his paternal aunt, Mary Moody Emerson, a woman of powerful intellect and a profound religious sensibility who became one of his chief spiritual influences. Steeped in the older piety of Puritan New England, but an astute reader of modern*

> *philosophy and theology, Mary Moody Emerson provided her nephew with an example of a sensibility in which intellectual rigor and religious ardor were coequal aspects of the spiritual life (Myerson 152).*

These inspirations stemmed mainly from the religiosity of the people by who he was surrounded; in addition to the transforming religious climate in New England, revolutionized Emerson's thought while still in the early stages. Theology in Boston had enormously changed in the two hundred years spanning from early Puritan settlement to Emerson's near career debut; the Calvinistic doctrine of the first Puritans had been questioned, opposed, redefined, and in a lot of neighborhoods dismissed. Emerson was the son of one of those who, as a minister, challenged Calvinism and led many churches in different parts of Boston to a religious attitude that was described as "Arminian," or, ultimately, Unitarian (Myerson 152). Such religious background with its dynamic nature inspired Emerson to seek further changes in the Unitarian Church before finally stepping down as a Unitarian minister.

The insistence of Calvin and other Protestant religious elite on the accessibility of saving the blessing to the elect of God instilled a strong, pietistic effect on many, yet it left a number of knotty unanswered questions and emotional burden that their descendants and other theologians had to tackle. The situation of moral action in the Christian faith and the idea of salvation were considered by many as awkward. By means of simple logic, if salvation is exclusively the gift of God's grace, and the elect are designed by God, there would be no room for a sincere quest by the devoted individual. Therefore, nothing could guarantee, by internal or external signs, whether an individual's soul is experiencing a salvation process.

Questions as such were of great importance to the Puritans during the late seventeenth-century when the direct descendants of the first immigrants started to put their religious beliefs to the test as well as reconsidering their association with the church and the nature of their souls. It was a time of a cultural mess as the Puritan elite had a firm belief that their communities were morally sinking. With God as the sole distributor of grace, the individual's preparation for conversion might not be necessary. This idea required an option that qualifies the individual's soul to be converted through a process that the church had to define to their devotees who seek to receive God's grace.

The alteration of the most radical form of Calvinism that the notion of "preparation" stood for was also dealt with together with the tendency to revise the conventional description of God and of the spiritual potential of the human soul. Arminianism, with its rejection of the Calvinist doctrine of predestination, became progressively prominent as a replacement of Calvin's code of belief throughout the eighteenth century. Charles Conrad Wright, American religious historian and scholar of American Unitarianism, pointed it out that "the first generation of Puritan immigrants had already moderated Calvinism to some extent through a version of 'Covenant' theology," that, in fact, "bound the sovereign will of God to certain contractual with his chosen people" (Myerson 153). According to Wright, Arminianism saw Calvinism as a doctrine with dangerous implications, and had, therefore, to straightforwardly criticize it and denounce it.

The climate into which Emerson would be born would see the liberals set up a monopoly in Boston, and by the time he was born, they eventually became prominent theological group at Harvard. In "Unitarian Christianity" (1819), William Ellery Channing, the main spokesperson of the new generation of liberals, announced the distinct existence of

the Unitarian group and built up a theological scheme based on the human potential of reasoning and spiritual growth.

The Transcendentalists, and Emerson, in particular, grew amongst the Unitarians who wished to found a more positive and liberal view of humanity. The group of liberals who began to denounce the Calvinistic approach to human nature, which impeded the individual's

moral development, gathered around Channing, the cherished theologian of Unitarian Christianity. Channing's efforts to involve the self-culture in the Unitarian business were concomitantly initiating the foundation of Transcendentalism. His idea of self-development by means of moral and intellectual sense was appealing to a new generation of Unitarian member, including Emerson. Though Channing was by no means associated with the Transcendentalist, he expressed many ideas which became afterwards the foundational concepts of American Transcendentalism, mainly "self-culture." In his sermons and writings, Channing called attention to a very individualized and objective approach to religion and morals. He maintained that the "Bible's meaning is to be sought in the same manner as that of other books" (Tiffany 313). In his speeches, Channing called on his audiences to independently search for Truth in scripture, and to celebrate their findings and conclusions in the form of poetry or enthusiasm for their new principles. Channing asserted that the belief in the presence of God's spirit in every man had to be supported by a rational approach to the Biblical scripture.

Channing sided with Emerson in the first phase of the most significant period not only of American idealism but of American literature as well, since religion developed into morals and morals into a different form of literary expression (Downs 515). More to the point, there were other connections between the two main, such as the inspiration of the younger from the

older, and their association with the group of liberals became known as the Transcendentalists. Emerson and Channing were both well-known personalities in Boston between 1820 and 1840. They were united under the current that opposed the cold Calvinistic approach to divinity, salvation, and their prejudice of inherent corrupt nature of all humans.

Emerson was essentially a poet, and in some sense, a mystic, who reflected in analogies and expressed his voice in metaphors, and was interested in an all-encompassing change and progress of the individual. Channing, however, spent his whole career as a clergyman, obstructing him from looking over longer times, past times and the future, more subjects and more concepts as Emerson who gave up his position as Unitarian minister in 1832 to pursue a career of an essayist and an orator. Emerson's resignation was a marker of the foundation the Transcendentalist movement. Upon its establishment, Transcendentalism was viewed as a religious organization. Nonetheless, the Transcendentalist favored a less reserved, and less ritualistic religious practice. Later, the Transcendentalists turned their focus to broader and deeper matters embarking on philosophy, theology, politics, and literature. Such multiplicity in the areas of interest was enriched by Western and non-Western sources, and the openness on any new emerging ideas.

Channing defended the human ability to make right decisions based on rational views about religion, and to be morally self-determining when faced with the different life challenges, and, therefore, discarding the dangerous propositions of the Calvinistic inherent corruption. Instead, "God has given us a rational nature, will call us to account for it." Though "we may let it sleep," Channing asserted, "we do so out our peril." In fact, "Revelation is addressed to us as rational beings" (qtd. in Myerson 154). For him, this assertion of human potential was associated with an improved sense of justice and goodwill of God, a rejection of the Calvinist doctrine of predetermined selection of a given number of individuals for

salvation. This acknowledgment of both human capacity and the fairness and goodwill of God was the foundation stone of the Unitarian disagreement with Calvinism, the starting point from which they would establish a belief system that focused on spiritual potential and continuing self-culture as the core of religious life.

> *Channing added one further dimension to this version of Christianity, one that was decisive in his influence on Emerson. This is a harder quality to specify and explain, but Emerson termed it Channing's moral imagination" and referred to Channing's 1821 Dudleian Lecture at Harvard, "The Evidences of Revealed Religion," as a performance that exemplified this quality. It was less the specifics of Channing's arguments in defense of Christianity than his capability to present a compelling witness to the reality of lived spiritual experience that constituted for Emerson the act of "moral imagination" that was so conclusive (Myerson 155).*

Channing insisted on an internal proof for the common faith, in the sense that evidence has to be rather felt than expressed, but not less compelling because it was based on feeling. Such a belief in the nature of religious faith rebounds and earns momentum in the individuals who apply it regularly in their daily experiences.

In the main, Transcendentalism furthered the Unitarian religious opposition of Calvinism, moving to a post-Christian theology that celebrated the ability of each man and woman to attain spiritual fulfillment. The Transcendentalists did possibly influence American literary and artistic culture more than any other American system of belief by developing theological forms of expression and inventing a new of literary voice.

Therefore, Channing laid the foundation of the most essential element of the Unitarian perspective, a system of belief that relied exclusively on the moral sense of the individuals

who, in line with this doctrine, possess an intrinsic ability that filters the moral choices, an endorsement of the presence of heavenly or godlike characteristics within the soul; and though it can deteriorate by the worldly desires, it could as well function as the essence for an continuing spiritual and moral development, in which the soul would become more refined, to point of nearing God's attributes.

By the 1820s, Emerson had become an intellectually mature. During those years he had been troubled by health problems and professional dilemma. After his brother received a spiritual shock when seeing that the Bible, in Germany, was approached as merely a historical or cultural piece and not holy book, he abandoned ministerial studies. Emerson, however, had a hard time to make a decision to not belong to the ministry due to his lack of unemotional judgment that he linked to religious communication. It was at this instance that Channing's vision was important to him, laying a foundation of a ministry that emphasizes imagination, inspiration preaching, a sort of organization that made Emerson become more aware of his gifts.

Though he had made up his mind about pursuing studies for the ministry, Emerson showed a lack of enthusiasm or possibly confidence to become a successful Unitarian minister. Declaring his lack of interest in the uninspired interpretation of religion, Emerson, nonetheless, acknowledged that he had keen interest in a powerful imagination and, accordingly, the wonders of beautifully woven poetry. In 1824, when contemplating about his vocational and career choices and while discussion natural talent and one's ambitions, Emerson wrote:

> *I cannot dissemble that my abilities are below my ambition. And I find that I judged a false criterion when I measured my powers by my ability to understand & to criticize the intellectual character of another. For men graduate their respect not by the secret wealth but by the onward use; not by the power to understand, but by the power to act. I have or had a strong imagination & consequently a keen relish for the beauties of poetry. The Exercise which the practice of composition gives to this faculty is the cause of my immoderate fondness (Journals 45).*

This personal issue about the ministry would preoccupy Emerson even after he effectively started a career at the Second Church of Boston, which was first a Congregational church, and then beginning in 1802, a Unitarian church. As he had a commitment to be a supply preacher in Concord, New Hampshire, Emerson would his eventual wife, Ellen Tucker, whom he tied the knot with in 1829. The union of the two made of Emerson a more sensitive man, and even endorsed his lack of emotionless reasoning. But, the support and the affection that he received from Ellen would come to an end in 1831, as she had to surrender to tuberculosis. Her death was so shocking to Emerson that it changed him eternally as he not only had to cope with her death but also his persistent efforts to broaden the Unitarian outlook. Ultimately, these pressures led Emerson to resign from his pulpit at the Second Church of Boston. This resignation or rather career change was defining as Emerson would set sail to Europe in 1832 and return with a new spirit a year later.

I. 3. Emerson's Disapproval of Traditional Religious Teaching

In the history of American spirituality, Emerson is well-known for his fierce rejection of the fair liberalism of his Unitarian legacy, and his appeal for a philosophy of insight and a religion revealed to us by means of our receptive faculties. This maturing Emerson, who had given up his post as a Unitarian minister in 1832, and opposed the tedious preaching and the indifferent conventions of his colleagues. The captivating style of discourse of "Nature*"* and "The Divinity School Address" continued to be a part of the essence of the "new Emerson, yet by the mid-1840s, Emerson had embarked on a new philosophical trend. He thought of his ecstatic experience in "Nature" as unpredictable and somehow incomprehensible and his good spirits were reflecting a personal loss and the circumstances of American public life;

> *While he continued as a philosophical idealist, immersed in Platonic and neo-Platonic traditions, and shaped by the Kantian-tinged Romanticism of Coleridge and Carlyle, he made his idealism subject to a continual interrogation… His later work suggests a continuing adaptation to the rapid scientific developments of the 1840s and 1850s on the one hand, and the building of national crisis over slavery on the other (Robinson pp 3-4).*

One of the most important phases of this reorientation was succession of delivering lectures in London in 1848 which equally expose the stimulus and the intellectual anxiety provoked by his visit to England. After delivering lecture in Manchester and other cities, Emerson stayed in London for quite some time, and with company of Thomas Carlyle, experimented the vigorous cultural life of the English capital. He was less fascinated, and paid less attention to London's literary association than the impressive scientific life:

> *Emerson arrived in London during "a highly charged atmosphere" when the religious establishment was under assault from the proponents of scientific advance, and the city was still abuzz over Robert Chmabers's early evolutionary work Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation (1844). Emerson met Chambers, heard anatomist Richard Owen propound the evidence for his theory of the archetypal vertebrate skeleton, and heard Charles Faraday's theories of magnetism and electricity (Qtd in ibid p. 4).*

As a result, Emerson became profoundly fascinated by the dynamic intellectual life of modern science. He reacted to this rich variety of theories and observations with an extensive series of lectures. At the heart of those lectures was the notion that the consciousness and the tangible world evolved and functioned in line with the same laws. Emerson was convinced that the natural laws of change and progress directed the development of the human intellect, the course of human history, and the evolution of organisms in nature. These laws that unify the universe and control it unchangeably were not only descriptive but fundamental and "since matter was the embodiment of the mind, those constitutive immutable laws sought by science were equally true in the moral realm" (Ibid).

In the lecture on Milton, there is a stance about Milton's religious views which may help understand Emerson's general attitude towards institutional faith. "The most devout man of his time…frequented no church; probably from a disgust at the fierce spirit of the pulpits. And so, throughout all his actions and opinions, is he a consistent spiritualist, or believer of the omnipotence of spiritual laws." With this line of thought, Emerson was against all forms organized religions, and preached for the abandonment of all spiritual rituals. "He came to regard religion as a universal sentiment, which reveals all truth to each individual soul. This

sentiment is awakened by perceiving the universal order of nature and by experience of its invariable laws. This sentiment is an intuition and not to be received at second hand." This statement is a testament to his "faith in moral power, and in an untrammeled religion of the spirit." The argument he put forth was that "Jesus was a great prophet but his power has been sadly degraded adoration of him" (Cooke 66-7).

According to Emerson, God exists in every man, and there should be no intermediary to seek His grace. Scripture is sacred because of the lack of faith in the actual truth, therefore the priest is promoted to the position of power. Nevertheless, the office of the preacher is dying, and the church is tottering to its fall" (68). While the church is grumbling, more faith is needed, but should exhibited in different forms and rituals. The malevolence of the church is manifested in different forms, but the there should be a real commitment to bring it down. A new time and a new prospectus to be looked out for, with more richness and flavor.

Though such ideas were not completely uncommon to Emerson as his essay Nature suggests, they had captivated him with a strong influence due to the recreation of promising scientific discourse. He argued that the rising scientific voice could offer a special sense of perception to the human mind, stimulate the process of creativity, inspire the future generations and redirect the course of human history towards a greater destination.

As Emerson got himself involved in the principles of natural evolution, his thoughts about important issues of the time such as race had changed by the 1850s. Using the principle of a changing and evolving nature to tackle an issue such as race, Emerson consistently spoke his mind about social progress in some scientific and political narratives. With reference to the biological intermixture as a foundational element of American advancement, Emerson

held a forward-thinking yet an unsafe position in the national debate on race, putting forward what Finseth calls a "cosmopolitanism of blood" (Finseth, p.60), as the path of social human development. This assumption of racial and social development was strongly related to Emerson's increasing interest in scientific evolution, and to the principle of transmutation as a fundamental philosophical idea. His dismissal of belief of racial fixity contributed to reinforcement of his antislavery standpoint, "one that was also grounded in a larger conception of the evolution of human society through an expanding egalitarianism and inclusiveness" (Robinson, p. 5).

As the question of slavery became more and more serious, Emerson's commitment to the cause grew higher with the presentation of his first noteworthy address in 1844, three years before his English lecture tour. When he revisited Europe in 1848, revolutions were sweeping across the continent and the conflict over slavery became critical in the United States, "dramatically intensifying later with the 1850 passage of Fugitive Slave Law" (Ibid).

In the midst of this philosophical shifts, scientific discovery, and political turmoil, Emerson started extracting a concept of "natural religion" in the 1850s, a breakthrough, unconventional, and morally guided system of first standards:

> *Presented in a variety of lectures and essays in the late 1850s and early 1860s, Emerson's natural religion signaled the development of a post-Christian spirituality among the New England Unitarians and religious liberals, a creed in which "ethics" became the chief factor, and for many, the essence of religion itself (Robinson, p. 5).*

With a serious threat of a potential national crisis, Emerson attached a faith of ethics with a theory of a growing democratic culture, the innovated scheme of secularization that would give the human spiritual drive a new way to be expressed.

One of the most important figures to adopt Emerson's principles of natural religion was Theodore Parker. The church established in 1845 was meant to offer the controversial Parker a pulpit to preach in Boston, a intentional reaction to the exclusion of Parker by the restrained Unitarian system. The political tendency of the church was as liberal as its religious principles. It thus allowed Parker to both expand the range of theological principles and to position himself as New England's fundamental antislavery preacher.

Emerson was a regular guest at the Music Hall after Parker was obliged to leave his position as a key preacher, coming up with a message that was in accordance with Parker's, and echoing his admission that slavery was the most moral issue of their era. Acknowledging Parker's devotion to theological advancement, and unbound expression, and his daring attitude as an antislavery preacher, Emerson provided a model of religion's shift to pure ethics.

The Music Hall also hosted Emerson to deliver his lecture "Morals" at a memorial service after the execution of John Brown. In contrast to the opinion that gave Brown a reputation of a cold activist, the Transcendentalists found in him a daringly radical opponent of slavery and an advocate of moral principle, the type of person that the circumstances were longing for. Emerson considered Brown a prophet of the present time. Parker was among the "Secret Six" helpers, together with others who were involved in the Transcendentalist movement, Bronson Alcott and Thomas Wentworth Higginson. As David S. Reynolds has

observed: "Brown's Concord-Boston network of supporters affiliated with Transcendentalism

was a crucial source of support, and the influential Emerson's public defense of him was particularly valuable. No person advanced this cause more than Emerson" (Reynolds, p. 863).

He considered Brown an example of determination who was promoting the pursuit of social justice. He felt that his actions spoke a philosophy and his endeavor for the common good was stimulated by a remarkable courage and cleverness. Parker and Brown were an illustration of transforming religion into ethics, a shift that Emerson took as a move of a vital evolution of the religious code of the post-theological era that was coming forward. The interest in divinity had now been succeeded by an interest in ethics, a move that Emerson considered to be in harmony with the democratic course of the time. Notions such as justice, good intention, and good actions were principles that gained the approval of al, source of both individual morality and of a fair, democratic society. Such principles served not only as a instructions for decision and action, but as a contentment in their nature. "Men may well come together to confirm their confidence in goodness. 'Tis what which all speech aims to say, and all action to evolve. Literature with all its libraries is only apology, interlude, pastime in the absence of that" (Emerson, 2010, p. 132). Emerson had adopted the "Moral Sense," a principle that he had accepted while still at formative years, "We can never hold any false belief with impunity. It is claimed that terrors of the old religious system were wholesome checks on the conduct of men. But their lives were darkened by it, their minds obscured, their moral sense injured" (181).

Channing's "moral imagination profoundly influenced Emerson in the early 1820s, and was important in his rather agonizing choice to become part of the ministry. Its importance resurfaced vigorously as national tensions on slavery rose dramatically. "He now

found, in himself and others, the moral sense leading the way, as if ethics led to philosophy and not vice versa." In his antislavery address of 1844, Emerson stated: "The blood is moral:

the blood is antislavery: it runs cold in the veins: the stomach rises with disgust, and curses slavery" (Qtd, in Robinson, p. 8). This spontaneous and physical reaction to the abusive institution of slavery evoked a feeling that the sources of ethical reactions can have a greater effect than those of the mental power.

Beholding the belief that the slave was a complete human and thus he ought to have a convenient position in society had a special impact in the context of the nationwide argument over the issue of slavery in the 1850s. Emerson associated morality straightforwardly with democratic ideals. Realizing that you have the ability to act as a moral agent, and that you behave according to the moral ideals, regardless of your social standing and economic situation, is a strong and possibly energizing fact. For the sake of making his audience recognize the slaves' potential of ethical behavior, even moral bravery, whether in resistance or insurgence, was therefore to make them complete humans.

Emerson tackled the issue of slavery again in "Morals," specifically in his straightforward condemnation of the absence of any sense of morality of Justice Roger Taney's pronouncement in the Dred Scott decision.

I. 4. Rethinking the American Religion:

As Bloom stated: "The lightened shadow of our American culture is Emerson's, and Emerson indeed saw everything in everything, and spoke with the tongue of a daemon" (Bloom 33).

Emerson's ultimate accomplishment was to originate the American religion, and here the aim is to step out of his circle in order to trace back the roots of that religion in a

large selection of those who derived their ideas from him, openly or indirectly, commemorative of or in denial of his knowledge of spiritual mysteries; "Starting from Emerson we came to where we are, and from that impasse, which he prophesized, we will go by a path that most likely he marked out also" (33). The mentality of Emerson is the mentality of America, for worse and for grandeur, and the essential interest of that mentality was the American spiritual life, which most remarkably was labeled "self-reliance."

To begin with, self-reliance in this context is in reaction to the reliance on the abstract, or a metaphysical being. Emerson, however, makes reliance on one's own insights equal to that placed on a god. This analysis is not in line with his essay "Self-Reliance," rather "self-reliance" will henceforth be a reference to a doctrine. Emerson makes this belief central to his faith. An alternative to the conventional concept of a god is one that is present in every individual who did not need to seek inspiration from an outer source but his own soul; "In as much the soul is present there will be power not confident but agent." Furthermore, reliance is redefined and the focus should on the self. Speaking of "reliance is a poor way" of expression. "Speak rather of that which relies because it works and is." To make this idea clear of the god-within and its direct contact with the individual, Emerson put it simply, "Who has more obedience than I masters me…Round him I should revolve by the gravitation of spirits" (Essays 158). Or as Harold Bloom explains with further references; "Deeper than the *psyche* is the *pneuma*, the spark, the uncreated self distinct from the soul that God…created." Thus, Self-reliance is the religion that values and venerates what is in the self precedes the Creation, "a whatness which from the perspective of religious orthodoxy can only be the primal Abyss" (Bloom 34).

In the aftermath of the Civil War, exhausted by his visionary excitement during the war, Emerson dwelt on the return of the original Abyss;

> *There is a deeper fact in the soul than compensation, to wit, its own nature. The soul is not compensation, but a life. The Soul is. Under all this running sea of circumstance, whose waters ebb and flow with perfect balance, lies the original abyss of real Being. Essence, or God, is not a relation or a part, but the whole. Being is the vast affirmative, excluding negation, self-balanced, and swallowing up all relations, parts and times within itself (Essays 185).*

This original abyss which, inheritor of Emerson's ideas, Stevens, was to call "fatal Ananke the common god," had been referred to as Necessity in Emerson's journals. Previously in 1866, brood over Hegel, whose goal was to reduce reality to a more synthetic unity within the system of absolute idealism, Emerson had put to one side, with some sort of irony, his perception of the European foresight of the end of speculation:

> *Hegel seems to say, Look, I have sat long gazing at the all but imperceptible transitions of thought to thought, until I have seen with eyes the true boundary…I know that all observation will justify me, and to the future metaphysician I say, that he may measure the power of his perception by the degree of his accord with mine. This is the twilight of the gods, predicted in the Scandinavian mythology (qtd in Bloom 34).*

Emerson though, in other instances, admitted that he "can't read Hegel, or Schelling, or find interest in what is" told to him "from them," then he continued to reinforce his faith of his own way of expression: "so I persist in my own idle & easy way, & write down my thoughts, and find presently that there are congenial persons who like them" (Lectures 170).

The impressive outbreak of negative theology is an important text, though enigmatic, of the American religion. The interpretations of different religious views and the foundation of new terms of the spiritual realm made of Emerson almost a founder of 'American religion.' "Of the religions native to the united States, Emersonianism or our *literary religion* remains the most diffuse and diffused, yet the only faith of spiritual significance, still of prophetic force" for the American future (Bloom 34). It is this specificity of having predictive ideas put forth in a literary tradition and, or, religious context that qualified Emerson to be one of the most renowned visionaries of the nineteenth-century.

The originators of American heretical doctrines that have kept on are rather abundant, yet renowned historians of American religion, such as Sydney Ahlstrom, are inclined to accept the fact that only few of them are of vital significance.[3] There is fortunately no Emersonian house of worship or an organized system of faith, but there are some streams that are in accord with American religion that doubtfully claim their origin to be from the seer of *Nature* and the *Essays*.

Harold Bloom, in positioning Emerson as the originator of the American religion, discredited all the parties that did not come to the conclusion that, unless it is set apart as

American literature, there can be nothing to be qualified as American religion. This was

[3]This handful of important historians of American religion include Ellen Harmon White of the Seventh Day Adventists, Joseph Smith of the Mormons, Alexander Campbell of the Disciples of Christ, Mary Baker Eddy of Christian Science, and Charles TazeRussel of Jehova's Witnesses… Apart from Mary Baker Eddy, who took the humble ideas of Bronson Alcott for an approval after the subtle Emerson evaded her, the "health and harmony" Positive Thinkers notably include Ralph Waldo Trine, author of *Time with the Infinite* (1897), and his spiritual descendents Harry Emerson Fosdick and Norman Vincent Peale (Bloom 35).

Bloom's own dogma that he owed to Emerson who managed to start such a principle among the Americans.

Emerson loved the historic aspects of religion, and the social nature of all genuine spirituality. Fellow Unitarians such as Henry Ware endorsed the idea of spirituality as being the belief in a personal God, not in the way preached by the traditional form of faith. In one of his sermons, Ware made a point that would either put Emerson amongst the atheists or a non-Christian at least in the Unitarian sense:

> *If the material universe rests on the laws of attraction, affinity, heat, motion, still all of them together are no Deity ; if the moral universe is founded on the principles of righteousness, truth, love, neither are these the Deity. There must be some Being to put in action these principles, to exercise these attributes. To call the principles and attributes God, is to violate the established use of language, and to confound the common apprehensions of mankind. It is in vain to hope by so doing to escape the charge of atheism. There is no other atheism conceivable. There is a personal God, or there is none (Myerson, p. 254).*

The Unitarian ministers debated whether Emerson was a Christian; some said he was not ; some said he was an atheist ; while others earnestly defended him. He was pronounced a pantheist, denying the personality of God; while his views were regarded as dangerous (Cooke75).

Andrews Norton reaction to the new supposed faith was clearly a disapproval and labeled it as The Latest Form of Infidelity in his address before the alumni of the Divinity School. He deemed the eighteenth-century disbelief as ineffective as it followed "the celebrated atheist Spinoza, and, while claiming to be Christian, denies Christianity in a denial of its

miracles." He then entered into a long defense of miracles, claiming that the whole life of Christ must be regarded as miraculous. That he had a divine commission can only be proved « miraculous displays of God's power, » while there is nothing left if this is denied. To the demand of the transcendentalists for some more positive evidence for the truths of religion than those afforded by history, he says there can be no intuition, no direct perception, no metaphysical certainty, outside of historical evidences. There is « no absolute certainty beyond the limit momentary consciousness, a certainty that vanishes the moment it exists, and is lost in the region of metaphysical doubt. » The whole transcendental movement was sharply attacked, and in the most decisive manner (74).

I. 5. Preaching Freedom

With the religious tale insisting on notions such as fate and predestination, it takes a redefinition of lot of concepts that had been instilled in the Christian communities throughout centuries of history. In fact, faith has to be redefined regardless of the institutions that incorporated it to suit the interests of oligarchs, monarchs, and certain groups in society; an authoritarian theocracy that monopolized the access of true knowledge to the masses for fear of being objected to or discredited; never promoting freedom therefore. Instead, the fate of every individual had been written and pain and misery are but ways of redeeming the souls.

Man is inherently a sinner that needed a savior that himself to have all who entered his kingdom redeemed. In the United Stated, with the Unitarian Church already established, the idea of God had undergone many interpretations ultimately settling for the Oneness over Trinity.

Faith then has to be all about morality or religion should always be a reference to it. Both are one and the same. Morality comes from the direct presence of the Universal Spirit in all things that is why moral progress had to start at the level of individuals. The law of God is not the one found in scripture but in nature where He is manifest, and His indwelling in man shows as morality. By this, he admits the order that is inevitably imposed and cannot be violated. It is the law of God which never changes but this should not be understood in the classical manner that turned believers and preachers into pure fatalists. On the contrary, this view completely disapproved the one preached for centuries, hindering all possibilities of a moral progress. Quoting the Bible can never help stop slavery or put women in a more honorable position in society. There must be a voice that has its foundation in the soul that connected to the Divine and receptive to its inspiration. So, there should no new faith that only seeks to condemn the preceding one and there should be no organized form of religion that can only exist through association and collectiveness.

In his essay on fate, Emerson dealt with the idea of the limitations of the soul imposed by many circumstances, but its fate itself has limits. These limits are the starting point of man's freedom and the margin within which he can change things and set new laws that promote more freedom to be enjoyed by as many people as possible. When man rejects his own impulse and presumptions, abides by the divine directions, then he takes control over thing and turn into a master of fate;

Man is his own star; and the soul that can

Render an honest and a perfect man,

Commands all light, all influence, all fate;

Nothing to him falls early or too late.

Our acts our angels are, or good or ill,

Our fatal shadows that walk by us still (Emerson 1950, p. 145).[4]

The process of achieving the point when fate can be mastered starts with the recognition of "the invariable will of God, the absolute order and unity of the universe." Then comes "self-renunciation and obedience, perfect acceptance of that will and those laws." Freedom lies in the understanding of the infinite law, and compliance with it; "he who sees through the design, presides over it, and must will that which must be" (Qtd, in. Cooke 336).

Freedom is within man, and thus is in itself a necessity. There is always the option of choosing in the soul and intellect cancels fate. Man is free as long as he is able to think, and only when he is following the divine direction can he have his destiny in his hands. However, Emerson still takes Fate seriously but as something, if accepted, cannot make us "less compelled to affirm liberty, the significance of the individual, the grandeur of duty, the power of character. This is true and the other is true." It is actually these qualities that resist the devastating consequences of Fate by not taking it as something absolute.

Many events throughout history have shown that "Nature is no sentimentalist, does not cosset or pamper us." The terrible facts of the world we live in are manifest but are part of a system, "and our habits" are similar. It is a system that is operative at all levels and dimensions of existence, and human nature is no exception. It is, in fact, this awareness that makes qualities such as "the power of character" so laudable.

Humans are conditional on the law of evolution as well as that of time that once "a race has lived its term, it comes no more again." Fate is thus a reality especially when backed by "the new science of Statistics," which shows that "in every million, there will be an

[4]Epilogue to Beaumont and Fetcher's Honest Man's Fortune (Emerson 1950: 145).

astronomer, a mathematician, a comic poet, a mystic." Yet, on the other hand, the law of compensation[5] takes effect: "Famine, typhus, frost, war, suicide and effete races must be reckoned calculable parts of the system of the world" (Qtd, in Wayne 106).

Though within this context, fate seems to be the obstacle for human freedom, it makes a moral balance in nature, "leveling the high, lifting the low, leveling the high, lifting the low," forcing justice on humans. As usual, the twofold essay on fate turns to the other side, that of human force, for fate has its master. Transcendentalism requires this balance in nature and in the human mind that if "Fate is immense, so is Power, which is the other fact in the dual world. If Fate follows and limits Power, Power attends and antagonizes Fate" (107).

The essay on Fate, takes away the judgments that deem Emerson a dreamer and superficial thinker that can barely open his eyes on horrors occurring in the world, let alone suggesting a formula for social or political reform. The idea of compensation is essential in his defense of Nature's binary behavior, and thus humans can make a change within the open margin. When Fate is deemed not absolute, duty and individual action can truthfully lead to greatness and triumph over the circumstances. Dwelling on fate is a shallow quality that is projected as an alibi for a lack of action in the face of a given situation. If fate can do us wrong, it can do us good as well, but belief in the latter is what makes man what he is, a thinker.

Dwelling on the subject of fate interestingly puts morals in a position that can be best understood from a Transcendentalist perspective. It is the best option to put forth arguments that go against the fatalists. Morals, however, "implies freedom and will." Man "chooses"

[5] "Compensation" is a concept that Emerson developed about the equilibrium in the universe, illustrating how for every act there is a response, for every remuneration a price, in every natural detail a spiritual message, and the essay elucidates those correlations. For him, "compensation" is a fundamental notion of life and is a substitute for religious views, justice and punishment.

whilst "the rest of creation does not," but he ought to understand the laws of Nature because his stubbornness is like blowing "with his lips against the tempest, he dams the incoming ocean with his cane." This is not power but inflexibility. Though persistence and perseverance may be interpreted as stubbornness, they are the qualities that know the boundaries between free will and fate and "all violence, all that is dreary and repels, is not power, but the absence of power. Morals is the direction of the will on the universal ends" (Qtd, in Cooke 337).

The intellect is the basis of our natural power and Emerson extends this moral proposition of the karmic law that "when souls reach a certain clearness of perception, they accept a knowledge and motive above selfishness. And, since the world is a unity under the control of faultless order, "a breath of will blows eternally through the universe of souls in the direction of "the Right and Necessary" (Emerson, Fate: 1860). The world obeys a consistent law. Man can choose to abide by this order or defy it. When he reaches a point of understanding the perfect mechanisms of God, then he willingly, with his personal free choice, recognizes them, and realizes that do not enforce no limitation, that they are compatible with the supreme spirit of unbound intelligence.

The essay "Fate" ends with a theme of the similarity of man's spirit and nature's continuous evolution, of man's struggling with nature to exploit her power for human potential. The world's deadly forces and lethal elements, when rationally mastered, offer great possibility for human freedom from those forces. On the whole, the destination of everything "and of the parts is toward benefit, and in proportion to the health. Behind every individual closes organization; before him opens liberty, the Better, the Best." Yet this mounting progress, he notifies, satisfies at an adequate perspective. At a small scale, fate and freedom seem to be conflicting with one another in any individual life, since "Nature is overlapped,

interweaved and endless" (Qtd, in Wayne 107). The enigma of the world lies in understanding the relation between the individual and event.

Honorable behavior also implies the relation of individuality between every individual and his environment, that both have an effect on one another and make one another. The impact of fate remains mysterious or unseen, but the soul at all times holds the events that shall make it happen. Accordingly, it can be deduced that the person's fate is the outgrowth of his character.

The great order of the world can manifest in the life of humans only if they prevail over their selfish desires. When the true outlook of life is reached, that of the perfect order of things, and accept the great Soul inhibiting all of us as a guide, the pain and misery can willingly be taken as outcomes of our noncompliance. Though pain is always there, the faith that God's world is fair always prevails and shields the mind against succumbing to odd events. It is in this very belief that Emerson finds the true circumstances for self-reliance and personal freedom. All good for humanity lies in the compliance with the laws of God, all malevolence is in his disobedience. Truth and goodness come from God as an answer to our obedience; "whilst a man seeks good ends, he is strong by the whole strength of nature" (Qtd, in Cooke 339). This notion of evil, as simply an absence of some elements that make life complete, is no rare amongst mystics. Sin is vital to the development of good in man. Emerson wraps up the essay on fate with a positive note about the workings of life, and of fate: "to choose a random sparkle here or there, when the indwelling Necessity plants the rose of beauty on the row of chaos and discloses the central intention of Nature to be harmony and joy" (Qtd, in Wayne p.107).

With turbulent events taking place all over the nation, there had to be a new conception of evil that would allow for a notion such as The American Dream to become mainstream. The religious narrative, for its part, could not draw a line between the limitations of evil and human will. It took God's will as a limitation to human will in general regardless of which way they choose in life. A redefinition or a new conception of evil was desperately needed to inspire the new generation witnessing the greatest changes that the nation had ever seen. The new conception put forth by the likes of Emerson bears a mystic element that reconciles religious faith with the transcendental outlook.

I. 6. Creation of the Transcendental Club:

Emerson's surfacing as an innovative, influential intellectual in the late 1830s was the outcome of the merging of three elements of analysis: his examination of the moral sense, his keen enthusiasm about the philosophy of idealism, and his late awareness about science and the study of the natural world. As mentioned earlier, Emerson borrowed the idea of the "moral sense" from the Unitarian belief that he progressively associated with the presence of a divine element and the potential of the human imaginative faculty. Emerson's increasing interest in philosophical idealism intensified both the significance and the value of the moral sense, leading him found an approach of a cohesive, natural universe. His idealism was rooted in a profound admiration of Plato and Neo-Platonism.

Furthermore, his reading of English Romanticists such as William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and Thomas Carlyle furthered his notion of Idealism and stimulated him to deepen his interest in such philosophy through reading of German philosophers such as Immanuel Kant and Friedriech Schelling. The influence of philosophical idealism on Emerson

thought was very profound that his voice started to sound more idealistic than before. In fact, he started to define that philosophy that he imminently incorporated to his Transcendentalism in his own terms. In *Nature* (1836), he emphasized the importance of the adoption of such great ideas, though imported from Europe, instead of the dry religious interpretations of the world's phenomena:

> *The advantage of the ideal theory over the popular faith is this, that it presents the world in precisely that view which is most desirable to the mind. It is, in fact, the view which Reason, both speculative and practical, that is, philosophy and virtue, take. For seen in the light of thought, the world always is phenomenal; and virtue subordinates it to the mind. Idealism sees the world in God. It behols the whole circle of persons and things, of actions and events, of country and religion, not as painfully accumulated, atom after atom, act after act, in age creeping Past, but as one which God paints on the instant eternity for the contemplation of the soul (Essays 33).*

I. 7. Conclusion

Amidst all this distress, Emerson remained subtly poised and tranquilly following the path of knowledge and wisdom, and showing no direct reaction to the voices that challenged or opposed his views. He always expressed his mind with the utmost confidence. With the conviction that the truth being sought has no single route, he left all the opinions that could not embrace nor appreciate his idea of the Universal Mind make their own way. For Emerson, truth is reached only through the union with this Universal Spirit and cannot be defied or

reinforced by means of reason. This union of the individual mind with the Universal Mind, made the claim that Emerson was a pantheist a real significance. Yet, it is clear that such labels did not stick to him, and that he was consistently committed to the spiritual notions of existence.

The polemic provoked by his address had the necessary impact that would set him apart from the Unitarians for good. That was also an example of how attached were the Unitarians to the traditional forms, and started to realize that how different he was intellectually and philosophically to them. He became no longer able to use a pulpit from which his views would always sound too controversial and where he would feel directly opposed, so he rather wisely pulled himself away "to do his work in a manner of his own" (Cooke 76).

Chapter Two Transcendental Politics in Emerson's Works

Chapter II. Emerson's Transcendental Politics

II. 1. Introduction:

Transcendentalism is commonly known as the philosophical trend which integrated the notions of the American Dream and somehow redefined it in the way it is known today. Though these ideas date back to the early American colonization, this 19th century current made them remarkably influential. Emerson is widely known for his concept of self-reliance. The idea of self-reliance has been the Great American Idea that meant the individual should feel totally unrestrained and independent to follow the principles that would lead them achieving success in the land of plenty. Emerson emphasizes the significance of individual thinking as he states in "Self-Reliance": "nothing is at least sacred but the integrity of our own mind" (Holmes, p. 48). He asserts that everyone should free themselves from the limitations of social bondage and then they must follow a path of success of their own.

II. 2. The Roots of the American Dream

One of the main roots of American Transcendentalism is Kantian apriorism. Kant asserted that each individual's conscience intrinsically has pure forms of receptivity which make the understanding of the external world easier. In other words, knowledge is the outcome of the interactions of the emotional responsiveness with the intellect. Thus, there could be no pure reason without the substance that only experience can provide. However, the basis of the Transcendentalist philosophy points toward an innate knowledge.

In "Nature"(1836), Emerson asserts that there are some essential realities, which are not drawn from experience, which are not subject to explanation and which go beyond human nature and are sensed spontaneously by the human mind. This direct perception of truth offers man the likelihood to be at the spiritual heart of the universe. By way of placing man at the hub of the universe, and through giving power and abilities conventionally attributed to divinity, transcendentalism, in some way, represents the myth of the boundless human capacities that Americans exemplify

In *American Dream and Literature*, Frederic Carpenter states: "Transcendentalism is the philosophy of the American Dream," and also described it as "practical idealism," (Carpenter: 1995, p. 32) since it renders a myth into a philosophical notion. Transcendentalism was essentially involved in the growth of the American myth with the concept of the New World where human potential can reach its culmination and an enthusiastic faith in the capacities of a self-reliant individual.

The seed of the American Dream existed before the emergence of this new philosophical trend that adopted and hypothesized the ideas originating from the myth. Transcendentalism is an exclusive reaction to romanticism and to the issue of the imitation of the European culture. This response showed that the American culture could elaborate original ideas and work on them vigorously and independently. It typifies the strength of mind of the inhabitants of a land unconcerned with the doctrines and the deceits of the past. This land laid the ground for the appearance of a philosophy which gave new meaning to man, nature, God and the connections between them.

The absence of an American philosophy school could easily be noted as Alexis de Tocqueville put it: "The Americans have no school of their own and are very little bothered

by all those which divide Europe; they hardly know their names. However, it is easy to see that the minds of almost all inhabitants of the United States move in the same direction and are guided according to the same rules; that is to say, without ever having gone to the trouble of defining the rules, a certain philosophic methodology common to all of them."

To break away from the spirit of organisms, the bondage of customs; to accept conventions only as records and present facts merely as a practical study to work in a different and a better way: such are the essential characteristics of the American philosophical reasoning. The French observer noticeably formulated the philosophic principles of the Americans before Emerson and Thoreau and, therefore, tackling the true spirit of Transcendentalism. The new notions of self-reliance, the important value put on the individual, and avoiding the "spirit of system": such are foundational percepts of Transcendentalism, and, taking it to a further extent, the Dream.

The Transcendental dream was a faith inherited from the Puritans but the shift from religious culture somehow secularized the concept. The new elaborate ideas dating back to the Puritan became widely held within another notion: it emphasized the ideas of spiritual self-inspection. Every attitude that came along with the Puritans to the New World had its roots in the European culture. In spite of being very determined in their quest for a life with new standards, the Puritans were not Americans, they were Europeans who left their homelands in the west of the old continent with the aim of achieving their ultimate ambitions.

Transcendentalism is totally an American achievement that resisted tradition and emphasized self-reliance and individualism. A pioneering philosophical trend as such required a virgin soil to emerge in its purest form, a land unaffected by long years of doctrines

and systems of beliefs. The conditions that the New World offered laid the ground to the emergence of ideas uninfluenced by social conventions, and religious axioms.

II. 3. Roots of an Unprecedented Democratic System

It is the Unitarian movement that should be credited for initiating the concept of self-reliance in a deep ethical consciousness, which Emerson later converted into the foundational ground of his philosophic thought. The main innovation made by the Transcendentalists was the compromise between the Catholic Church, the Protestants, and the Puritans. For both the Protestants and the Puritans, the church was hopelessly corrupted. In view of the fact that these religions did not succeed in establishing the kingdom of God, the Transcendentalists believed the latter had to be in some other place, away from the restrictions of any worldly systems. Now truth should be sought from within; the supreme force lies within every individual.

Such was the reaction of this pioneering group of people reacting against the European philosophic system. This response is a rough idea of an unparalleled democratic regime, one in which the idea of power and authority are revised, being put together with the inner moral character. No outside source of influence is of importance for the individual's spiritual accomplishment except his own insight and the determination to translate it into action.

Transcendentalists insisted on the importance of the adversative nature of the relationship between the government and the individual with an insistence on the latter. *Civil Disobedience* (1849) by Thoreau is the best illustration of the movement's inclination to reject the institutional hierarchy and instead support an insistence on the individual. Thanks to

his great intuitive faculty, this individual is exceptional. One has to detach himself from the objective truth to experience one's true self and attain self-transcendence.

The morality of the idea of individualism owes its origins to Puritanism yet the notion changes with the new context. With the Puritans initiating the idea of God's blessing exposed through "chosen" individuals, the Transcendentalists advocate that the kingdom of God exists in every self, as a moral law, opposing the conventional morality. They also asserted that everything in nature has a form that is consistent with its function. Hence, the laws of nature translate moral laws that exist in every individual: "It has already been illustrated, that every natural process is a version of a moral sentence. The moral law lies at the center of nature and radiates to the circumference. It is the pith and marrow of every substance, every relation and every process" (Emerson, Nature, p. 25).

In calling upon individuals to break free from social, political, religious conventions, Emerson insisted that "whoever would be a man would be a nonconformist." The ideas that Emerson, Thoreau, Elizabeth palmer Peaboy and William Ellery Channing are exposing on self-reliance and transcending the narrow constraints of society are part of a general reform trajectory in American life and they tap into something very important in the American identity. The idea of being skeptical of social, cultural, religious conventions and the idea of relentless questioning, we can see the roots of these ideas in the Puritans lives of the seventeenth century and certainly in the ideas of the American Revolution in the 18th century and we see these ideas in the 19th century transforming these ideas and making them over new.

Dependence on external influences, contemporary cultures, or existent traditions hampered individuals self-improvement. Emerson was always afraid of being the child of his

circumstances; he rather wanted to make his own circumstance. In fact, Emerson's legacy has centered on his firm insistence on individualism. He expressed his views not as a maintenance or completion of bygone generations, but as a rising of the individual. Self-reliance, the belief that an individual soul is not only self-sustaining but the most crucial ingredient for genius, became a brand of his thought and a pin of his legacy (Mott: 2000, p. 62).

This trend of breaking tradition and instituting new intellectual movement has dictated the interpretations of Emersonian scholarship. Cornel West has described Emerson as establishing a radically new philosophical tradition that evades all strains of antebellum philosophy:

> *There are not a few men, I hope, in America who decline the pursuit of wealth; not a few who refrain from ambition; and some few who devote themselves to thought and study from a pure love of intellectual life. He neglects no political duty, and is unmindful of nothing in the march of events which can affect the virtue and peace of men. While he is far above fretting himself because of evil-doers, he has ever ready his verdict for the right and his right hand for its champions. While apart from the passions of all controversies, he is ever present with their principles, declaring himself, and taking his stand, while appearing to be incapable of contempt of persons, however uncompromising may be his indignation against what is dishonest and harsh (Cooke 1982: 103-4).*

Lawrence Buell, one of Emerson's most prominent interpreters, has argued for the transnational revolutionist as the most important agenda in which the value of Emerson's mastermind can truly be recognized: "Emerson is almost always at his most interesting when striving to free his mind from parochial entanglements of whatever sort" (Buell, p. 4).

Emerson was without a doubt inspired by, and also involved in traditions and issues of his political climate. Much of his political ideas were typical of wide-ranging political paradoxes. Adopting democratic ideas and at the same time being anxious about the overindulgences of democratic culture, Emerson's political philosophy tried to find answers to the same issues that have bothered American political theorists. This chapter aims particularly at evoking this conflict through investigating the manner in which Emerson inherited and made use of aspects from a particular political culture that, on the face of it, would sound archaic, Federalism.

If Emerson is repeatedly represented as no successor of any ideological ancestor, American Federalism is characteristically identified with being short of political descendants:

> *Rooted in a particular moment, American Federalism is often conceptualized as a movement with few antecedents and even fewer descendents. Out of step with the general democratization that followed the revolution, it fits awkwardly within the political canon. Yet if Federalist ideals did indeed continue after the party's downfall, and if one were to identify an individual to exemplify the remnants of Federalism in antebellum America, Ralph Waldo Emerson would seem an odd choice (Park, p. 483).*

To a certain extent, this is factual: it would be a hyperbole and a serious misunderstanding to identify Emerson as a Federalist. His dismissal of strict method, glorification of the ordinary man, and unrelenting call to break free from outdated ideas and tradition are regularly conceived as the principles of democracy and the unrestricted nature of Jacksonian America. More to the point, Emerson seldom embarked on actual politics by

keeping himself away from systematic efforts and institutions. Nonetheless, Emerson had his say in opposition to and within a certain political cultured culture.

II. 4. Transcendentalism Infiltrating Politics

In the poem '*Politics'* (1844), Emerson lays emphasis on his idea that America as a fluid state has its individuals as its main consideration. The poem seems to be a motto for the essay "Politics," published also in 1844. Emerson here uses figures from ancient mythology such as Merlin (adviser to King Arthur), and Amphion (in Greek mythology, the son of Zeus) not only to give the poem a sense of timelessness but to put it in the framework of the "perfect state."

When the Church is social Worth,
When the state-house is the hearth,
Then the perfect State is come,
The Republican at home

These last four lines give an image of what Emerson takes as a true balance for the perfect state. The phrase "is come" implies a beginning and relates the "social worth" of the church to the pragmatism of the state-house. In this quatrain, Emerson notifies the special characteristics of the state, and therefore applying the mythic to the specific and the politic.

In his essay "Politics" (1844), Emerson begins with historical remark that every political system was once the initiative of one individual and that the States institutions are not aboriginal though they existed before we were born. For this reason, these institutions are

alterable. While the unaware citizen believes that society and politics are rooted like oak trees to the center;

> *In dealing with the State we ought to remember that its institutions are not aboriginal, though they existed before we were born; that they are not superior to the citizen; that everyone of them was once the act of a single man; every law and usage was a man's expedient to meet a particular case; that they all are imitable, all alterable…Society is an illusion to the young citizen. It lies before him rigid repose, with certain names, men and institutions rooted like oak-trees to the centre, round which all arrange themselves the best they can. But the old statesman knows that society is fluid; there are no such roots and centers, but any particle may suddenly become the centre of the movement and the system to gyrate round it.*

Therefore, Emerson expresses the democratic axiom that the governing body must follow, rather than direct the character of the citizen towards progress. He also asserts that the practice which wins through is the manifestation of what development exists in the population which allowed it;

> *But the wise know that foolish legislation is a rope of sand which perishes in the twisting; that the State must follow and not lead the character and progress of the citizen; the stringer usurper is quickly got rid of; and they only who build on Ideas, build for eternity; and that the form of government which prevails is the expression of cultivation exists in the population which permits it (Complete Works 222).*

But, in another sense, we are recipients of the progress in political theory. Emerson notes that the past laws and revolutions have given birth to two innovative tools of political theory: the first one is the equality of rights of all persons; the second is differential property rights. In ancient societies, the attitudes towards the rights of individuals and of property were rather subjective and random. In modern days, however, these tendencies have been c defied and faced as practices that put the rich in a position that enables them to always have the upper hand over the poor and keep them poor, coupled with the idea that the whole idea of property is detrimental and its effect on people is damaging and harmful. As a response to these issues, most probably, of reformers, Emerson presumes that the only true interest of "the State is persons: that property will always persons." Complete works p 222, Alternatively, the ultimate government is the civilization of men: if people reach that through education, the organizations will share their change for the better, and the ethical outlook will dictate the rules of the state.

Emerson asserts that the government comes out of a particular character and condition of the citizens. He claims that the democratic system is not fundamentally better than the monarchical, which is profoundly entrenched in spiritual history and therefore it is the adequate system for particular circumstances or eras. However, in modern America, democracy is simply better for Americans:

> *Democracy is better for us, because the religious sentiment of the present time accords better with it…Every actual State is corrupt. Good men must not obey the laws too well. What satire on government can equal the severity of ensure conveyed in the word politic, which now for ages has signified cunning, intimating that the state is a trick (Complete works 234).*

Organizations and political parties are a "benign necessity" required by nature. Their foundations are based on instinct and have nothing vicious in their basis. Parties only stand in for interests and principles.

In the political principles, there is always such a complementary of conflicting poles; "centripetal and centrifugal…and each force by its own activity develops the other" (complete works 238). Governments have their foundational point in the moral identity of men. It is by way of some inner resources of truth, justice, and holiness that men currently operate lucidly. The moral norm is that every man's instinct is a satisfactory announcement to him of the character of his equals. Hence people can work together for shared political aspirations. Emerson always gives priority to the political value of personal moral character and the outcome of individual effort. In general terms, moral political character brings about independence, development, and change. He also asserts that the influence of character is still in its early stages with a denunciation of the snobbish senators who have ascended to the summit with no moral basics.

At the end of the essay, Emerson places personal character as the basis of political affairs. His principle of "self-government," from self-reliance gives the individual the compensation and consequence of his own constitution; "The tendencies of the times favor the idea of self-government, and leave the individual, for all code, to the rewards and penalties of his own constitution; which work with more energy than we believe whilst we depend on artificial restraint" (Complete Works 218).

In the earlier versions of Politics starting from 1837, we notice that Emerson brings together in this published 1844 essay topics that are prevalent in his entire vocation. His regular attitude in the first lectures was that the less governed we are the better it is for us. He

spoke about his concept of the great man of character whom he termed as a "prophet" who goes beyond the perspective of the people, embodying a Platonic model of the all-sufficiency of private character. Therefore, the sage of Boston proclaimed that the true government is ever this attitude, that is not only in the spirit of one individual but in the mind of every man, thus such secular regime and its political affairs are impediments. Emerson supposed that character accomplishes itself, yet any advantage to others is simply conditional but not a result intended by the doer. Apart from politics, a man of virtue acts in accordance to his true character not taking into account any practical computations.

In "Politics," Emerson speaks about a more impartial account, seeming doubtful about, for instance, the fanatic communitarian options being expressed in his time, like the denunciation of private property by Henry David Thoreau and the utopian societies of Brook Farm and Fruitland. He notices that since it is difficult to clear up the impartiality of this matter, he is moderately having a tendency to find its solution in our spontaneous defenses. Explicitly, nature will resolve the issue of the protection of possessions and such communities can never tell what is ideal for all people.

Like in "The Conservative," the essay on "Politics" harmonizes Emerson's attitude towards reform politics with worldwide reform. In this essay, he put forward a similar reasoning of compensation to weigh up the strengths of democrat and favor the latter over the conservative party. As power shifts from one party to another, both are tricked by "personality" that supersedes "principle" and both fail as a result. Emerson argues that neither party contributed to the development of science, art, and humanity in a way that matches the nation's resources.

As is the case with most of his writings, "Politics" swings between phrases of shrewd skepticism and refined idealism. These two edges are fused in his sense of the silent unexploited powers of the human soul. Almost since the publication of "Politics" in 1844, Emerson became heavily concerned with the issue of slavery and took part in debates of abolitionism.

II. 5. The Transcendental Approach to Power

The theme of man's potential was central to Emerson's philosophy. In his essay "Power," he did not mean to explain the limits of power, but instead, to put forward the principle that man intrinsically seeks power. The mainstream culture of man does not take into account the most essential elements of nature because they are not familiar with the notion of self-reliance or unique and innovative actions. People that achieve glory, however, seem to have legitimate trait of courage to act excellently: "All power is of one kind, a sharing of the nature of the world. The mind that is parallel with the laws of nature will be in the current of events and strong with their strength. One man is made of the same stuff of which events are made; is in sympathy with the course of things; can predict it" (Emerson: 2012, p.431).

Yet, human life has always witnessed the opposition of good and bad powers:

> *This power, to be sure, is not clothed in satin. 'T is power of Lynch law, of soldiers and pirates; and it bullies the peaceable and loyal. But it brings its own antidote; and here is my point,--that all kinds of power usually emerge at the same time; good energy and bad; power of mind with physical health; the ecstasies of devotion with the exasperation of debauchery (434).*

Nature's exceptional forces are behind the rise of human power. A powerful individual is the result of a shift from savageness to culture. Human power is classified according to the intellectual, moral, and aesthetical aptitudes as contradictory to social and economic recompenses. In his essay "Power" (1860), Emerson speaks of constructive power in a general context where nature is involved in determining the conditions of reaching power.

Here, Emerson takes the search after power as a natural and legitimate quest and combines it with the general principle of "knowledge is power". The highly educated man is the culmination of the work of nature. The idea of upward progression goes hand in hand with his principles of self-reliance and the resemblance of mind and nature.

Emerson argues that most people are not aware of the most essential aspects of nature as they are not used to being self-reliant and spontaneous performers. Men of success, on the other hand, seem to have special qualities of audacity to carry tasks successfully. The mindset of a great achiever is in accordance with the laws of nature. However, life on earth has always witnessed a conflict of power being sometimes in the bad hands.

To this principle of the natural ascension of human life in all its aspects, Emerson adds important details to show us how to use our mental energies:

> *The first is the stopping off decisively our miscellaneous activity and concentrating our force on one or a few points; as the gardener, by severe pruning, forces the sap of the tree into one or two vigorous limbs instead of suffering it to spindle into a sheaf of twigs…you shall take what your brain can, and drop all the rest. Only so can that amount of vital force accumulate which can make the step from knowing to doing (Emerson: 1860, p. 62).*

The intensity of forces, he emphasizes here, is the answer to great influence in political affairs, in conflicts, and in all organizations set up by humans.

II. 6. Morality in Political Thought

In his essay "Politics", Emerson endeavors to prove that the state is not superior to its citizens putting forth the argument that politics and government are put in place for the good of its people. Democracy was proposed to protect individual rights. As a form of ruling, democracy was the product of a type of minds that allowed it to be applicable. In fact, "the moral identity of men" forms the essence of the government. In this essay, Emerson emphasized two main ideas: 'democracy' and 'individualism'. The law is only a memo. Laws and statues change constantly and are the most appropriate way of overcoming all obstacles. Since a democratic government is of the people, for the people, and by the people, the citizens are ought to be in accordance with it that everyone want to take advantage of a system chosen by everyone.

Emerson holds the belief that if the government is not a higher authority, the individual's character and honesty make the most essential principle in society. For him, civilization is just at the beginning and it has the potential to reach out to every place if the ethical forces and innovative intelligence do their preferred role in its expansion.

Being employed, trusted, loved, and respected are fundamental rights every citizen should enjoy within a democratic system. Should this be realized, an ideal government that promotes individual development and defend individual's rights could come out. Governmental organizations can be eliminated only in the case of individuals becoming self-reliant and independent, and this is the only way for democracy to be practiced.

The paradox is that the character has the least impact on society. The political and social system is so tyrannical and irresponsible that the supremacy become destructive in effort to hold on to the chair. If every individual was contented and mixed himself only with peaceful and openhanded people, the true pretentious and insincere politicians would never exist. Therefore, the integrity and character of every individual are part of a cause of a fraudulent organization identified as 'politics.' The notion of right and love can be established only by men with high moral values who have as much faith in themselves as necessary.

Besides, Emerson has reservations about the property rights in politics. Democracy does not control these rights, but they are built on an outstanding scheme. However, since Emerson focuses on supporting the individual, he defends the person rights rather than property rights. The former should be granted greater importance as Emerson puts it:

> *mainly because there is an instinctive sense, however obscure and yet inarticulate, that the whole constitution of property, on its present tenures, is injurious, and its influence on persons deteriorating and degrading; that truly the only interest for the consideration of the State is persons ; that property will always follow persons ; that the highest end of government is the culture of men ; and that if men can be educated, the institutions will share their improvement and the moral sentiment will write the law of the land (Complete Works 230).*

As a result, the appropriate political organization can be established with individuals monopolizing the ownership of their management as a person of the State and triumph over the system that does not estimate the wellbeing of its citizens and their rights. During its brief years spanning from the mid-1830's to the late 1840's, Transcendentalism appeared to invoke

no intimidations to the social and political institutions they went up against. A small group of intellectuals, with Emerson as a main figure can be considered to be at the origin of the eventual upheavals that were on verge of breaking out across the United States.

II. 7. The Making of a Reformer

Having a positive attitude in life and an inclination towards seeing the bright side rather than fishing for the negatives, Emerson saw pain and misery as some sort of illusions that have no absolute or ultimate reality. With a character as such living in a country that experienced a civil war and where slavery was an institution, the comments and the writing on such deep and critical topics were different and everything was seen through a Transcendental scope.

To the widespread opinion, Transcendentalism has always been considered as the other extreme of rationalism. For instance, Nathaniel Hawthorne, who was Emerson's fellow citizen and neighbor, did not support Emerson's transcendental optimism and depicted him as a "mystic stretching his hand of cloudland, in vain search for something real" (Qtd. in, Newton, p.40). As for Melville, there was a reality towards which Emerson's eyes were thickly bandaged.

In fact, Emerson felt that he was in an evolving and prospering world where things should always change for the better; "So fast will disagreeable appearances, swine, spiders, snakes, pests, madhouses, prisons, enemies, vanish; they are temporary and shall be no more seen" (The Complete Works, p.173). In "Friendship," an essay published in 1841, Emerson states the following:

> *Shall I not call God the Beautiful, who daily showeth himself so to me in his gifts? I chide society, I embrace solitude, and yet I am not so ungrateful as not to see the wise, the lovely, and the noble-minded, as from time to time they pass my gate. Who hears me, who understands me, becomes mine, a possession for all time. Nor is nature so poor, but she gives me this joy several times, and thus we weave social threads of our own, a new web of relations; and, as many thoughts in succession substantiate themselves, we shall by and by stand in a new world of our own creation, and no longer strangers and pilgrims in a traditionary globe (Emerson: 1971, pp. 114-115).*

And, in "The American Scholar," an essay published in 1837, Emerson incited his compatriots to rid American culture from European influences and to do away with social bondage and conventional beliefs. The essay was originally an oration delivered at Cambridge, Massachusetts, August 31, 1837, Emerson expressed his high hopes about his homeland and asserted that America was destined for a greater future. This was a decision point in history for America according to him: "Our day of dependence, our long apprenticeship to the learning of other lands, draws to a close" (25). The sage of Boston also hoped that no individual should be a blind devotee to any ideologies or dogmas but to see the world clearly without the impact of any past beliefs or traditions and therefore and encouraging every individual to be an independent thinker.

In his correspondence with Carlyle, Charles Eliot Norton endorsed his 1837 verdict that Emerson and America continued without a care in the world to put the emphasis on the positive in any circumstance. Emerson's thought and poetry may have been appreciated but, their splendor, disconnected from the pain as well as the diversity of the world, seemed in some way merely aesthetic:

> *His serene sweetness, his pure whiteness of his soul, the reflection of his soul in his face, were never more apparent to me; but never before in intercourse with had I been so impressed with the limits of his mind…He can accept nothing as a fact that tells against his dogma. His optimism becomes bigotry, and though of a nobler type than the common American conceit of the pre-eminent excellence of American things as they are, has hardly less of the quality of fatalism. To him this is best of all possible worlds, and the best of all possible times. He refuses to believe in disorder or evil. Order is the absolute law; disorder is but a phenomenon; good is absolute, evil but good in the making…He is the most innocent, the most inexperienced of men who have lived in and reflected on the world (Qtd. in, Mathiessen, p. 1852).*

Norton[6] observed that Emerson's inclination towards seeing life as lovely had led him to ignore rather than defy those who criticized him. Norton rejected Emerson's philosophy though both thinkers had a positive feeling about the eventual outcomes of the Civil War. Emerson considered anything occurring in the world as being part of a worthwhile plan. Emerson's conviction that the world is improving albeit in a slow pace was consistent with Norton's faith that the Civil War would have a huge constructive effect in the United States especially on the North.

Francis Otto Matthiessen, a famous literary critic, who is regarded as the most significant literary critic of the early twentieth century. His seminal study, *American*

[6] Charles Eliot Norton inaugurated the study of art history in America while teaching as Lecturer on the History of the Fine Arts as Connected with Literature at Harvard University from 1874 to 1898. Rennella.M, *The Boston Cosmopolitans: International Travel and American Arts and Letters Palgrave Macmillan, 2008,*pp. 40-41.

Renaissance: Art and expression in the age of Emerson and Whitman, is considered as one of the most important critical works on American literature ever written. Matthiessen wrote a chapter on the vision of evil and asserted that Emerson could not really find words with sufficient power to express his sense of the sanctity of private integrity. He conceived the heart in such real isolation that his hypotheses now seem disconnected from the unpleasing reality:

> *And even when his belief in the free individual was endowed with flesh and blood in the richest poetry yet to have sprung from American soil, in Leaves of Grass, it was destined to call out from Yeats the characteristic view of our own time. Yeats came to feel, in spite of a youthful devotion, that Whitman as well as Emerson have begun to seem superficial, precisely because they lack the Vision of Evil (Mathiessen, p. 180).*

It is very atypical to bring up Emerson as someone who would acknowledge the unpleasing facts of the world except for some statements like those in "Fate," published in 1860: "But let us honestly state the facts. Our America has a bad name for superficialness. Great men, great nations, have not been boasters and buffoons, but perceivers of the terror of life, and have manned themselves to face it" (Emerson: 2004, p.367). As indicated by Matthiessen, Emerson was at times mystified about the discrepancies of the objective truth and the world of man's perception. Therefore, such dilemma showed that Emerson did not know which world to choose as the true one. For instance, in "love," an essay published in 1841, he states: : "Every thing is beautiful seen from the point of the intellect, or as truth. But all is sour, if seen as experience. Details are melancholy; the plan is seemly and noble" (Emerson: 2010, p. 116).

Henry James Sr., the American theologian who had Emerson as a friend did not appreciate Emerson's line of reasoning and was at a loss with Emerson's inconsistent outlook of a shrewd observer to a mere spectator with inability to give the distinct notions any logical correlation. James' argument was Emerson had no conscious, and lived only by insight, which is overall a less spiritual faculty. In addition to this, James argued that this made Emerson to a large extent deceitful to the development and the prosperity of the nation with him unaware of this fact. Perhaps, the most trusted way to be familiar with Emerson's tone with regards to the question of evil is assess the reaction of other sympathetic contemporaries who were authentically involved in it.

James Sr. was not the only observer who considered the way Emerson approached the world as rather disappointing. This judgment, was echoed by both Presbyterian and Catholic, who were cohesive in declaring that Emerson's poems were "hymns to the devil" (Mathiessen, p. 181). For the reason that in their essence, they did not acknowledge the existence of evil as absolute but only superficial. More to the point, some of Emerson's acquaintances such as Father Taylor and insistent Charles Eliot Norton had more or less the same opinion as James Sr.

In a critique of what was in a way termed ill-optimism, Matthiessen brought up Herman Melville's reaction to Transcendentalism despite the latter having a good appreciation for transcendental thought but ultimately rejecting many ideas. Contrary to the principles of "Spiritual Laws," Melville gave his strong response. When Emerson stated that "The good, compared to the evil which he [man] sees, is his own good to his own evil," (Essays & Lectures, p. 164). Melville responded: "A perfectly Good being therefore would see no evil. But what did Christ see? He saw what made him weep…to annihilate all this nonsense, read the sermon on the Mount, and consider what it implies" (Mathiessen, p.183).

Melville had been provoked beforehand by the related assertion that the question of unpleasantness is explained and given a solution to by the Poet who "reattaches things to nature and the Whole, reattaching even artificial things and violations of nature, to nature, by a deeper insight, disposes very easily of the most disagreeable facts" (Emerson: 1925, p. 76).

When Norton came back to America in 1873, he devoted his efforts to assessment of what he described as the perilous outcome of Emersonian "fatalism" on the republic. In a case of a drearily real moral setback of the American governing body during Reconstruction, Emerson's sensitive far-reaching statements sounded more and more dangerous to Norton for the reason that they would merely endorse the waning efforts of any inclination that Americans had to further their progress through beneficial self-criticism and, especially, self-awareness. Shortly after his journey across the Atlantic with Emerson, Norton recorded a passage in his journal disapproving of Emerson's exaggeration in insisting on self-reliance:

> *But such inveterate and persistent optimism, though it may show only its pleasant side in such a character as Emerson's is dangerous doctrine for a people. It degenerates into fatalistic indifference to moral considerations, and to personal responsibilities; it is at the root of much of the irrational sentimentalism in our American politics, of much of our national disregard of honour in our public men, of much of our unwillingness to accept hard truths, and of much of the common tendency to disregard the distinctions between right and wrong, and to execute guilt on the plea of good intentions or good nature (Renella Mark, p.43).*

On the whole, Norton's acquaintance with Emerson caused him to be against what he perceived as a disinclination of Americans to not holding themselves responsible for their

actions in addition to their failure to observe and deal with the challenging moral situations coming out to them in the post-Civil War world. As per Rennella, the most troubling aspect of Emerson's thought during the 1870's was that it did not succeed in doing anything to amend the culture of American materialism, especially in its fast pace of expansion in the particularly new environment in what could be labeled as the Gilded Age (Ibid).

As maintained by some critics, multiple passages from Emerson's writings tackle unrealistic expectations. For instance, in the essay "Friendship," Emerson says: "But a friend is a sane man who exercises not my ingenuity but me. My friend gives me entertainment without requiring any stipulation on my part. A friend, therefore, is a sort of paradox in nature" (Emerson: 1971, p. 120). This idea shows that Emerson was unaware of about the true nature of human relationships. He supposes that friendship can be set up with the contribution of one individual. Thus Emerson spoke of a friendship that exist in his idealistic thoughts, which would not sound rational to someone who is truly aware of how friendships function.

In addition, Emerson recorded in his works that nature bestowed beautiful feelings on him and that it was a home of everlasting happiness where evil could not have an absolute effect on him. His essay "Nature" is where his cheerfulness attains its culmination. Therefore, he made critics assume that his unrealistic presentation of his view to the world ensured his presence in a world of fantasy.

Denigrating comments on Emerson's failure to recognize the existence of evil are usually composed with, or concealed with, patronizing interpretations of his cool buoyancy.[7]

[7]"While the New Critics and critics who followed after them have launched these twin critiques (often in tandem), there have been a variety of contentious debates—some supplementing the censorious early readings, some aiming to revise and overturn them…in fact to Emerson's own time, among his

Augustine Birrel, an English politician and writer, backed the criticism of this affirmed aspect of Emerson's publications in the late 1880's, for example when he stated: "In his treatment of literary subject, we miss the purely human touch" (Ibid. p.11).

The series of criticism targeted at this criterion of Emerson's thought went on to the end of the twentieth century. Scholars throughout the twentieth century remained both captivated and uneasy by Emerson's approach to evil. Cornel West, in his book, *The American Evasion of Philosophy* stated that mysticism did not push Emerson to put in too much of his energy in the direct outcomes of human efforts. It consents to downplay injustice, suffering, and helplessness in the world and stay satisfied with the least refusal to go along with evil (West, p.24).[8] In fact, there are numerous destructive critiques of Emerson's oblivion to suffering and injustice.

II. 8. Emerson's Support for Lincoln

Emerson had followed President Lincoln's course with the highest interest and agreement till his assassination on the 15th April, 1865, and four days later, he had to attend a meeting held in Concord to deliver a speech as a form of tribute to the fresh loss of the Savior of the Union. He delivered an address that evoked the war, the triumph of the North, and his

contemporaries…John Ruskin, who we find in *Time and Tide* (1867) censoring both 'great teachers' (as he called them) Carlyle and Emerson, among others: "none of them seem to me yet to have enough insisted on the inevitable power and infectiousness of all evil, and the easy and utter extinguishableness of good. Medicine often fails of its effect—but poison never". La Rocca David *Estimating Emerson*: *An Anthology of Criticism from Carlyle to Cavell* A&C Black, 2013. p. 10-11.

[8]West. Cornel, *The American Evasion of Philosophy*: *A Genealogy of Pragmatism* University of Wisconsin Press, 9 may 1989, p. 24.

admiration of Lincoln, and insisting that the meeting is taking place "under the gloom of a calamity which darkens down over the minds of good men in all civil society."

> *Emerson's support for president Lincoln was lukewarm until Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation in September 1862. Until that point, Emerson was even ambivalent about the war, as he insisted that the preservation of the Union was of far less concern than the emancipation of the slaves. In fact, he and his second wife, Lidian, forbade their son to enter the Union army until the Emancipation Proclamation was signed. After that historic turning point, Emerson became a staunch supporter of the war effort and gave his son permission to enlist* (Journal of Speculative Philosophy, p. 8).

The death of Lincoln was such a loss that it was seen from Emerson's perspective as one that possibly no other death "has caused so much pain to mankind as this has caused, or will cause, on its announcement." The president was "the most active and hopeful of men, and his work had not perished; but acclamation of praise for the task he had accomplished burst out into a song of triumph, which even tears his death cannot keep down." The president was American in every sense, and had not set sail to another continent, "had never been spoiled by English insularity or French dissipation." He was a "quite native, aboriginal man…a plain man of the people, an extraordinary fortune attended him." A man with a "strong sense of duty," which was not difficult for him to follow.

This fair-minded man was naturally tolerant and accessible to everyone and "his occupying the chair of state was a triumph of the good sense of mankind, and of the public conscience" on whose compassion "a whole race was thrown." In an objective description of Lincoln's presidency, he underlines the qualities that made him the most suitable person for the situation, as this "middle-class country had got a middle-class president at last." But only

in "manners and sympathies" was he middle-class, as for power, his was superior." This man was raised in accordance with a specific necessity that is why he understood the trouble of the day, and as the issue developed, so did his perception of it. It is so exceptional that a man would fit the circumstances so pertinently, amidst the threats and distrust and "if ever a man was fairly tested he was." He stood tall heroically in an epoch of heroes and was himself the "true history of the American people in his time." Passing away after a practical abolition of slavery is a "far happier fate" than living to see "the decay of his own faculties." He had lived long enough to see the laws supported by the people becoming effective.

When taking the death of the president from a romantic perspective, or a transcendental one in the American context, it was Heaven showing that he served his country even more after he departed. This view is further extended by Emerson;

> *There is a serene providence which rules the fate of nations, which makes little account of time, little of one generation or race, makes no account of disasters, conquers alike by what is called defeat, or what is called victory, thrusts aside enemy and obstruction, crushes everything immoral as inhuman, and obtains the ultimate triumph of the best race by the sacrifice of everything which resists the moral laws of the world. It makes its own instruments, creates the man of the time, trains him in poverty, inspires his genius, and arms him for his task. It has given every race its own talent, and ordains that only that race which combines perfectly with the virtues of all shall endure (156).*

The shocking departure of the hero of the nation did not go against the laws of nature from a Transcendental approach, but it added a special value to the efforts of the president in uniting the nation under one principle of freedom for all. His death will continue to serve the

nation and inspire new generations to whom his spirit was handed over. That is the natural type of conclusion for a man who lived only for great challenges and whose legacy will last more than the fifty six years he spent in this world and, in general, "the war gave back integrity to this erring and immoral nation. It charged with power, peaceful amiable man, to whose life war and discord were abhorrent."

Some two years later, his rhetoric became even more relaxed when delivering his Phi Beta Kappa address of 1867. The tone this time reflected definitely his happiness about the success of the war, and his great expectations of the future of the American people. He assumed that the joy of having the Federal Union prevailing was shared by every "good citizen." The joy is still felt by all Americans because the nation has survived "the rude trial" which put its very existence in peril. The public should now be happy for inheriting a land that honored them with the resilience of its heroes (157).

Emerson has always criticized the national vices and transgressions and on no account had he failed to see the all flaws and shortcomings. The true attitude of a believer in the Republic has shown on him in high degree; and, deeper than any idea of another American thinker, he had an insight into the future of the country. He was a visionary in every sense, owing to his background of a great reader of German idealism, English Romanticism, mysticism, and Indian philosophy. With his prophetic genius, he believed in America wholeheartedly, in her legacy, her potential, and her promising destiny. His faith in the American idea was unmatched. In all his earlier lectures, he evoked the importance of establishing an American character with American traits instead of importing the intellectual culture from one country, and the responsibilities from another.

In "Fortune of the Republic", first delivered in Boston in 1863, and published in *Miscellanies* (1884, 1904), he classifies the war within the framework of a global issue for worldwide human rights, the results of which will have an impact on the destiny of humanity. He then alerts against letting the lack of concern and hopelessness of the day to encourage the movement to opt for a quick and thoughtless peace accord, "on any terms." He emphasized the importance of maintaining the mood of struggle, till reaching the ultimate goals, which would naturally consist of the complete abolition of slavery. One of the potential obstacles to realizing this end was the unstated support that Great Britain, the undisputed global power at the time, was giving to the Confederacy. Emerson sensed that wealthy elite in England was supportive of the mutineers as they felt that American democracy was putting their aristocratic institutions and their interest in cotton trade at stake. For him, when it comes to economics, England's religion and morals are overlooked. He was especially pointing the finger at the British intellectuals, with his friend Thomas Carlyle at the frontline, who backed this malicious strategy.

He then continues to affirm that history has recorded that there have uprisings which did not favor feudalism and barbarism, but were for the interest of society. Such revolutions were marked by principle, hinting at the progress that occurred after the Southerners became no longer part of the Congress. And, as a consequence of Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation, the country has started "to strike off the chains which snuffling hypocrites have bound on the weaker race" (Qtd., in Wayne 109). The idea that liberty, equality, and social justice are natural rights no matter the race started to take shape. Undoubtedly, nothing as such could have become concrete had it not been for the war.

Developments at the political level have also been fostered by the war. Lincoln, a man of the middle class, for his part, turned out to be a true president of the people, a practical

incarnation of the fundamental democratic notion "that the government should be of the people, by the people, and for the people." This principle, Emerson asserts, has seen the light under Lincoln, way more than under the preceding government, and relatively the politics of Europe are still "Feudal."

In view of all the development of the republic, to end unfriendliness now, to go back the misery of slavery and social discrimination, would be beyond doubt disastrous. The nation is witnessing a great revolution, endorsing the attitude of the Puritans, "passing out of old remainders of barbarism into pure Christianity and humanity, into freedom of thought, of religion, of speech, of the press, of trade, of suffrage, or political right." He reassures his fellow countrymen that American democracy is growing to be more liberal and progressive and that victory should stretch further.

Humanity wants a government that would not feel uncomfortable to be caring and protective; "but that democratic institutions shall be more thoughtful for the interests of women, for the training of children, for care of sick and unable persons and serious care of criminals, than was ever any the best government of the old world" (109-10). Emerson never ceases to list the advances that America has had compared to the old world, England in particular. There is a huge difference between this image of America and that of the slave holders. He reminds the apologists that it is useless to suppose that the war was not inevitable by the North, or, that both parties are not right because the difference between the two is perpetual. It is a difference of principled and unprincipled purposes.

Emerson wraps up the address with a serious but positive mood. America is currently at a crucial time which will have far-reaching consequences. The conclusion of the confrontation will decide the eventual course of democracy not in America alone but in the

rest of the world. He admits that the price of the war high but the consequences went into the favor of freedom. Possibly another generation is still to be sacrificed and the dawn of equal rights shall come thereafter. He notifies his audience that the times are hard, but epic as the war supports them to become bighearted.

His greatest Transcendental outlook is of a renewed America where everyone will toil for sincere humanity, for the underprivileged, for fairness, brilliance, and the common good. Just then, this possibly great country will eventually turn into what it was meant to be, a "great charity of God to the human race." This political philosophy came straightforwardly from his Transcendentalism. It is the idea of the Over-Soul that inspired the faith in human equality for it is all people commonly share, a patently obvious reality expressed eloquently by the Founding Fathers.

Emerson's antislavery career culminated in "Fortune of the Republic" that is by far his explicitly political address. There were big local issues when he gave this speech. The fate of democracy and the value of human equality are to be decided by the results of the war. In the case when Lincoln would not be reelected, then the moral advancement that the nation has reached on the road to worldwide emancipation, social equality, and civil right would go in vain. As the war started, he was reassured that it would ultimately be confirmed to be the nation's tool for a moral renaissance.

In several of his previous lectures such as "Civilization a Pinch" (1861), he had endorsed his Transcendental principles of universal freedom and equality that are manifest in "Fortune of the Republic," and when Lincoln was reelected in 1864, Emerson was overjoyed. This event was perceived by him as a victory for the whole world, "Seldom in history was so

much staked on a popular vote, I suppose never in history" (110-11). Every word he stated about the result of the election bore a celebratory tone.

In the autumn of 1864, he expressed his views about the reelection of Lincoln while delivering a lecture on "Education." At the start, as he evoked American life, he stated that voters have given their say "that the nation shall be a nation, not a mere meeting and parting" and that "the unity" of "the country must be sustained by force; such is the decision by the people sobered by the calamities of war, the immense loss of life, the heavy burdens of taxation." Tackling the educating aspect of the war, he insists that every American citizen is aware of "the issues at stake, is ready to debate them, considers them a personal matter. All know that America means freedom, opportunity," and "power" (Qtd., in Cooke 1982: 156). A year later, he spoke at the Harvard Commencement festival, and said that the war restored integrity to the misguided and decadent nation. "It charged with power, peaceful, amiable men, to whose life war and discord were abhorrent."

The success of the war was rejoiced in a much explicit way in his Phi Beta Kappa address of 1867, and showed how optimistic he was about the future of the American nation. Now every true citizen should share "the wonderful prosperity of the Federal Union. The heart still beats with the public pulse, of joy, that the country" has survived the tough test that put its existence at risk, "and thrills with the vast augmentation of strength which it draws from this proof. The storm which has been resisted is a crown of honor, and a pledge of the strength to the ship. We may well be contended with our fair inheritance" (156-57). On Emerson's involvements and writings in the context of war and social reform, critic George Willis Cooke said:

> *As a critic faithful in pointing out the conditions and methods of social and moral progress, we owe him a debt we can never repay but by acceptance of his teachings. He has been a true critic, because recognizing the absolute foundations on which all truth of conduct must rest. He has tried to lift us to the "the ways and manners of the sky," infusing into our life, our thought, and our literature a pure and a lofty sense of human responsibility (158).*

The political arguments that entangle Emerson from the late 1830s onwards were indicated by his unorthodox theological moves outside the then-orthodox Unitarianism of his time. In *Emerson: The Mind on Fire*, 1995, Richardson accomplishes a good wok by redefining the theological climate of the day and stays away from the familiar oversight of portraying Unitarianism only with damaging terms. It should be noted that the Unitarian movement generated some of the most eloquent abolitionists and supporters of woman's rights in the nineteenth century, and that twentieth-century liberalism would be improbable if we disregard the continuous involvement of this essential social and religious association.

Chapter Three

Slavery from a Transcendental Scope

Chapter III. Slavery from a Transcendental Scope

III. 1. Introduction:

"If you put a chain around the neck of a slave, the other end fastens itself around your own."
—Ralph Waldo Emerson

Although Transcendentalists commonly insist on the idea that reforms of society must start within the individual sense of right and wrong, they also understood that the deep-rooted institution of slavery necessitated an immediate action, particularly when it straightforwardly concerned Massachusetts. When the Fugitive Slave Act was passed, Boston's Vigilance Committee circulated thousands of copies of posters to warn colored people of the watchmen and police officers who were empowered to act as kidnappers and slave catchers.

Emerson had paid a visit to slave-holding territories when he took a trip to the South in 1826-27, and he personally came across the scandalous treatment of numerous human beings. Emerson spoke against slave trade as early as the 1830s. And, in 1832, when he became a minister of the Second Church of Boston, he opened his podium to anti-slavery orators. In 1844, he gave an inspiring in Concord on the abolition of slavery in the British West Indies.

When Congress passed the Fugitive Slave Act in 150, Emerson did not tolerate it. He considered this law, which asked for the return of "runaway slaves" from any part of the country and banned helping them, a national tragedy. It was shocking and scandalous for Emerson who wrote:

> *This filthy act was made in the nineteenth century, by people who could read and write. I will not obey it, by God….This is a case of conscience, a call for compassion, a call for mercy. Slavery poisons and depraves everything it touches….Union is a delectable thing, and so is wealth, and so is life, but they may all cost too much, if they cost honour (Qtd. in, Paul C, p.26).*

Emerson spoke publically against slavery in Boston, Concord, and other venues; he put out many essays and poems that were extensively read; he donated money to abolitionists and welcomed John Brown, Angelina, and Sarah Grimké in his home. And for those who remained indifferent regarding the subject he wrote:

> *If it shall turn out, as desponding men say, that our people do not really care whether Boston is a slave port or not, provided our trade thrives, then we may at least cease to dread hard times and ruin. It is high time our bad wealth came to an end. I am sure I shall very cheerfully take my share of suffering in the ruin of such a prosperity, and shall very willingly turn to the mountains to chop wood and seek to find for myself and my children labors compatible with freedom and honor.*[9]

Most particular way but namely through reading and writing about the topic. During the 1840s and 1850s, Emerson spoke his mind openly about the institution of slavery and published many essays on the issue. However, he was never convinced enough to be part of any antislavery association all under the principle of prioritizing self-reform. This line of

[9] Boston (Mass). Citizens, Samuel Gridly Howe, Address of the Committee Appointed by a Public Meeting: Held at Faneuil Hall, September 24, 1846, for the Purpose of Considering the Recent Case of Kidnapping from our Soil, and of Taking Measures to Prevent the Recurrence of Similar Outrages, White & Potter, printers, 1846. p. 31.

reasoning is prevalent in his many writings about reform such as the emancipation of slaves and women's rights.

Scholars have long questioned Emerson's involvement in the abolition movement and the extent to which he was devoted to the antislavery issue. Some early assessors labeled him as a keen social reformer, whereas others have considered him an introspective fantasist, kindly detached from the chaotic reform efforts. Thus, in the aim of understanding Emerson's antislavery position, it is very important to trace the development of Emerson's thought through an analysis of his reactions to the social issues that were in some way the outcome of the institution of slavery.

Throughout the 1840's and 1850's, Emerson spoke openly about slavery in multiple circumstances and wrote a number of essays on the subject. The majority of the Transcendentalists were, by some means, part of the abolitionist movement. Nevertheless, Emerson rejected being part of any anti-slavery organization, arguing that true reform starts with self-reform. In 1848, Emerson was among those irritated over the Boston court case against the fugitive slave, Anthony Burns. In 1863, he delivered a mid-Civil War address, 'Fortune of the Republic' with the purpose of backing President's Lincoln's twofold ambitions of maintaining the Union and the complete eradication of slavery in the United States.

This chapter explores Emerson's private prejudices against blacks while he also publicly championed their causes. Such juxtaposition freshly charts the evolution of Emerson's slow but steady application of his early neo-idealism to emancipating blacks. His shift from philosopher to active reformer had lasting effects not only in America but also abroad.

In the U.S, Emerson influenced such diverse figures as Thoreau, Whitman, Dickinson and William James, and in Europe Mickiewicz, Wilde, Kipling, Nietzsche, and Camus, as well as many leading followers in India and Japan. This chapter also includes the nineteenth century roots of the seismic social changes.

In the 1841 essay "Self-Reliance", Emerson presupposed a democratic society of free and equal individuals, a romanticized America with a curtain concealing the horrors of slavery. But, the more his dedication to antislavery grew the more he inquired about ways to find the middle ground between his principles of self-reliance and a well thought-out political action required to abolish slavery.

Contemporary scholarship has reassessed the formerly dominant idea of Emerson as disconnected from politics and unconcerned with abolitionism. Though he took part in it, Emerson regarded anti-slavery activism as an interruption to his own proper efforts of "freeing imprisoned spirits, imprisoned thoughts, far back in the brain of man" (Emerson: 1960, p.80). With their proactive interest in a cause, abolitionists gave Emerson the impression that they only have a "platform existence, and no personality." His principles of self-reliance favored individual over collective action. Emerson was truly doing well in fusing self-reliance with abolitionism when he appealed to opposing the Fugitive Slave Law: anyone who refused to accept the law showed self-reliance in the way Emerson wanted it to be.

Apart from the Fugitive Slave Law, Emerson's principles of Self-Reliance did not offer a comprehensible advice to argue against slavery. His backing of a diplomatic, remunerated emancipation within an integral Union was incompatible with his backing of the brutal procedures of John Brown, who he proudly regarded as the example of the American self-reliant.

III. 3. Emerson's Antislavery Background

Emerson's religious and social experiences make it clear why, at the beginning of his career, refused to be part of any reform in general and the movements of abolitionists in particular. A direct descendent of a Unitarian clergyman and a Unitarian minister himself, at his debut as a writer, he inescapably mirrored some of the essential belief and opinions familiar in the Boston Church; "Unitarians were conservative, believers in providential arrangements of society, believers in respectability, in class distinctions." (O.B Frothingham, quoted in Joel Myerson p.183).

The mainstream Unitarian minister, with his contempt for controversial subjects and disgust of strong eagerness and radicalism, turned away from the uncompromising abolitionists and other fanatical reformers as a group of fools who would deliberately cause the collapse of the entire society to establish their purpose. Emerson was left with this outlook and the reserved character that was common among Unitarians, and as a fresh clergyman in Boston prior to his renowned publications, mirrored the customary Unitarian critique of mass reform groups. His personal views were even more unsympathetic as he described them as a detestable group. Much of this Unitarian spirit, as much moody as intellectual, would stick with him to the end of his days. He would never tolerate partisan politics or any association that asked for commitment to a predefined system of governance.

However, other characteristics on New England Unitarian tradition could further abandon the inbuilt conformist inclination. When the early Unitarians split from the Congregational Church in the early period of the first half of the nineteenth century, they did it very unenthusiastically and were cautious to argue with thoughtful politesse, but they showed a strong reform inclination right from their foundation. Enthusiasm for conscience,

self-culture, and freedom of spirit offered a prolific space where social reform looked set to be executed. Furthermore, the concept of social conscientiousness that was inbuilt in the Unitarian Church was a motivational element for the reform spirit.

Unitarian ministers and the commoners featured prevalently in the peace movements, in jail reform, and other civilizing causes that appeared in the first five decades of the nineteenth century when immigration was on the increase and so was urbanization and industrialization that changed the face of America forever. This transformation generated a sort of social problems that made the lightweight individual and the old methods old-fashioned and unpractical. The first and most renowned head of the Unitarian Church, William Ellery Channing, attempted to reach the utmost in liberal reform without completely dismissing his Congregational heritage. In publishing his thin volume, *Slavery 1835*, Channing gave his prominent status as the most cherished religious orator of the era, in the face of the acute mistrust of the radicals.

Emerson as well as other Transcendentalists like Theodore Parker and George Ripley held a great esteem for Channing, whom they considered as the senior statesman of liberal faith. Many of the second-generation Unitarian leaders who grew to become Transcendentalist, together with Emerson and Parker, would copy a mentor like Channing in going about little by little in tackling the slavery problem. Yet, as an assembly, they would go after and then do better than their advisers in many reform grounds.

The Transcendental Club became a space to discuss the ways in which church and society should be reformed. The urge for reform from inside the group led to the trial of a utopian society at Brook Farm (1841-1847), with Ripley as its founder after his resignation from the Unitarian ministry. In a campaign against slavery, the Transcendentalist loop had as

models other ministerial associates such as Charles Follen and Samuel J. Mary. Emerson's colleague and intimate friend, William Henry Furness, became more and more enthusiastic in his backing of the antislavery campaign. One of the most open New England abolitionists, Lydia Maria Child, was a sibling of a Unitarian minister Convers Francis, at times a mediator of the Transcendental Club gatherings. Such links could be increased almost continuously. It is safe to state that an all-embracing, ever-growing set of connections of reform and abolitionists linked Emerson to the antislavery cause in numerous ways.

More to the point, another set of personal contacts to oppose slavery would be the outcome of his resignation from the Second Church of Boston. Though this move alienated him from a direct contact with the space of Boston antislavery in addition to the Boston black society, it gave him the opportunity to deal with the slavery cause from within a close circle.

Numerous Concord neighbors as well as friends of Emerson were supportive of the fight against slavery for the three decades that followed. The Concord Female Anti-Slavery Society engaged in the fight against slavery at a local level, endorsing the cause with the organization of meetings, delivering written works, funding lectures, and assisting other activities, as well as protecting fugitive slaves:

> *Following the lead of British women a decade earlier, women in the United States began organizing in the 1830s: by 1838, hundreds of women's antislavery societies, with a total membership of over six thousand, were meeting regularly to plan local efforts that would yield tangible political results in the war to end American slavery. From Cincinnati to Boston to Salem to Philadelphia, and numerous small towns in between, women made their voices heard. Only recently, however, have scholars begun to scrutinize*

> *the specific accomplishments of these organizations and to identify and credit individual women for their groundbreaking activism. (Petrulionis, p. 385)*[10]

The Concord Lyceum[11] often called on antislavery activists to deliver speeches, and at times it was Emerson who wrote the invitations. Concordians were frequent readers of William Lloyd Garrison's[12] *Liberator*. His fellow citizens, mainly those with in a good position to interfere effectively, helped slaves out in the most decent ways, taking them into their own homes and guiding them to find their next targets. Among the prominent figures who visited Concord was abolitionist John Brown to seek assistance for his audacious undertaking:

> *F. B. Sanborn, later Emerson biographer, joined the so-called Secret Six conspirators who helped raise funds that John Brown used for his 1859 raid on the federal arsenal at Harpers Ferry. As with Emerson's connections to Unitarian antislavery figures, his Concord connections multiplied his links to the antislavery figures, his Concord connections multiplied his links to the antislavery network almost indefinitely. (Myerson, p. 186).*

Emerson's family provided a space of an antislavery mood with his step grandfather, Ezra Ripley, Concord minister and a subscriber to the Middlesex County Anti-Slavery

[10]Sandra HarbertPetrulionis « *Swelling That Great Tide of Humanity »: The Concord, Massachusetts, Female Anti-Slavery Society,* The New England Quarterly Vol 74, No. 3 (Sep., 2001) p. 385.
[11] The lyceum movement is considered to be a true product of the New England mind, and in New England there is no lyceum which surpassed in success and prominence the Concord Lyceum.
[12] In 1833, abolitionist leader William Lloyd Garrison predicted that "the destiny of the slaves is in the hands of American women, and complete emancipation can never take place without their co-operation." Sandra HarbertPetrulionis, p. 385.

Society,[13] criticized slavery openly in the 1830s. Mary Moody Emerson, the intellectual aunt was in constant disagreement with the institution of slavery and the impact she left on her nephew, Emerson, was so deep. She often convinced him and even planned breakfast for the British abolitionist, George Thompson, who came as a guest, at Emerson's safe home. Around the same period, his elder brother Charles delivered an antislavery speech in Concord, and the pair of brothers backed British writer Harriet Martineau following her provocation of huge wave of criticism when she outspokenly sided with the abolitionists. Another member of the Concord Female Anti-Slavery Society was Emerson's second wife, Lidian likening the wives of other Concord's influential figures such as Thoreau.

Owing to his liberal-Unitarian background, his enlightened personal contacts in Concord, and his family record of commitment to the cause, antislavery was an essential element in Emerson's setting. Naturally, the theme of slavery feature with a significant consistency in both public and private Emerson's writings starting from 1821.

III. 3. Adhering to the Cause 1837-1843

Emerson's interest in antislavery was not recognized because the emphasis was put mainly on words, images, figures of speech and other literary elements of his writings. Thus the attention of critics was narrowed to texts instead of putting them into the context of

[13] The plight of blacks had long concerned the Emerson family. Emerson's father, William, despite his modest income, had helped to maintain the Smith School in Boston, which provided free education "for colored children of both sexes," from 1789 until his death in 1811. Len Gougeon, *Abolition, Emersons, and 1837*.The New England Qurterly Vol. 54, No. 3 (Sep., 1981) p. 345.

antebellum culture.[14] This limited view to Emerson's works on such topics as slavery and reform was due to the focus on his prior most compactly poetical works and the disregard of the religious, political, and social aspects of his literary creation made the latter sound detached from the fast changing society of the time. Hence, Emerson as an intellectual was detached from his cultural world but these views started to change since the 1860s:

> *The rise of social history and cultural studies greatly expanded the field of vision of both the historical and the English professions and in the process helped to break down the wall between two disciplines. This development has made it possible to examine how Emerson's life and ideas are woven into the fabric of his time and how important Emersonian threads have been to developing patterns of idealism in antebellum culture (Myerson 181).*

As the outbreak of a civil war was looming, Emerson shared the stage with abolitionists on multiple occasions, but he disapprovingly distanced himself from them. In fact, that was his attitude with reformers whom he described as bitter or sterile people as well as his intense disgust in being part of the political stage.

Emerson's career path and his concern with the slavery causes gives another justification of why he was taken as indifferent towards the antislavery campaign. The debut of his career marked by works such as Nature (1836), and Essays: Second Series (1844) barely suggest a direct concern with the problems of his society. Thus the works published in the first ten years of his writing career as an essayist were drafted before he had built up a greater activist attitude and when revolutionary abolitionists formed a broadly despicable strident minority.

[14]The Antebellum Period in American history is generally considered to be the period before the Civil War and after the War of 1812, although some historians expand it to all the years from the adoption of the Constitution in 1789 to the beginning of the Civil War.

Emerson's standpoint started to change increasingly till the point when the passage the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850 stimulated a more extremist attitude and a further involvement in the fight against slavery. Emerson presented many of his notable lectures on the issue of slavery in the span of twenty years after the passage of the new law, a time of his career that in recent times has been relatively given the least consideration. These later works put forth a far more radical position:

> *Almost all of his [Emerson] contributions are occasional pieces arising in response to a news public conflict over slavery. But taken together with statements by Emerson for which no manuscript or printed copy survives and with the many passages concerned with slavery in his letters and journals, they show Emerson's intense devotion to the American ideals of liberty and freedom transforming him into a passionate advocate for the abolition of slavery (Myerson 181-2).*

Therefore, Emerson is shown reflecting often and profoundly on slavery, taking part in abolition public meetings, and exchanging letters and discussing with many abolitionist friends and social contacts. By the 1840s, Emerson had developed to be the actual spiritual leader from whom many Americans, Northerners in particular, sought instruction and inspiration. Emerson's enthusiastic defense of idealism, with its appeal to higher principles and its great consideration for personal conscience over the conventional laws approved by society, inspired many Americans to have reservations about the governmental rules and to put into effect values that surpassed, and frequently at odds with, those established in the political, economic, social, and even spiritual fields. Emerson filled a void in American culture. (Joel Myerson 183).

The urge for the involvement in the antislavery cause provoked by Emerson's milieu did not naturally make of him an antislavery advocate. However, the several influences of family, colleagues, neighbors alongside his developing sense of commitment towards his nation and his position as a spokesperson for idealism, were to direct him inevitably towards the antislavery movement.

"The American Scholar," an address delivered before Harvard University's Phi Beta Kappa Society in 1837, explains though implicitly how aspects of Emerson's life and ideas relate to social activism on the whole and slavery specifically during the beginning of his career. The address, though reservedly, had a lot to tell us about Emerson establishing himself in the arena of reform and explains the conflicts that were to go on to determine his lasting but undecided association with abolitionism. As a way of defining the real scholar, Emerson proposed a role of poet-philosopher-scholar who would require sheer intellectual freedom in addition to long periods of reflection away from basic needs of normal life. The free spirit necessitated an independence to flee the undermining impact of traditionalism; without this sort of individualism, the poet-scholar would be reduced into a book lover or a pedant.

Though Emerson put absolute freedom of mind and a fundamentally art-for-art's sake outlook in one part of his rule, on the other he put the principle of duty. The notions of duty and work were firmly established in his background and psyche. Other than the customary duties given to the scholar to recall the past and learn from it, the real scholar for Emerson was to take up the role of a priest, a prophet, and a poet at a time. This outlining of such a highly social responsibility makes it clear that his ministerial heritage was a prime source of his inclinations. The consequential friction between the incompatible demands of Emerson's productive mastermind for remoteness and detachment and the exigency of his public

responsibility as guide and shaper of opinions in his society and elsewhere would continue to mark out and harass Emerson all the way through his professional life.

It is no surprise that the sermon delivered in 1837, his first open statement on antislavery, almost coincided with the period of the delivery of such great addresses as "The American Scholar" and even the more uncompromising "Divinity School Address" (1838). During this world-shattering period, Emerson was distancing himself from the tradition responsibility he had assumed, and then soon found unbearable. However, having earned a neutral position towards the ministerial tasks, Emerson was not keen on giving it up for a cause or a movement. Even as he valued the waves of change for the reason that they were founded on a basis of divine ideals, he was disinclined to invest his efforts in a limited department. It was until 1844 that Emerson became disposed to deliver another public address on antislavery that unsurprisingly coincided with the tenth anniversary of the Emancipation of the slaves in the British West Indies on 1 August 1834; "The program of antislavery lectures scheduled that day in Concord was one of many such events throughout New England. Both the Fourth of July and the first of August had become annual events in the abolitionist calendar. They were natural occasions for attacking the contradictions between America's professed ideals and its actual practices" (Joel Myerson 189).

By that time, Emerson could no longer hold it out and remain uninvolved in the antislavery debate. He had turned out to be the most influential intellectual in his region, and the American spokesman for American idealism. A lot of fellow countrymen counted on his insightful opinions on matters of importance to the American troubled society. More to the point, by 1844, Emerson had been hammered by fierce criticism after the delivery of "Divinity School Address" giving him a direct experience of nature of American society and its sensitive and emotional reactions to revolutionary ideas. The incident changed Emerson's

outlook on his own society. He was now associated to the abolitionists by the denouncement he went through by a lot of similar responding voices of his own society that had been expressing disapproval of the antislavery movements. It then became out of the question for him to remain with the mental block that he created between himself and those voices.

Furthermore, by 1844, it had become improbable to remain voiceless without giving the impression of closing your eyes to the maintenance of slavery, particularly with the annexation of Texas that was on the agenda and that would give more ground for slavery to spread westward. When asked by his countrymen on the question of the West Indies emancipation, he could not turn it down without being seen unsympathetic to the historic shift and the prevalence of moral principles.

The historical and commemorative characteristics of 1 August anniversary offered Emerson a great chance to tackle the problem of slavery in a manner that goes with his instinct;

> *From Thomas Clarkson's History of the Rise and Progress, and Accomplishment of the Abolition of the African Slave Trade by the British Parliament (1808) and James J.Thome and J. Horace Kimball's Emancipation in the West Indies…(1838) he got many vivid details of the sordid history of brutality and oppression in the slave trade, as well as the triumphant story of protest and eventual emancipation in the British West Indies (Joel Myerson 190).*

Works as such stimulated Emerson to open his eyes to the true evil of slavery and to the humiliation of the slave and affected him so as to develop a sincere admiration for the brave endeavors of the slave's advocates. He endorsed his sources in listing the shocks and awfulness of the slave trade and slavery in the West Indies with the earnest disgust of an

antislavery campaigner. The lecture also offered a short record of the antislavery campaign and brief biographies of the brave campaigner who were the forerunners to put an end to the slave trade and slavery. His acknowledgment of the English leaders held none of his familiar criticism of abolitionists.

The essential principles of Emerson's disagreement with the institution of slavery in his lecture were to develop into the basis of all his imminent declarations on the matter. Similar to Frederick Douglass and other abolitionists, whether black or white, Emerson declined what numerous activists considered as the ultimate method to assessing slavery, explicitly, that its principles could be defined through examination and mere estimates. Encouraged by the forced manners and statements of slaves and by racially prejudiced claims, this sort of moral statistical slavery defenders to claim that the mistreatments in the institutions were exceptions and that slavery was not the harsh and horrendous institution, as the abolitionists had labeled it, but rather a fair and munificent system. Slaves were, in general, satisfied and comfortable, as proven by their positive attitude, and faithfulness to their owners. For committed intellectuals such as Emerson, the problem could not be figured out by means of observing the slave actions, seeking slaves' point of view, judging the gentle versus cruel owners and take notes of the differences.

The problem for Emerson just as for Douglass was the fundamental injustice from which the system originated and the falsehood and deceptions that brought about its evils. Slavery was merely an act of abducting people and selfishly exploiting them. Even the most gentle amongst slave owners were thieve who were indirectly involved in the worst sorts of cruelty.

The aspect of slavery that made Emerson think of it as an absolute evil was the readiness of the supposedly civilized society to turn away their eyes from evil for the reason that they liked the benefit they got from the system of slavery; "We had found a race who were less warlike, and less energetic shopkeepers than we; who had very little skill in trade. We found it very convenient to keep them at work, since, by the aid of a little whipping, we could get their work for nothing but their board and the cost of whips. What if it cost a few unpleasant scenes on the coast of Africa?" (Quoted in John Carlos Rowe 28)

Emerson denounced white responsibility for the practice of slavery by associating his audience's everyday wellbeing items and luxuries with stealing, brutality, and dishonesty with which this comfort, in due course, had been paid for: "The sugar they raised was excellent, nobody tasted blood in it. The coffee was fragrant; the tobacco was incense; the brandy made nations happy; the cotton clothed the world. What! All raised by these men, and no wages? Excellent! What a convenience! They seemed created by providence to bear the heat and the whipping, and make these fine articles" (Emerson: The Major Prose 277).

Taken as a whole, the address is based on a foundation of Emersonian idealism. The West Indies emancipation was an indication for him that the world was becoming a better place on the basis of a natural law and that man was becoming more and more civilized and the United Stated would undoubtedly ride the wave of change. If this statement is to be taken into account by a modern reader, then it will sound too superficial after the death of six hundred thousand people due to the Civil War, and similar disasters elsewhere in the world. Emerson could predict the ways which humanity would take to reach progress and thus he was unaware of what technology, for instance, would produce as mass destruction weapons. Even though the Mexican War was on the verge of breaking out, he was remembering a time of tranquility in America and the indications of the development of the human mind. Right

mind and morals prevailed in the West Indies beyond the over-optimistic prospects. The emancipated slaves did not harm their masters and no unrest followed as a result of that;

> *On the night of the 31st July, they met everywhere at their churches and chapels, and at midnight, when the clock struck twelve, on their knees, the silent, weeping assembly became men; they rose and embraced each other; they cried, they sung, they prayed, they were wild with joy, there was no riot, no feasting. I have never read anything in history more touching than the moderation of the negroes. Some American captains left the shore and put to sea, anticipating insurrection and general murder. With far different thoughts, the negroes spent the hour in their huts and chapels (David Lee Child, p. 13).*

"I have never read anything in history more touching than the moderation of the negroes," (Quoted in Myerson 192) commented Emerson on the way the slaves conducted themselves after the emancipation. His 1844 address is remarkable as well for its condemnation of the practically worldwide abuse of the Negro. Emerson acquired such an experience from the West Indies emancipation, that made him strongly rejected the racially based view of Africans.

For Emerson, the notion of self-reliance and defiance should also be valid for the African American slaves themselves, a standpoint that is in complete contradiction with the majority of abolitionists, who thought of the slaves as having no responsibility to emancipate themselves. Britain's emancipation day, Emerson states, "marks the entrance of a new element into modern politics, namely, the civilization of the Negro. A man is added to the human family." (Quoted in Alan M. Levine and Daniel S. Malachuk 196). Concisely, the

emancipation and its after effects provided evidence that the common belief in the inferiority of the Negro was mistaken.

Emerson's view of blacks did not follow a streamline as he sometimes described them as primitive, secondary. He had a lot of speculations concerning the very nature of blacks and whether they were naturally inferior beings especially in the early 1850s. Nevertheless, he eventually dismissed those speculations as Len Gougeon put it:"he [Emerson] looked upon the rapid cultural development of blacks as an inevitable consequence of emancipation that would finally redeem them from the debilitating effects of the institution of slavery." (Len Gougeon 185).

Emerson was indebted to the movement of that abolished slavery in British West Indies and to the continuers of it. But the high regard that Emerson had for this movement was not effortlessly pass on to the American context. He experienced the celebratory story of West Indies abolition merely secondhand and on second thoughts from the viewpoint of its prominent leaders, who he did not particularly know well. The reality of the American context was more complex and controversial.

During the second half of the 1840s, Emerson was appealed to speak in favor of antislavery movements and reformers. Though typically he would be unwilling to open up to abolitionists and reformers, it was hard for him to completely withdraw from the political stage and put his focus only on poetry and learning. His address on the West Indian abolition attracted a large audience and was invited to repeat it on a number of occasions. In 1845, when the annexation of Texas as a slave territory was looming, Emerson found himself drawn onto the political stage again. Later that year he turned down an invitation to lecture before the New Bedford Lyceum to voice disapproval of the segregation of blacks. When Henry

David Thoreau, Emerson's close friend, opposed the Mexican War by refusing to pay taxes and was imprisoned as a result of that, Emerson realized that may become over-involved in the subject of slavery and felt that his supposed coldness for the cause was directly provoked.

In 1847, Emerson barely contributed with his name and writings to fellow Transcendentalist Theodore Parker's new academic journal, *The Massachusetts Quarterly Review* (1847-1850). Meant as a continuation to the *Dial*,[15] the journal was too tedious, and very much filled with reform thoughts. Emerson did not undermine the efforts of the project at the outset, but, right after discovering that his name was put as that of chief editor, he completely withdrew from the project. He sharply expressed grief over the unbalance between America's moral and intellectual life and its trade and production; "A journal that would meet the real wants of this time must have a courage and power sufficient to solve the problems which the great groping society around us, stupid with perplexity, is dumbly exploring" (The Reasoner 321).

III. 4. Prophesying the End to Slavery

Emerson wrote a number of poems on the topic of slavery, emancipation, and the Civil War, four of which were assembled in the 1867 collection, *May-Day and Other Pieces*: "*Freedom*," "*Ode Sung in Town Hall, Concord, July 4, 1857*," "*Boston Hymn*," and "*Voluntaries*."

[15]The Dial grew out of a desire for a medium of communication among those interested in the ideas expressed in the Transcendental Club. To afford a means of expression to these thinkers was its main object (Cooke 77).

III. 2.1. "Boston Hymn" (1863)

As one of the most prominent figures to embody Transcendentalism to this day, Emerson wrote "Boston Hymn "as a call to a mission for the American. The speaker in the poem is a divine voice that speaks with authority to the addressees. With such voice, the poem matches the authoritative sound of such spiritual scriptures as the books of the Old Testament. This tone is used thoughtfully together with the personification of Freedom as the angel that God has sent to alert the Americans of all their wrongdoings with the possibility of repenting of all their transgressions that stood in the face of freedom.

The word of the Lord by night

To the watching Pilgrims came,

As they sat by the seaside,

And filled their hearts with flame

The biblical language is manifest in this stanza as the phrase "The word of the Lord by night" appears on top of the stanza and gives the common reader a sense of seriousness. Unlike the Old Testament, the word of Lord is for the Pilgrims rather than the Israelites this time. As the Pilgrims are likened to the Israelites, it feels as though the Pilgrims are distinguished to work for a divine plan. The Pilgrims were called upon to take part in a mission of both historical and spiritual importance.

God said, I am tired of kings,

I suffer them no more;

Up to my ear the morning brings

The outrage of the poor

In quoting or echoing the Old Testament James 5:4 which says: "Behold, the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, are crying out against you, and the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts."[16] There is a clear hint at the unfairness of slavery. Though he has distinguished the Pilgrims as God's people, he will draw attention to the transgressions of the American people, and this is the occasion on which he first evokes slavery. This interpretation requires an in-depth knowledge of biblical knowledge otherwise, it will only concern the kings and queens of other nations who live with an abundance of wealth while other people die of hanger.[17]

Nevertheless, since the message of the poem is explicit, reading between the lines uncovers the condemnation of the speaker is to both the Americans and peoples of other nations. Hence, anyone familiar with the state of affairs at the time when the poem was publically read would naturally deduce that the rebuke in the stanza also concerns America. Emerson drafted the poem in 1862, less than a year before the Emancipation Proclamation, and it was publically read in 1863, the year when the African American slaves were announced free. Therefore, taking into account the context of this poem, it becomes clear that the "outrage of the poor" were the voices of the enslaved Africans Americans. Similar to the verse in James where it is stated that "the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord," the voices of the African American slaves got through to the ears of the Lord. The speaker also states that God does not approve of the positions of kings and queens especially with regards to freedom. Accordingly, with only two stanzas, the Pilgrims were deemed

[16] English Standard Version (ESV) The Holy Bible ESV® Text Edition: 2016. Copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers.https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=James+5%3A4&version=ESV

[17] Poem Analysis Boston Hymn by RalphWaldo Emerson https://poemanalysis.com/boston-hymn-ralph-waldo-emerson-poem-analysis/

God's chosen people but were condemned for owning slaves and this claim was endorsed through a reference to the Bible.

Think ye I made this ball
A field of havoc and war,
Where tyrants great and tyrants small
Might harry theweak and poor?

Again in this stanza, the author goes on to use the voice of God who asks a question to the people of the world in general. The question that makes the reader perceive the world from a divine point. Any believer in a divine power would notice from this stanza that God is displeased with what man has done to the earth given to him. The latter, from a divine perspective, was not made to be destroyed with wars, or for the oppression of the poor. Emerson noticeably knows that the Bible repeatedly speaks of the poor demanding justice and warning the privileged not to keep them down. However, in almost every society, this commandment has not been followed and the elite have lived extravagantly and the poor have experienced deprivation and despair.

My angel-his name is Freedom,

Choose him to be your king;

He shall cut pathways east and west

And fend you with his wing (Ibid)

In this part of the poem, an angel is brought in as a personified Freedom and the American people are called upon to choose Freedom as their king. Therefore, there is no inconsistent human being on the throne. Instead, it is Freedom that sits on the allegorical American throne as God's angel to rebuke the Americans of their wrongdoing and govern

them with fairness. The speaker assures the American people that if they elect Freedom as their king, that he would fend them "with his wing."

Lo! I uncover the land

Which I hit of old time in the West,

As the sculpture uncovers the statue

When he wrought his best

This stanza serves as a reminder of when the land in the West was first revealed and the Pilgrims came to settle there. The author supposes that the discovery of the western lands was part of God's plan to reveal it to them and also indicates that it was the last and best land to ever be discovered.

I show Columbia, of the rocks

Which dip their foot in the seas

And soar to the air-borne flocks

Of clouds and boreal fleece (Ibid)

In this part of the hymn, the speaker empathizes with the reader's feelings of the land of the west. He specifically mentions Columbia and her beauty through a personification. This beautiful depiction of the land stimulates the sense of pride in the dwellers of Columbia. This tendency of choosing Columbia shows that he wishes to involve all the lands of the west to be under the rule of Freedom.

I will divide my goods;

Call in the rich and slave

None shall rule but the humble

And none but Toil shall have

This special stanza asserts categorically that those who invest a lot of effort in doing things should be rewarded duly. This statement is consistent with that of stanza two that the slaves who worked hard year after year should have prospered if only they were paid duly. He clearly states that no one should get rich if he does not sweat. This is as well biblical discourse, and is openly stated as an argument in favor of the slaves and as a reproach to anyone who held slaves before. The land owners who had slaves did not deserve lives of luxury because they did none of the work themselves. This part of the poem is an open call for justice in support of those who work, and a reproach to those who do not. With Freedom as a ruler, everyone should get their comeuppance.

I will have never a noble

No lineage counted great;

Fishers and choppers and ploughmen

Shall constitute a state

In this stanza, the divine voice proclaims that America will not be the same as other lands where Kings and Queens still reign. The speaker maintains that there will be no pure or noble blood, for people will not become rich by means of ancestry. Instead, the "fishers and choppers" will be the ones earning money for they have worked hard for it and the ones forming the new state.

Go, cut down trees in the forest

And trim the straightest boughs;

Cut down trees in the forest

And build me a wooden house (Ibid, p.53)

Just as the previous stanzas, Emerson goes on with the use of a divine voice as his speaker which makes it understandable that he is referring to the Old Testament. Though in the latter God wanted from the Israelites to construct a place of worship made of gold and other rare stones, in this hymn, God demands from the Pilgrims to build him house from the trees that they themselves cut down in the forests. This is a simulation of a divine call to the Americans to a more serious life. Instead of founding empires to the detriment of slaves, God calls them to work just as hard as the African Americans. And in the following stanza, there is a call to all the Americans to be united under the same principles:

Call the people together

The young men and the sires,

The digger in the harvest field,

Hireling and that him that fires

In the Old Testament, God did not want the Israelites to have a king reigning over them. The Lord was their king but had priests as responsible for the Judging but only to a certain limit. The intense biblical mood in this stanza is similar to that of the book of Judges, where the Lord asked the Israelites to choose certain rulers over a given number of people that if a tension was provoked, things could be resettled with fair decisions. This should also be applicable in America that the heads of churches, states and schools can be elected democratically but there should be no supreme leader amongst them since the speaker has already chosen the angel Freedom to rule over them all. Just as the Israelites, the Pilgrims should achieve what God had intended. This biblical mood and style makes the reader's fell as though they are God's people.

And ye shall succor men;

'T is nobleness to serve

Help them who cannot help again:

Beware from right to swerve

Again in this stanza, Emerson echoes the biblical commandments of the nobleness of serving others rather than seeking to be served by others and the speaker of this poem is calling on the Americans for this same value. While he has already demanded from people to work for they earn, he now asserts that serving is noble act. It is important to note that this idea would require a radical change of the mindsets of the Americans as they were used to the opposite. Nobility was for those who did not have to work for any money or status but merely those who inherited a wealth and a social standing. These attitudes and lifestyle of Old Europe and England, in particular, was transferred to the New World, the South especially. Wealth and the number of the slaves owned by a plantation owner was what determined the value of the latter. The divine voice in this poem is used to undermine the old notion of nobility that has been transferred to America from the English society and was then passed on from one generation to the other. With the purpose of doing so, the speaker takes the reader back to the Bible times, and asserts that real nobility is to serve, and therefore calls the American people to pride themselves for the they do themselves rather than their ancestry. There is also an admonition not to forget the principle of how honorable it is to work as well as doing a tougher work for those who are helpless.

I break your bonds and masterships

And I unchain the slave:

Free be his heart and hand henceforth

As wind and wandering wave

At long last, the speaker openly states his purpose. He has been alluding to his position about slavery but here, he straightforwardly gives a final verdict which reads as "I unchain the slave" in a declaration that is decisive and crucial to both the slaves and those who owned them. The author suggests that the slaves' ultimate fate is freedom and it will be granted by God through inspiring those who follow his revelations. The author also insists that the slaves should enjoy freedom in its truest sense "Free…As wind and wandering wave."

I cause from every creature

His proper good to flow:

As much as he is and doeth,

So much he shall bestow

In this part of the poem the divine voice asserts that it is the source of all good in nature and in every creature. This idea is in line with Emerson's major convictions such as the Over-Soul. The transcendental principles that he set forth imply that God or a divine spirit was everywhere, in everyone and in everything. A lot of lines of this poem seem to go against these major ideas of Emerson but since he wrote those lines for a people who believed in the God of the Old and the New Testament, he sought their agreement by avoiding to shake their faith. Though he made use of biblical contexts, he tactfully used them to his advantage to preach freedom and equality. However, some of the author's deep convictions still prevail especially in this stanza where a true transcendental idea that God's presence is everywhere is the essence of all good. A good example of this belief in the poem is the emancipation of the slaves by a decree from God.

But, laying hands on another

To coin his labor and sweat,

He goes in pawn to his victim

For eternal years in debt

Emerson knew his addressees well enough to be able to reach out to every part of society with its different levels mainly the conflict between the North and the South. He appealed every member of society with their differences to unite under the rule of Freedom. He was also aware that the South was anxiously defeated, and that they need to a new sense of belonging to the new great nation. Emerson was also aware of the fact that many slave owners made use of the bible to give good reason for their owing of slaves and the following verse from Ephesians 6:5 may justify their acts: "Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ."[18] Yet, Emerson explained that the biblical reason for having a slave was only to pay off a certain huge debt with seven years of service as stated in Proverbs 22:7: "The rich rule over the poor, and the borrower is slave to the owner."[19]

In the seventeenth stanza the speaker continues to call for freedom; "To-day unbind the captive, so only are ye unbound." Here, he also uses a biblical reference to provoke an emotional reaction from the Christians of his time who had long had an idea that God would ultimately interfere to save them and the signal would come as a sound of a trumpet: "Lift up a people from the dust, Trump of their rescue, sound!." Emerson uses this biblical reference to hint at near end to slavery and in the way the God would save the Christians.

As the American Civil War broke out, The South insisted on the ideas that justified their economy and way of life in general that were based on the exploitation of the African

[18] Ephesians 6 Holy Bible, New International Version (NIV) Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica,https://biblehub.com/niv/ephesians/6.htm

[19] Proverbs 22 :7 Holy Bible, New International Version (NIV) Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica,https://biblehub.com/niv/ephesians/6.htm

Americans. A lot of Southerners had an argument that if the North wants the slaves to be free, the slave owners should receive an amount of money for the losses caused by the emancipation of slaves. This condition did not sound illegitimate because in fact they bought slaves with their own cash. However, Emerson suggested the opposite in the eighteenth stanza. It is rather the slaves who should receive money for their hard work in the plantations during all the long years. Thus he is putting the slaves in a position that makse of them worthy owners of the plantations;

Pay ransom to the owner

And fill the bag to the brim.

Who is the owner? The slave is the owner,

And ever he was. Pay him

In the next stanza, Emerson calls what the South has practiced a shame without disregarding the faults of the North to make both parties eligible for compromise and unity. There must be some sacrifices from both the North and the South; "O North! Give him beauty for rags, / And honor, O South! For his shame." As for the North, they have to invest in taking the slaves out of the dust, and the South has to convert their shame to honor through condemning their practices. Then Nevada is invited to put Freedom's name on their coins; "Nevada! Coin thy golden crags / With Freedom's image and name."

In the twentieth stanza, Emerson calls upon the former slaves to step up their actions; "Up! And the dusky race/ That sat in darkness long," and to flee the darkness swiftly and strongly and start a brand new life with a sense of freedom; "Be swift their feet as antelopes,/ And as behemoth strong." Then in the stanza that comes after this, the same voice used in the previous stanzas calls people from the East, West and North to come together:

Come, East and West and North

By races, as snowflakes,

And carry my purpose forth

Which neither halts nor shakes (Ibid).

Despite the differences between people in many aspects, the speaker invites them to be united and asks them to live up to his "purpose" which may strongly imply "Freedom." Therefore, the different races and the different ideas should culminate in a people that celebrate Freedom.

In the last stanza, the speaker asserts that his plan shall prevail whether in daylight or in the dark; "My will fulfilled shall be/ For in daylight or in dark." God's will shall be fulfilled because his thunderbolt will not miss the mark and this implies that Freedom will eventually reign no matter what obstacles it has to face or how long it will take.

In 1863, and amidst the Civil War, Emerson wrote the poem "Boston Hymn" to give his views about Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation which asserted that any slaves held in rebel or Confederate states would be unchained. "Boston Hymn" is one of the poems that Emerson wrote for a particular occasion and one he composed to be recited publically. This poem was presumably a premature celebration of an anticipated end to slavery. The opening lines ascertain that poem is written in the voice of some sublime world which asks the Americans to America's own promises of democratic organization. America's true destiny was a complete end to slavery. The nation's future was linked to its past which was a course of events leading to social equality.

Emerson then begins to lay emphasis on the West, encouraging Americans to bring new pathways into being as an indication to the contemporary conflict between North and

South. The poem makes reference to the notion of manifest destiny; "I uncover the land/Which I hid of old time in the West". Emerson somehow predicts of future of compromise since God provided America with worldly goods enough for both the North and the South.

At this point, Emerson provides an appropriate depiction of the nineteenth century ideals: the West was not only a land of high expectations but also the answer to the issue of democratic organization and social equality. Ordinary men will become part of the governing body and America will be a nation characterized by classlessness. There should be no "noble" in America, and "no lineage counted great". Common men like "Fishers" and "choppers" are the ones who "shall constitute a state". The West, therefore, gave the New World another opportunity to hold itself to its promises. Later, Emerson yet again evokes the issue of slavery, proclaiming that it is God's will that all people be eventually emancipated. Slavery is something that goes against nature's laws since the slave is not as free "as wind wandering wave." Slavery represents a true obstacle for prosperity because it prevents people from becoming what nature intended them to be.

"The American Scholar" (1837), in which Emerson urged his fellow countrymen to free American culture from its European past and to free themselves from the restrictions of society and established beliefs, he identified promising indications of American intellectual life and themes appearing in the literature of his own generation, yet he believed that the American genius had yet not entirely appeared in his full aptitude. In the "The American Scholar," which was originally published as an Oration Delivered before the Phi Beta Kappa Society, at Cambridge, Massachusetts, August 31, 1837, Emerson demonstrated his high optimism about America by stating that America was destined for more. For him, it was a turning point in history: "Our day of dependence, our long apprenticeship to the learning of

other lands, draws to a close" (Qtd. in, ibid, p. 25). He also wanted the individual not to blindly be a devotee of anything, but to see the world clearly without the impact of the past and traditions and become a thinking man.

Like all his writings on reform, Emerson does not disregard the issues that are challenging society; instead, he is unsympathetic with the practices of reformers and of single-issue policy and organizations. He is rather in favor of a vision of far-reaching change of the individual self as the way to developing a better social order. In "New England Reformers" (1848), Emerson admits that this is an age and region strongly affected by an activity of thought and experimenting mainly among the middle and leading sections. Religion is to any further extent limited to the church, but it has repositioned itself into restraint and non-resistance societies, in associations of abolitionists and socialists. Emerson considers some of the changes proposed by such movements as impractical or rather ridiculous like the folly of protecting the rights of insects and turning over the field oneself in place of an animal.

The drawback for Emerson is that the reform attitude that has characterized New England in the past twenty five years has been a continuing alienation from the spiritual facts and rebellious only for the sake of rebellion. Regarding education, Emerson disapproves the scheme of spending fifteen years in an institution ending up in not learning a thing. For him, education should lay emphasis on truth and nature instead of just "a memory of words";

> *The same insatiable criticism may be traced in the efforts for the reform of Education. The popular education has been taxed with a want of truth and nature. It was complained that an education to things was not given. We are students of words: we are shut up in schools, and colleges, and recitation-rooms, for ten or fifteen years, and come out at last with a bag of wind, a*

> *memory of words, and do not know a thing… We do not know an edible root in the woods, we can tell our course by the stars, nor the hour of the day by the sun (Complete Works 285).*

Schooling should offer useful knowledge, and its aim is supposed to be self-reliance. Emerson also disapproves the learning of dead languages without associating them with their true value that is the direct access to old data in theology, law, science and mathematics:

> *The ancient languages, with great beauty of structure, contain wonderful remains of genius, which draw, and will always draw, certain like-minded men, Greek men, and Roman men, in all countries, to their study; but by a wonderful drowsiness of usage they had exacted the study of all men… Some thousands of young men are graduated at our colleges in this country every year, and the persons who, at forty years, still read Greek, can all be counted on your hand. I never met with ten. Four or five persons I have seen who read Plato (Ibid).*

Nevertheless, Emerson is of the same mind regarding "the affirmative principles" of the "democratical" groups, which endeavor to dismiss the unessential through building up a trust in the private, autonomous powers of the individual. Yet, the problem is that the reformers themselves are not are not remodeled and there is not only one thing that should be opposed: "the wave of evil washes all our institutions alike" (Ibid). Reform seekers place themselves in a position that is superior to institutions though they are part of society and those institutions are formed by individuals. Emerson therefore considers it a waste of time to just condemn.

Apart from preconception and bias, Emerson categorizes a new problem with reform in its dependence on "Association," which supposes that individuals are unable to make

effective changes unless a big number of them work together under the name of reform. He points out the three communities already established in Massachusetts and questions why those who have the patience to undertake such things cannot find satisfaction away from the communities where compromise is not a requirement. Such requirement and rules are a degradation for the individual. He hypothesizes that those who are attracted to such communities are individuals who lack faith, and hope to become strong by joining other individual losers:

> *The union is only perfect, when all the uniters are isolated. It is the union of friends who live in different streets or towns. Each man, if he attempts to join himself to others, is on all sides cramped and diminished of his proportion; and the stricter the union the smaller and the more pitiful he is. But leave him alone, to recognize in every hour and place the street soul; he will go up and down doing the works of a true member, and, to the astonishment of all, the work will be done with concert, though no man spoke. Government will be adamantine without any governor. The union must be ideal in actual individualism (Complete Works 293).*

Emerson thinks that "every man is a lover of truth." This is a more positive view of humanity compared to that of the reformers, who suppose that individuals must be driven into doing the right things. We should have faith in the universe: "the good globe is faithful, and carries us securely through the celestial spaces… we need not interfere to help it on". This is a very transcendentalist view to how real reform should be and that, ultimately, the future will be worthy of the past (Olster, p. 72).

"New England Reformers" as an address is not particularly concerned with the issue of slavery though it was delivered before an audience of active reformers. Instead, Emerson tackles Utopianism and education reform. His disapproval of "association" is a straightforward indication about the neighboring utopian communities at Brook Farm[20] and Fruitland. His verdict that such communities are a magnet for those in despair and those who did not succeed in other projects, economic or domestic, is particularly a strong language used against these associates and other community members. Emerson found it hard to refuse the invitation of Ripley to join Brook Farm. Ultimately, his confidential response to Ripley was in harmony with his public message in all of his addresses and literary works on reform: "I think that all I shall solidly do, I must do alone" (Myerson p. 312).

Emerson had an immense interest in the reform efforts of his day. It was a period of many endeavors to reform the world. In addition to the agitation to the campaigning of the Transcendental movement, there were varied uproars of new ideas seeking to bring changes at the social and educational levels. Gatherings of all sorts were taking place, newspapers supporting all reform efforts, and new ideas emerged.

Almost everyone in Emerson's circle was linked to a type of reform. Parker started shaking the long held theological conventions. Thoreau showed disapproval to the tax scheme, and found himself behind bars. Almost right afterwards, he lived the Walden Pond experience. Margaret Fuller started her excellent conversations in Boston. Alcott had deserted his Temple School and ended up establishing the utopian community of "Fruitlands."

[20]In 1841, George Ripley and Sophia Ripley, together with Charles Dana founded the utopian social community of Brook Farm on a space of more than 170 acres, located in West Roxbury, Massachusetts, in order "to combine the thinker and the worker…to guarantee the highest mental freedom…to do away the necessity of mental services, by opening the benefits of education and the profits of labor to all; and thus to prepare a society of liberal, intelligent and cultivated persons" (qtd. in., Tiffany, 2010, p308).

Emerson encouraged all these reformatory movements as long as their goals were clearly defined and showed sincere attempts to propagate truth and raise awareness. In fact, all were "looking towards a new order of things":

> *Emerson's criticism of Brook Farm was characterized by practical reflection especially when emphasizing the importance of the law of competition. The latter cannot allow for a charitable spirit to help whoever asks with a generous hand. Rather, the charity, from a Transcendental outlook, culminates in self-help and self-reliance and this idea is the essence of Emerson's conception of reform (Cooke p. 98).*

Nevertheless, there is another part of Emerson's approach to this subject. While he says he is restricted to provide help only for those with whom he has a fellow feeling, he also insists that no one should be happy at the expense of the misery of any other.

His skepticism about any other form of reform aside from the stimulation of the soul to reach its end potential, has made of him a target of fierce criticism by the supporters of collectiveness and good organizations. Thus, any group gathering to enforce a shortsighted and short-term outlook, could not earn his genuine appreciation. He would not approve of the self-control cause, for it merely temporized with the status quo that laid the ground for the emergence of wrongdoing and suffering. If individuals were made self-controlled, they would still be egotistical and immoral. Therefore, he would direct his efforts towards the very essence of all vice and imperfections, "dry up that fountain, and then all the lesser evils would cease."

When Emerson uses strong language against the masses, it is important to note that he has no prejudice against the poor and the underprivileged, and his resentment is only due to

the contemptible methods by means of which reform is to be effective on the basis of "an exterior assent of opinions or customs. So it was in regard to Sunday schools and other good methods of education." (Cooke 1982: 98). But, he did not target religion at its core but its objectives seemed to tackle only the symptoms and failed to fill the spiritual void in people as individuals.

Emerson's statement in '*New England Reformers'* that union is workable only when its members do their best in private was applicable to any social relation and was remarkably identical to that of Margaret Fuller on marriage in *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* (1845). Both Emerson and Fuller had profound discussions about marriage, friendship, and unions during this time period.

Emerson's disapproval of education reform, and his general assessment of education, had been stated some years before in *The American Scholar* (1837). In *New England Reformers,* he expressed disapproval of the scholar who does not bring about any new ideas, interested only in turning his aptitudes into a profitable function, instead of making of it a nourishment to his own development:

> *In their experience the scholar was not raised by the sacred thoughts amongst which he dwelt, but used them to selfish ends. He was a profane person, and became a showman, turning his gifts to a marketable use, and not to his own sustenance and growth. It was found that the intellect could be independently developed, that is, in separation from the man, as any single organ can invigorated and the result was monstrous (Complete Works p.294).*

Emerson's recurrent Transcendentalist's vision of universal reform is also prevalent in *New England Reformers*. He refers to this universal reform as something that will naturally

occur through a "total regeneration." In other words, reform occurs at the level of individuals and thus what is proposed by "association" opposed his Transcendentalist idealism, because reformers essentially are suspicious of human nature whereas Transcendentalists place man at the center of the universe and regard him as perfectible and somehow even divine.

Contemporary scholars have argued that Emerson's first biographers deliberately undermined his reform commitments in support of endorsing his image as a standing apart discreet philosopher, involved more in the idealized life of the mind than in the political and social matters of his time. However, his contemporaries identified him as someone sincerely dedicated to weigh up the spiritual costs of slavery, yet confident that the nation would ultimately consider the right options. Numerous antislavery writings of Emerson have only lately been recuperated and made accessible in print, illustrating his firm commitment to abolitionism starting from the late 1830's till the period of the Civil War.

While slavery was considered as an exceptional issue but in relation to the broader American picture, Emerson thinks it is patently obvious that the advantages and ascendancy on which the country dignified itself were refused and overthrown by the evil of slavery. The Transcendentalists were the originators of many social justice movements, including the abolitionist movement to bring slavery to an end. During its short life span from the mid-1830's to the late 1840's, Transcendentalism did not give the impression to put the social and political institutions in jeopardy. Yet, in retrospection, the Transcendentalists can be perceived as the pioneers of the massive turmoil that was set to sweep across the whole of the United States.

The term Transcendentalism is a borrowed notion put forth by German philosopher Immanuel Kant who recorded that individuals have an innate faculty that gets them to transcend the

limits of their tangible world so as to sense inherent truths. Among the connotations of this idea is that every human being has equal innate capacities despite the differences in race, gender, or social status, promoting the notion of universal equality. Such background permitted the Transcendentalists to see the inequalities of the contemporary institutions. Their faith in human equality deeply influenced the abolitionist movement afterwards.

Emerson and Thoreau openly criticized the displacement of the indigenous people of America from their land and they disapproved, together with fellow Transcendentalists, the institution of slavery.

III. 6. A Mature Abolitionist: 1850-1856

When the legislation of the Fugitive Slave Law was passed in September 1850, the slavery discussions changed and so did Emerson's standpoint and commitment. This law displaced that of 1793, under which enforcement powers were not openly determined:

> *When conflicts among federal, state, and local authorities arose, as was inevitable, there was no easy way to solve them. By the 1840s, numerous states, including Massachusetts, had further weakened the federal statute by passing "Liberty Laws" that blocked the use of state and local jails and the participation of state and local officials in fugitive slave cases. This left the federal marshal and federal courts virtually helpless (Myerson pp.194-5).*

The new Fugitive Slave Law resolved the problem by exempting the states from duty in fugitive slave indictment, by delegating exclusive federal officials to hear fugitive slave cases, by giving permission to federal representatives assisted by federal troops when needed

to send back fugitives as soon as they are accurately recognized, and by taking care of penalties which can go as high as to reach a thousand dollars and six months prison sentence for anyone charged with assisting and inciting fugitive slaves. Furthermore, the law gave permission to the federal marshal to call for citizens to help in trapping the fugitive slaves or avoid a possible escape. More shockingly though, the law denied reject the right of habeas corpus and fair trial, and it forbade the person charged with escaping the slave territory from witnessing in their own favor.

Therefore, anyone accused of being a fugitive slave was to be treated as part of somebody's belongings whether in Northern or Southern federal courthouses. Though some particular federal officials and federal judges. Who could as well run hearings, gave time for the accused to consult lawyers, and to have an extended period of time to defend themselves, in other cases, officials or judges speeded up the trial before any justification could be presented; "Although the new Fugitive Slave Law, the final portion of the bills collectively known as the Compromise of 1850, ostensibly settled the conflict over slavery, it fell far short of its goals. Only some of the particular questions about where slavery would be permitted as the nation expanded, and where it would be forbidden, were settled" (Myerson p.195). In spite of the agreements made over territorial expansion, nothing more than a quiet political period came as a result of that.

By the mid-1850s, the slavery problem would Kansas Territory into a blood-spattered battlefield. Additionally, the conciliation would nothing to appease the irritated mood of Southern radicals and Northern abolitionist opposition. The Southern radicals found the compromise deal delusional, thinking that the new laws unjustly restricted slavery and that the Fugitive Slave Law would not be applicable or enforceable in the North. The same sort of betrayal was felt by Northern extremists who found the restrictiveness of the new law as

contradictory with the Bill of Rights, holding every suspected fugitive slave accountable until he pleads not guilty. The abuse that tackled fundamental rights of citizens gave a boost to the antislavery campaigners. Stories of fugitive slaves captured in New York City, Philadelphia and other Northern regions were making headline in newspapers and provoked an abhorrence of the new law. The Northerners seized every opportunity to turn things into their favor, making of every Southern transgression an advertisement for their cause. Unbiased and even pro-South newspapers in the North reported stories that provoked antislavery reactions.

This immoral enactment in Emerson's view or as he called it "filthy" did not make Emerson react urgently as he believed that it would not be obeyed in New England just as was the case for the old law, but naturally the decree strongly inflamed his feelings:

> *...in his first public address on the Fugitive Slave Law, delivered to the citizens of Concord in the spring of 1851, Emerson urged outright civil disobedience by encouraging his fellow citizens to this heinous law "on the earliest occasion." He defended such apparent lawlessness on the grounds that this "filthy enactment" of Congress is "contrary to the primal sentiment of duty." To require free citizens to detain a person who is fleeing his or her freedom from the oppression of slavery is contrary to the self-evident truth articulated in the Declaration of Independence, a truth that is inscribed in the soul of every virtuous (New Morning p.164).*

The law, especially the real effort to detain fugitive slaves in Boston, would quickly making Emerson's activism stronger. It was a different when fugitives or slaves lived in distant areas than when their owners and the US marshal came to involve your neighborhood in the inquiry process. As Emerson was to state over and over with splendid clearness and

vigor, under the new Fugitive Slave Law, the problems that arose as a result of a fugitive slave in Massachusetts would concern any Massachusetts' resident.

Just about a month after the law became effective, a Boston fugitive case was recorded when representatives of a Macon, Georgia slave owner in Boston and got down to guarantee the capture of two fugitives, William and Ellen Craft. Such seriousness about the application of the law was taken as a high-profile case that statesman Daniel Webster and the Unionists. The escape of the Crafts from Macon to the North in 1848 was a remarkable story as Ellen passed as a white male planter and William as her personal servant. As they reached Boston, the place that was a safe haven for them, and as they both started working independently, the charge to capture the couple became known and the antislavery supporters got provoked. Emerson trailed the progress of the story by way of the press with great attention, as ascertained by his statements in correspondence and journals (Joel Myerson p.197).

Throughout the agitation that followed the story of the Crafts, Emerson made no public statements. Later, there was another endeavor to capture a Boston fugitive slave, Shadrach Minkins, born into slavery in Virginia, who escaped for his freedom in 1850 and was luckily saved by the likes of Lewis Hayden who also helped him to further escape prosecution by sending him to Montreal, Canada. Once more, Emerson locked up his words in his journals, letters, and correspondences. In April 1851, Emerson had formally opened up about his resentment at the Fugitive Slave Law by sending a letter to the yearly reunion of the Middlesex Antislavery Society. Emerson expressed regret for not being able to be present at the meeting, but he expressed his willingness to oppose the "detestable statute" passed by Congress. He encouraged everyone to protect fugitive slave from their owners. The mood of the letter is one of serene strength of mind rather than antagonism. Despite the fact that fugitive slaves had been captured and sent back to their owners I other states, Emerson may

have thought that greater commitment to liberty in Massachusetts would go on to turn the catchers away from the state and leave it barehanded (Bercovitch p.552).

Emerson was deeply touched by the fugitive slave unpleasant incidents as he expressed it in his brief letter:

> *It seems imperative that every lover of human rights should, in every manner, singly or socially, in private and in public, by voice and by pen—and, first of all, by substantial help and hospitality to the slave, and defending him against his hunters—enter his protest for humanity against the detestable statute of the last Congress (Qtd in Zakaras 97).*

It is a categorical pronouncement, a vow to set aside his suspicions about public protests and go in with the antislavery movement and predictably it found its way right away in William Lloyd Garrison's *Liberator*, a newspaper that he founded together with Isaac Knapp that appealed to the moral conscience of its readers, pushing them to demand immediate emancipation of slaves.

After a third fugitive slave was captured in April 1851, Thomas Sims, whose rendition coincided with the day of the Middlesex meeting, Emerson could no longer control his anger. The editors of his journals indicate that he filled eighty-six manuscript pages of his 1851 journal with statements targeting Webster, the Fugitive Slave Law, and the disgrace both were causing for the state that was the origin of American liberty and, of course, the reference is to Boston which he said about with a very strong language:

> *Every hour brings us from distant quarters of the Union the expression of mortification at the late events in Massachusetts, and the behavior of Boston. The tameness was indeed shocking. Boston, of whose fame for spirit and character we*

> *have all been so proud. Boston, whose citizens, intelligent people in England told me, they could always distinguish by their culture among Americans; the Boston of the American Revolution Boston, which figures so proudly in "John Adams's Diary," which all the country had been reading; Boston, spoiled by prosperity, must bow its ancient honor in the dust, and make irretrievably ashamed. In Boston,-- we have said with such lofty confidence,--no fugitive slave can be arrested;--and now, we must transfer our vaunt to the country, and say with a little less confidence,--no fugitive man can be arrested here;--at least we can brag thus until tomorrow, when the farmers also may be corrupted (Complete Lectures 170).*

Thomas Sims was eventually returned to slavery from Boston under the surveillance of the local federal troops. Such high profile case made Emerson feel that he needed to take some sort of straightforward personal action. When the townspeople of Concord invited to give a speech on the subject of the Fugitive Slave Law, he unhesitatingly agreed. On May 3, he gave the first of his speeches on the on subject. The address, which was one his most excellent ones of his career, deals with the denunciations with which Emerson had been putting into his journals; its repeated topics are the corruption of the land by the law and the participation of the citizens who consented to the law into the land. Towns and rural areas are implicated in one hot rush of terror.

With notable openness, Emerson admitted that he was shocked by the way Sims was treated. "I wake in the morning with a painful sensation, which I carry about all day," he stated, the root of which he depicted as the "odious remembrance of that ignominy which has fallen on Massachusetts, which robs the landscape of beauty, and takes the sunshine out of every hour. I have lived all my life in this state, and never had any experience of personal

inconvenience from the law, until now" (Selected Lectures 170). Letters drafted about the same period, together with journal passages loaded with parallel statements of anger and anguish, show Emerson's comments in Concord to be sincere, not mere allegorical exaggerations (Joel Myerson 198).

Emerson's address that condemned the degrading moral state of Massachusetts reveals a major determined move. It was one in which he insisted on the importance of opposing unfair legislation such as the Fugitive Slave Law. Laws do not define rights, but are merely "declaratory of a right which already existed." For this purpose, a law that is morally wrong is "a man's duty to break it, at every hazard" (Qtd in Joel Myerson 198). The Fugitive Slave Law which splendidly illustrated a decadent law must be broken. It must be abrogated and removed from the statute book; yet, as long as it is there, it has to be defied. This assumption was the most militant proclamation Emerson had ever given. Nevertheless, more usual Emersonian sanguinity came to the surface as when he spoke about "the immense power of rectitude" but he suspected that it was "apt to be forgotten in politics. But they who have brought this great wrong on country have not forgotten it." Then, he continued to explain that "never was any injustice effected except by the help of justice. The great game of the government has been to win the sanction of Massachusetts to the crime" (Selected Lectures 184).

Though statements as such moderated the radical ones, the address still remains as one of Emerson's unique magnum opus of emotion scarcely held back by reason. The address "proved very popular, and Emerson repeated it at least nine times, apparently most often at Free Soil Party rallies supporting John Gorham Plafrey's congressional candidacy" (Joel Myerson 199).

The Fugitive Slave Law has brought about a collapse in land values across the nation. "The very convenience of property, the house and land we occupy, have lost their best value, a man looks gloomily on his children and thinks 'What have I done, that you should begin life in dishonor? However, there is one great advantage to be taken from the latest ignominy. The challenge had the enlightening "power of a sheet lightning at midnight…It ended a good deal of nonsense we had been wont to hear and to repeat, on the nineteenth of April, the seventeenth of June, and the fourth of July" (Selected Lectures 171). All the declarations of love and the hymns of liberty proved to be deceptive, and the unfortunate black who has learned of the reputation of Boston as he holes up in his southern swamp discovers when he arrives in the city that the reputable town of Boston is his "master's hound" and that he runs the risk of being shot, "or burned alive, or cast into the sea, or starved to death, or suffocated in a wooden box, to get away from his driver" and be captured by the citizens of Massachusetts and return to the dog hutch he had run away from (Qtd in Bercovitch 553).

However, the loss of state honor fades when facing the greatest skepticism, Emerson asserts, has been caused by the law. In an unexpected shift to gloom, he made a list of all the principles that Fugitive Slave Law has pushed him to renounce, the earliest being the belief that the passage of the law would immediately provoke all principled people to oppose it.

In an indication of the way that the fight against slavery was prevailing over old opposition, Emerson was invited to deliver his Concord Address again as a stump for John Gorham Palfrey. Emerson's eagerness to be moved onto a political stage shows just how prepared he was to express, almost self-protectively, his commitment to his ideals on whatever occasion. Yet, when Palfrey fell short at the election at the end of, Emerson's aversion for the experiment, coupled with his busy lecture schedule, pushed him to withdraw the political and reform scenes. His journal accounts confirm him, in private, discussing and

advocating his career path. After blaming himself for the reason that he had not put himself face to face with the unforgivable questions of slavery, he admitted that he had been working for the cause of humanity from his own perspective.

Though he refused to speak at any abolitionist rallies, he went on to be a devotee of political and legal developments with high concern and attacked slavery and racism in letters and dialogue. Eventually, in the spring of 1853, he welcomed an invitation to be part of a dinner honoring of New Hampshire's abolitionist senator, John Parker Hale, who once refused to vote for the annexation of Texas though compelled to do so, and was even ready to deliver a speech, but he may have been crowded out of the occasion to speak by the pack of personalities there. His only public expression on the crisis featured that spring in *Autographs for Freedom*, an anthology of literature designed to help eradicate the great sin of slavery, to which Emerson contributed only with a poem, "Freedom." The poem tackled Emerson's old pleas for poetical freedom as well as broader and in vogue issues of freedom and slavery especially in the first four lines:

Once I wished I might rehearse

Freedom's paean in my verse,

That the slave who caught the train

Should throb until he snapped his chain (Quoted in Albert J 123)

By 1854, new nationwide and local issues were facing Emerson to take to the public center stage again. At the outset came the heated debate over the Kansas-Nebraska Act which was passed by US Congress on May 30, 1854 and which allowed people in those territories to decide for themselves whether or not to accept slavery within their borders. The new act, in

fact, revoked the Missouri Compromise of 1820 which prohibited slavery north of latitude 36°30´. Emerson agreed to give a lecture in New York in March 1854. Nonetheless, Daniel Webster had just delivered a speech to support the Fugitive Slave Law, making many of his former followers turn against him and Emerson was no exception, of course. "When the Fugitive Slave Law was passed and Emerson believed that his hero, Daniel Webster, had betrayed public trust, Emerson appeared at public meetings in Concord, Boston and New York and spoke with a bitterness strange in so serene a person" (Complete Works xviii). Emerson's speech, however, did not get the expected attention. It lacked the enthusiasm of his 1851 lecture in Concord as well as the solid imagery that generally characterized his finest writings.

A lot of time was dedicated to comparing the assumptions of the parties to the antislavery issues and to his own refusal and inappropriateness as an antislavery spokesperson:

> *Gentleman, I have a respect for conservatism. I know how deeply founded it is in our nature and how idle are all attempts to shake ourselves free from it. We are all conservatives, half Whig, half Democrat, in our essences: and might as well try to jump out of our skins as to escape from our Whiggery. There are two forces in Nature, by whose antagonism we exist; the power of Fate, Fortune, the laws of the world, the order of things, or however else we choose to phrase it, the material necessities, on the one hand—and Will Or Duty or Freedom on the other (Complete Essays 869).*

In his analysis of Daniel Webster's high merits and shortcomings, too much respect was paid to virtues for abolitionist audience. Emerson himself regarded his speech as

incomplete and substandard endeavor and it met with the indifferent response that could typical of a radical antislavery press. Nonetheless, the speech was a noteworthy attempt at an all-inclusive handling of the destructive outcomes of slavery on American life and principles, and it included many strong statements about the fundamental role of individual conscience in prizing freedom;

> *But I put it to every noble and generous spirit, to every poetic, every heroic, every religious heart, that not so is our learning, our education, our poetry, our worship to be declared. Liberty is aggressive, Liberty is the Crusade of all brave and conscientious men, the Epic Poetry, the new religion, the chivalry of all of all gentlemen. This is the oppressed Lady whom true knights on their oath and honor must rescue and save (Complete Essays 875).*

In January 1855, Emerson yet again stepped in to speak out publically against the slavery issue. Less than a year earlier, another fugitive slave, Anthony Burns, had been captured in Boston and returned to slavery. The occurrence attracted a lot of attention on both the local and national level. Abolitionists, who were holding a meeting in the city, reacted with new force as they were secretly setting off a range of legal planning. A public gathering inflamed the crowd, with which the streets were teeming, led an assault on the Boston Court House to save Burns. Thomas Wentworth Higginson, a member of the Secret Six who supported John Brown, and others forced their way into the building, only to pull back when the horde did not urge them on, but not prior to the injuries suffered by Higginson and many others and the fatal end of one of the men guarding the Court House who received a gunshot from an angry member of the abolitionist movement. Then, Amos Bronson Alcott, Emerson's friend, who was present at the special meeting, won an amount of illustriousness by mounting the Court House steps alone and then descending following his own course.

Emerson's 1855 speech mixed with his own fury that sprang from seeing his local territory yet again marched into by by slave capturers and his fellow neighbors yet again degraded by the legislations. The speech consisted of Emerson's common themes: the clash between the principles of the independence and the insight of the individual and the urge for social reaction; the disease of the age that made the likes of Daniel Webster act against the morals; and the moral development of America that was bound to happen, which would direct the nation towards a point when slavery will eventually give in, "and go with cannibalism, tattooing, inquisition, dueling, [and] burking" (Qtd., in Joel Myerson 201).

The speech also illustrates Emerson's ability in putting a contemporary issue of slavery versus freedom in the framework of the moral development of humanity and civilization. Reiteration of biblical forms and the allusion to the great honorable and fair-minded historical leaders are evoked to put the Burns chapter into a context of historical unfairness. Similar to other speeches, Emerson compares judges and politicians of that period with the icons of man's pursuit of freedom and justice but sadly figured out that they were not there.

Just before the outbreak of the Civil War, Emerson opposed slavery to champion the cause of liberty and the exploited community on several occasion and each was to be triggered by some new conflict coming up of the escalating national issue over slavery. The earliest came following Congressman Peterson S. Brook, and proslavery Democrat, caught Senator Charles Sumner, an abolitionist Republican from Massachusetts, and beat him fiercely with his walking cane at the desk of the former. By beating Sumner, he earned the respect of his peers from the South. For the Northerner's, Brook's behavior was so provocative that it resulted in a great wave condemnations and meetings. For Emerson, the Brook's case made him realize that it was impractical to argue with the Southerners; they had

been so degraded by their institution that were unable, to any further extent, to debate with a fair mind. Slavery had pulled society back to barbarity.

Later that year, Emerson went to a meeting for the support of the antislavery settlers in Kansas, most of whom had moved from Massachusetts to contribute to a multiplication to annex Kansas as a free state in the union. A civil war broke out in Kansas as a consequence of the issue, inducing the speech from Charles Sumner that caused his whipping. Abolitionists, dwelling in Kansas, found themselves repetitively harassed by Missouri proslavery activists or, as they were referred to, the "border ruffians," at an aim of forcing them out through terrorization. In Concord mainly, protest meetings were organized to raise money and provisions for the overwhelmed settlers. Provoked by the reports of the troubles of the settlers, Emerson went to meetings and at one emotionally appealed the citizens to donate openhandedly. In that speech he almost straightforwardly called for revolution. Remembering the period when Massachusetts, in its epic days, "had no government—was an anarchy," Emerson pronounced himself happy "to see that the terror at disunion and anarchy is disappearing" (Qtd in Myerson 203). Undoubtedly, he had started believing in the idea that, not only was war an inevitable fate, but also a necessity;

> *It is wonderful to see the unseasonable senility of what is called the Peace Party, through all its masks, blinding their eyes to the main feature of the war, namely, its inevitableness. The war existed long before the cannonade of Sumter, and could not be postponed. It might have begun otherwise or elsewhere, but war was in the minds and bones of the combatants, it was written on the iron leaf, and you might as easily dodge gravitation (Complete Essays 889).*

In 1859, another terrifying incident drove Emerson back to the antislavery crusade. In September, John Brown led a small group on a raid against a federal armory in Harpers Ferry in a vain attempt to start an armed slave revolt and destroy the institution of slavery. Already esteemed by Emerson, Brown's arrest and death sentence for his daring assault took away any reservations "that Emerson might have entertained about the zealous Kansas freedom fighter (Joel Myerson 204). In many speeches, Emerson positioned Brown in the context of historical moral heroes and condemned the extreme measure that was taken against him;

> *It is easy to see what a favorite he will be with history, which plays such pranks with temporary reputations. Nothing can resist the sympathy which all elevated minds must feel with Brown, and through them the whole civilized world; and if be must suffer, he must drag official gentleman into an immorality most undesirable, of which they have already disagreeable forebodings. Indeed, it is the reductio ad absurdum of Slavery, when the governor of Virginia is forced to hang a man whom he declares to be a man of integrity, truthfulness and courage he has ever met (Complete Essays 880).*

Those words by Emerson were delivered to console Brown's family. On another occasion entitled "John Brown," he depicted Brown as a character who tried to correct the ego defect that characterized some abolitionists and other reformers. Undoubtedly, he acknowledged Brown's radical idealism as parallel to his own image of himself as the brave, independent American Scholar. Brown accomplished the principle of real manhood that had been Emerson's lifetime concern. Emerson's appreciative comments on Brown's radical pronouncement, "Better that a whole generation of men, women and children should pass away by a violent death than that one word of either [the Golden Rule or the Declaration of Independence] should be violated in this country," (Quoted in Joel Myerson 204) simply

showed Emerson's sharp revolutionary instinct and his high esteem to Brown. Emerson went to praise Brown a "Unionist—there is a strict constructionist for you. He believes in the Union of the United States, and he conceives that the only obstruction to the Union is Slavery, and for that reason, as a patriot, he works for its abolition" (Complete Essays 880).

As the Civil War broke out, Emerson became a ardent supporter of the cause of the Union and of liberty for the slave. Together with other antislavery campaigners, he called for an urgent release of the slaves. When Lincoln's initial Emancipation Proclamation[21] at last came, Emerson placed the President's move amongst some groundbreaking and momentous changes in recent history:

> *Every step in the history of political liberty is a sally of the human mind into the untried Future, and has the interest of genius, and is fruitful in heroic anecdotes. Liberty is a slow fruit. It comes, like religion, for short periods, and in rare conditions, as if awaiting a culture of the race which shall make it organic and permanent. Such moments of expansion in modern history were the Confession of Augsburg, the plantation of America, the English commonwealth of 1648, the Declaration of American Independence in 1776, the British Emancipation of slaves in the West Indies, the passage of the Reform Bill, the repeal of the Corn-Laws, the Magnetic Ocean Telegraph, though yet imperfect, the passage of the Homestead Bill in the last Congress, and now, eminently, President Lincoln's Proclamation on the twenty-second of September (Complete Essays 885).*

[21] Emerson spoke with others at a meeting held in Boston in September, 1862, to celebrate the significance of the Emancipation Proclamation which Lincoln had issued on September 22. This address was published in the Atlantic Monthly for November, 1862 (Complete Essays 883).

Emerson believed that those acts of long reach work on a long future and on lasting interests, and pay homage to both those who initiate and those who accept them. These actions cause no "noisy joy, but are received into a sympathy so deep as to apprise us that mankind are greater and better than we know" (Complete Essays 885). The Proclamation came too late and somehow incomplete in its purpose to satisfy a lot of slavery opponents, and Emerson strongly defended the president. "Forget all that we thought shortcomings, every mistake, every delay. In the extreme embarrassment of his part, call this endurance, wisdom, magnanimity; illuminated, as they now are, by this dazzling success. For Emerson, it was thanks to the Proclamation that "we have recovered ourselves from our false position and planted ourselves on a law of Nature," and therefore, we should not be afraid "henceforward to show our faces among mankind," then he concluded by stating that we should no longer live with two-facedness and double standards, "but we have styled our free institutions will be such" (Complete Essays 887-8).

His speech on the Proclamation had a wide audience and indeed served to silence the commentators and endorse public opinion about the president. Moreover, Emerson wrote poems for antislavery advocates, the most known "Volunteers," was a homage to the black Massachusetts Fifty-fourth Regiment and its commander Regiment, Colonel Robert Gould Shaw, who had passed away in the surge of the misfortunate attack on Fort Wagner, South Carolina.

Low and mournful be the strain,

Haughty thought be far from me;

Tones of penitence and pain,

Moaning of the tropic sea;

Low and tender in the cell

Where a captive sits in chains,

Crooning ditties treasured well

From his Afric's torrid plains

III. 7. Supporting the Antislavery Movement

In the Transcendental Club, when others backed off from consideration to the antislavery movement, Emerson supported it and had great hope in social reformer, and abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison. Despite being against the principle of self-reform, he supported the goals of the agitators who were stimulated by their high moral sense. His different inclination oriented him towards the same destination, yet to this wave of reform he all he could to have his mark amongst them; and his contribution is only possible to be traced back if the ways in which he was involved with the agitators is understood. Though he never completely discredited the external methods of reform, his expected the least outcome from legislation. It is rather the moral and spiritual impulse that takes people away from being self-centered. It is indeed the American way of life that was uncaring and vulgar that allowed for slavery to be applicable, and he believed that slavery could only be abolished by taking the moral standards to a new higher level, and by a deeper emphasis on the human soul.

The delivery of the 1845 address at Concord on the anniversary of emancipation in the West Indies, particularly placed Emerson with the abolitionists league. It was a powerful and effective development of the campaigning against slavery in England that resulted in its abolition in its colonies. The appeal for abolition of slavery in America was extracted from

this real life example. From the start of the address, he appealed the audience and the public to celebrate the anniversary of an event which he described as special in "the history of civilization; a day of reason; of the clear light; of that which makes us better than a flock of birds and beasts;…a day of gross history to ethical abstractions." He also emphasizes that such an outcome was of a number of "leading citizens that had taken care to record [their] votes" and "which for many years absorbed the attention of the best and most eminent of mankind." Then he goes on to directly target the institution of slavery which "seems to its opponent to have but one side, and he feels that none but a stupid or malignant person can hesitate on a view of the facts" (Emerson 1950: 831).

At this point of the history of America, "our temper and, and the risings of pride" have to be renounced for these traits are the source of "the ruin of a race of men" they take as a "small matter, compared with the last decoration and completions of his own comfort." Emerson then resorts to referring to the historical facts to give examples of how human experiences always record a conflict of "material and moral nature." The historical monuments show that "one race was victim and served the other races" as in the example of Egypt, "where negro captives are painted on the tombs of kings," in a way that hints at their looming fate. In this deep concern about slavery, the emphasis is put on the "negro" who, from the ancient times, "has been an article of luxury to the commercial nations" (832). He continues to show his contempt especially that "the prizes of society, the trumpet of fame, the privileges of learning, of culture, of religion, the decencies and joys of marriage, honor, obedience, personal authority" and other natural rights "were for all," but for the negro. They instead had as put in Emerson's words:

> *Bad food, and insufficiency of that; disfranchisement; no property in the rags that covered him; no marriage; no right in the poor black woman that*

> *cherished him in her bosom, no right to the children of his body; no security from the humors, none from the crimes, none from the appetites of his master: toil, famine, insult and flogging; and, when he sank in the furrow, no wind of good fame blew over him, no priest of salvation visited him with glad tidings: but he went down to death with dusky dreams of African shadow-catchers and Obeahs hunting him (833).*

The depiction of real facts of how the *negro* is getting through life day by day has to stimulate sympathy when even the very animal nature of the subjugated resist the subjugation. There comes a time when slavery should be cursed and the culture that bore it has to be changed to one where gender and race do not decide the fate of groups and individuals. Now American society has reached a point of return and the oppressors are now exposed as "the horrid story ran and flew; the winds blew it all over the world." They story was held true for those who heard it and "it became plain to all men, the more this business was looked into, that the crimes and cruelties of slave-traders and slave-owners could not be overstated" (834). The more this matter was looked into, the more horrifying stories arose. However, he has also another take on the subject that he believes the "history of slavery seems to justify" that it was not only established by the greed of the planter.

The alibi generally put forth by the apologists or analysts is that the planter would not really want a slave if not for the luxury that he would sacrifice and that he "has no love of slavery." The evil of slavery does not lie in the subjugation of people, but there is "a bitter element," beside the greediness," the love power, voluptuousness of holding a human being in his absolute control." He then likens the planter to "the spoiled child of his unnatural habits," and has shrank "in his indolent and luxurious climate the need of excitement by irritating and tormenting his slave." He also hails the stand of British diplomat, and colonial administrator

Sir Lionel Smith, who condemned the whipping of "the poor negro girls" who did "not comply with their master's will." He also defended "the Baptist preachers and the stipendiary magistrates, who are the negroes' friends, from the power of the planter" (Emerson 1950: 842).

In the intense debates on slavery, Emerson found a common ground with the short-lived political party, Free Soil, which mainly focused on being against the expansion of slavery into the western territories of the United States. English poet and educationalist, Arthur Hugh Clough, who upon his visit to Concord, in 1852, wrote: "I had Abolition well well out with Emerson, with whom one can talk with pleasure on the subject. His view is in the direction of purchasing emancipation." After some time during the same year, he also wrote about Emerson and qualified him as a "Free-Soiler" (Qtd in Cooke 1982: 136). In his address in Cambridge a year before, he conveyed a strong message of resentment over the scholar who drifted away from his chief task to get himself involved "in affairs; but, instead of principles ruling in the affairs of the nation, he found a power in favor of slavery, which sadly lowered the spirit in which the country was founded." He exposed the evil of slavery, how it pulled everything down into its vice and disgrace.

Emerson pictured slavery as having dominated the highest powers of the country and how this evil "corrupted everything it touched" (Ibid,). He condemned the predominant lack of concern about the horrors of slavery that even the political sphere was at its most degraded condition when the statute passed in 1850 criminalized fair dealing and mercy. The statute threatened that any act of fairness would result in a fine or imprisonment. Still in the same, in address delivered before the Antislavery Society of New York, he expressed his vision of how slavery should best be dealt with to be done with forever assuming that "Every wise American will say, in the collision of statutes, in their doubtful interpretations, that liberty is

the great order which all over the world we are to promote." This should be the real aim of the law which puts an end to crime, and reaches out to every man to instill the in them the value of liberty that does not take away that of the others. This principle will never wrong anyone, who, in a state of dilemma, "leans to the side of general liberty." And, as "men inspire each other," it so pleasant to be amongst the "masses" when it comes to dealing with a great matter;"for instance, one would say, the summary or gradual abolition of slavery."

Then he wonders why such a concern "is not the subject of instant negotiation and settlement." He proposes that such a matter is to be treated "peacefully" by "the great brains" and "the great administrative faculties" that, so far, have not have not put the necessary effort with a strategy to eradicate slavery, a strategy that does not undermine the South and goes well with the settled conscious of the North. He considers this proposition to be of no complication, since the example of the British nation that bought the West-Indian slaves is no strange to them. So, the property of the planter has to be bought as he emphasizes: "I say buy! Never conceding the right of the planter to own, but acknowledging the calamity of his position, and willing to bear a countryman's share in relieving him, and because it is the only practical course and is innocent." This suggestion that he deems as the most practical requires the involvement of "all men," since one individual is unable have an effect on such circumstances. There is the utmost hope that the Americans will "bring the states shoulder to shoulder, and the citizens man to man," to abolish slavery. Emerson then, sets out a number of propositions of contributions can be made at different levels, from individuals, families, social groups, to whole states. All was expressed with great faith of what America as a nation can do to put an end to slavery:

> *The United States will brought to give every inch of their public lands for a purpose like this. Every state will contribute its surplus revenue. Every man*

> *will bear his part. We will have a chimney-tax. We will give up our coaches and wine and watches. The church will melt her plate. The father of his country shall wait, well pleased, a little longer for his monument. Franklin will wait for his; the Pilgrim Fathers for theirs; and the patient Columbus, who waited all his mortality for justice, shall wait a part of immortality also. We will call upon the rich beneficiaries who found asylums, hospitals,…upon wealthy bachelors and wealthy maidens, to make the state their heirs, as they were wont to do in Rome. The rich shall give of their riches; the merchants of their commerce; the mechanics of their strength; the needle-women will give and children can have a Cent Society…Every man in this land would give a week's work to dig away this accursed mountain of slavery, and force it forever out of the world (Qtd, in. Cooke 1982: 137-38).*

Emerson here brought up the most important figures of the American history as doing their share to make the mountain of slavery crumble. It was such an evil that he had to figuratively call on the Pilgrim Fathers to have the erection of their monuments delayed. The abolition of slavery will be just as glorious as the foundation of America. There can no priority, no sacrifice given to another cause other than slavery. By all means, it shall end and this end should be cherished a great triumph over the greatest evil that America ever has to deal with. He spoke with the utmost faith in America's potential to overcome every obstacle that get into its way towards liberty. No matter the conditions, he always transmitted a positive tone and he had never foreseen an outbreak of a civil war at this stage.

In May 1856, Emerson gave speech at Concord when he wondered how a "barbarous community," referring to the slave states, and a "civilized community can constitute one state." He denounced the status quo and the contradictory elements that supposedly form a

state. The country should go one way or the other for if we are not to get rid of slavery, "we must get rid of freedom." Then, he straightforwardly lists the stark differences between the North and the South describing the former as one "adorned with education, with skilled labor, with arts, with long prospective interests, with social family ties, with honor and justice. In the latter, the value of life is no similar; "life is a fever, and man is animal." He also hails the position of Charles Sumner, Senator from Massachusetts, who "stood for the North, a little in advance of all the North, and therefore without adequate support," and "his maintenance of justice freedom" never waned. Sumner was a great example of resisting the indifference of his circle of friends and holding on to his noble principles. Emerson exceptionally considers Sumner a noble leader of the antislavery forces in the state and thinks that "if Mr. Sumner had any vices we should be likely to hear of them" and asks why such a figure is opposed for being an abolitionist "as if every sane man were not an abolitionist, or a believer that all men should be free" (Qtd., in Cooke 1982: 138-39).

III. 7.2. The Case of John Brown

Emerson approved the strong qualities of John Brown and his unconquerable faith. Brown visited Concord in a number of occasions, and was warmly welcomed by Emerson himself. As a radical abolitionist whose impassioned hatred for slavery pushed him towards the fatal act at Harpers Ferry in 1859, he still found the sympathy of Emerson who did not consider such endeavors as the best way to freedom. In his comments on Brown, as a "saint, waiting yet his martyrdom, and who, if he shall suffer, will make the gallows glorious, like the cross," the final statement was considered blasphemous and an inappropriate comparison.

Yet, it showed Emerson' disapproval of traditional religious dogma that does not hold freedom as a value that is worth dying for and, by comparison, an act of martyrdom.

He reacted, through an account of Brown's life, to expose the evilness of the laws that defended the slave owners and referred to him as "the hero of Harpers Ferry" who can "make friends wherever on earth courage and integrity are esteemed; the rarest of heroes, a pure idealist, with no by-ends of his own." In foreseeing the glory of Browns position, Emerson sees him as a man that history will favor over those who are taken by the trick of "temporary reputation." In fact, the logical consequence of hanging a man, whom "the governor of Virginia is forced to hang" despite once considering him"a man of the most integrity, truthfulness, and courage he has ever met" (Qtd., in Cooke 1982: 141) is absurd and contradictory. It is difficult, in all history, to bear witness to the nobility of such a man who has had the courage to give up life for principle, and a few have given more to the world than the simply intellectual people humanity has ever witnessed. Brown was "living to ideal ends," and not private ambition, secret purpose, or hidden agenda. The statesmen who have no sentiment of compassion are to be blamed for the prevalence of the laws that established evil as a norm;

> *The sentiment of mercy is the natural recoil which the laws of the universe provide to protect mankind from destruction by savage passions. And our blind statesmen go up and down with committee, indeed, to find its birthplace, and a very strong force to root it out. For the arch-abolitionist, older than Brown and older than the Shenandoah Mountains, is Love, whose other name is Justice, which was before Alfred, before Lycurgus, before slavery, and will be after it (142).*

Emerson's natural character and his approach to human progress could not make of him a fervent activist. His stands, however, had to reach the minds that were likely to be influential. Because the spirit of reform was at a low point, there was no real faith in its possible outcomes; and he had to place his hopes on the divine spirit inhabiting the souls of every man, which cannot be overpowered. Being a close spectator of the real scenes of evil and corruptions, his faith in the state completely died and so it was for the external methods of reforming the individual.

As the tensions rose, and heroic men were involved, and their campaign rose to a strength of mind of moral greatness, he gave a more enthusiastic approval to the external methods embraced. His admiration of Brown, his quick insight into the exceptional character of that real brave, gave him a higher enthusiasm and a deeper trust in the motivation and the intentions of the North.

III. 8. Emerson's Position during Time of War

The time of hazard leading up to new horizons is the time that puts men's souls to the test. The threat to liberty persists when the middle ground between true minds and men in power is always found. Emerson was not at the head in the real struggle, but the leaking ink of his pen read more and more relevant as the drama escalated. His opinion about slavery amid the war became plainer and direct describing it as "the barbarism which has lately appeared wherever that question has been touched, and in the action of the states where it prevails, seems to stupefy the moral sense." It is not only a great evil in its essence but "the moral injury of slavery is infinitely greater than its pecuniary mischief of slavery, which is always shown by statistics, worthy to be named in comparison with this power to subvert the reason

of men; so that those who spoke of it, defended it, who act in this behalf, seem to have lost the moral sense" (Qtd in., Cooke: 1982: 144). To be paraphrased.

When tackling the potential secession, he employed these vigorous words, suitable for the situation and the conditions:

> *In the great action now pending, all the forbearance, all the discretion possible, and yet all the firmness will be used by the representatives of the North, and by the people at home. No man of patriotism, no man of natural sentiment can undervalue the sacred Union which we possess; but if it is sundered, it will be because it had already ceased to have a vital tension. The action of today is the only the ultimamum of what had already occurred. The bonds had ceased to exist, because of this vital defect of slavery at the South, actually separating them in sympathy, in thought, in character, from the people of the North; and then, if the separation had gone thus, what is the use of a pretended tie? As to concessions, we have none to make. The monstrous concession made at the formation of the Constitution is all that ever can be asked; it has blocked the civilization and humanity of the times to this day (145).*

The war had a positive impact on him and reinforced his faith in human potential. He realized that people were more genuine than he had expected, and was also impressed by the revolution of the North. It made him reconsider his thoughts on the relations of men to men, and the significance of the state. The divine judgment has chanced upon people for their transgression; but he said that the growing fight for freedom was resulting in a heroism and a moral greatness worth the effort. He had given up hope for the nation formerly, but this time

he came face to face with a new reality characterized by devotion and splendor, laying the ground for a better state of affairs. Therefore, people must stay worshipful and modest, under the conditions forced by this judgment, and spoke highly of Mr. Lincoln and his power to come up trumps of the conflict. His faith in Lincoln translates his trust in the idea of the Union, and his renewed faith in the values of the Republic. He was impressed by the keenness and maturity of the young men, the sheer patriotism and dedication which was manifested on several occasions, and the principled attitude of the people. For the first time, he now believes in what his country can achieve and overcome especially in the question of morals that is why he is now sympathizing with the tendencies of the North.

In February 1862, he was called upon to deliver an antislavery address in Washington, with Lincoln as a senior figure among the audience, appreciating the rhetoric. In the address, Emerson gave a spectrum of factors that build a civilization, discarding the unchanged ideas was the point that stood out. At all times, it is the uniqueness and the newness of ideas that stimulate the minds as a shocker. Though he emphasized the power of ideas, he stated the importance of the material factor that include the geography, the climate, natural resources, and the conditions designed by social and legal schemes.

Civilization is the product of a complex organization where every element in it depends on another for its good functioning. But, there can be no real civility without high morality since economy can prosper with the absence of the least moral sense, as in the example of the South. The material success of a civilization depends on the unspoken acceptance of the laws of the physical world, and the moral victory depends on the acceptance of ethical values. The emergence of great men, the movement of great purposes, surpasses in value any mechanical innovation. The country where knowledge cannot reach out to every

home, and women are not recognized as true fellow citizens, is worlds apart from civility, or in fact, barbarous; and its asset of land, long seashores cannot stand these fatal troubles.

He then shifted to discussing the situation of the South that ignored and destroyed morality, in refuting a man's right to work with dignity. Labor is an important element to civilization as the facts reveal. The conflicting principles of the North and the South with the former respecting labor, and the latter founded on slavery, are causing a tension and holding the nation back from finding the middle ground. America is the land of plenty and the promised one by the Divine Providence, but slavery has revealed every evil that could lead not only to a moral failure but to a collapse of a nation. Therefore, during this crisis "men of original perception and original action" are needed to "act in the interest of civilization."

There could have been potentially in the history of America, a time when slavery could have been done with, had the free states acted responsibly. They gave in, but another chance has presented itself now: "it looks as if we held the fate of the fairest possession of mankind in our hands, to be saved by our firmness, or to be lost by hesitation." But now, the way towards a point where "every man in the South" is put "in just and natural relations with every man in the North, laborer with laborer," is emancipation which is "the demand of civilization," and "puts the whole people in healthy, productive, amiable position" (Qtd., in Cooke 1982: 147-48). The Southerners, however, seek war and have reached a point of when clashes are provoked to have consequences that benefit them but the North will hold strong to end slavery or permanently be put in a position of disfavor. The true arm at the hands of the North against the South is abolition.

The North has hesitated a lot and conceded a lot, and should now step up its efforts to achieve what it believes is right. This, in turn, will guarantee for the South "a new atomic

social composition which will lead to peace and prosperity." There has to be "an affirmative step in the interests of human civility," though the executor may be condemned when first taking "a bold and good measure," but "men reconcile themselves very fast,… once it is taken." This act with no heavy price "rids the world," at one hit, "of this humiliating trouble, which is "the cause of war and ruin of nations." The outcome of such bold action from the statesman will settle all the differences because "justice satisfies everybody, white man, red man, yellow man, and black man" (149). Yet, this measure has to be in effect soon, for if not so, this weapon will fall off the hands of the North though victory will eventually come when it is due and by means of Nature's prearranged fundamentals.

As the war broke out, he started to show more and more support to Lincoln's policies, approving the president's message of a gradual abolition of slavery and marked it as the best year in political life. As the proclamation of 22 September was announced, bracing for emancipation on the first of January, an assembly was organized in Boston, where Emerson had to remind the attendants that "every step in the history of political liberty is a sally of the human mind into the untried future," as the war was yet to take its toll on the nation. He also insisted the liberty comes at a price, which is patience and resilience likening it to "a slow fruit" that comes "for short periods and rare conditions." The fate of the nation is to be decided by war, though that is not what he had hoped for, because the ultimate solution to slavery would be an economic move by the North of buying up all slaves from their owners. But, as things started to take a different form and the South seemed determined to defend their lifestyle with fervor, thus provoking a war, he believed that Mr. Lincoln's ideas would get the country to see the light of freedom and that "he has been permitted to do more for America than any other American man," (150) for the obstacles that he had to overcome, and that the

right time for emancipation is drawing near. Once slavery is done with, it can never have a place again in the nineteenth century, because "the moral sentiment is now against it."

For Emerson, the emancipation shows that the lives of the brave Americans "have not been sacrificed in vain. It makes a victory of our defeats." It heals the wounds of any American who abhorred slavery, and every citizen with the right mind now feels healthy. A victory as such will make the nation stand many adversities. However, "it does not promise the redemption of the black race," which is beyond our means, "but it relieves of our opposition." The act of the president has "paroled all slaves in America, who should no longer fight against the North that has now recovered itself from the "false position" and planted itself "on a law of Nature." This outcome is owed to the combined efforts of a "virtuous feeling" or a "religious heart," and the contribution of "every man of honor, every poet, every philosopher," adding to that "the generosity of the cities, the health of the country, the strong arms of the mechanics, the endurance of farmers," and "the passionate conscience of women" together with "the sympathy of distant nations," (151) all come together to support the Emancipation Proclamation.

Every citizen should support this movement so that when this scar disappears, no one should remain pretentious, but pride themselves with their unmasked faces. The existence of slavery on the nation's soil was creating a public distress, but with the proclamation, it will be relieved. This act, with a movement behind it, will mark the renewal and redemption of the country. The build up to the war was there regardless of Sumter, and could only culminate in this way. Emerson's message to his countrymen was full of a sense of a new pride for every American, and the rest of the world had to hear it too, in case they had misunderstood their purpose; "Happy are the young who find the pestilence cleansed out of the earth, leaving open to them an honest career," that the movement had made possible. Also, "happy are the old,

who see Nature purified before they depart," and this may give a good reason to live on."Do not let the dying die; hold them back to this world until you have charged their ear and heart with this message to other spiritual societies, announcing the melioration of our planet" (Qtd., in (Cooke 1982: 151).

He also showed sympathy for the misfortunate and wounded race which was subject to subjugation by men who did not understand what the moral law was. The proclamation became effective on the first of January, 1863, and emancipation has now seen the light for the first time in the history of the country currently at war. For such an occasion a meeting of jubilation was held in Boston where Emerson read his "Boston Hymn."

III. 9.Human Equality and Abolitionism

The term Transcendentalism was borrowed from the German philosopher Immanuel Kant who evoked man's intrinsic ability to go beyond the limits of the outer world so that they can become receptive to natural truth. Amongst the connotations of this idea is that every individual holds the same natural abilities irrespective of race, gender or class, endorsing the notion of universal justice. This standpoint opened the Transcendentalists eyes on the inequalities put in place by the current social institutions. Emerson openly criticized the dislocation dislodgment of Native Americans their homeland. He and fellow Transcendentalist Theodore Parker fiercely opposed the institution of slavery. Such opposition contributed to the shaping of abolitionist movement.

To become familiar with how Transcendentalists approached reform, it is very important to have a perception of what was going on at the political and social levels of that

time. Jacksonian Democrats were in disagreement with the Whig Party conservatives. However, both parties appeared to be essentially satisfied with the status quo and enlarging the countries territory. Dealing with the rights of slaves, women, and Indians was certainly not in their program, and the gap between classes got bigger, particularly with the arrival of immigrants from famished Ireland and industry developed while farming started to shrink. It was an era of continuous conciliation to maintain political power evenly balanced between free and slave states.

It is no surprise, therefore, that such a political and social climate would provoke the emergence of multiple reform movements, generally by small assemblages resentful to social and political unfairness but incapable to efficiently have their say in Congress. Though the reform groups were small, their determined and enthusiastic voices became loud through speeches and written essays. An alternative way was to move westward seeking liberties that were almost denied in the east, yet chaos frequently took the places of long-established forms of ruling.

Transcendentalists believed in internal, spiritual principles as the starting point for man's understanding of the universe. These made up the foundation for the "conscience" that gave each individual the capacity to connect with the spiritual realm. At its essence, Transcendentalism celebrated the spiritual equality of every soul. There is no random discrimination amongst the saved and ill-fated, because anyone can have an inspirational, "transcendent" experience and goes on to live later with a connection to the spiritual world. Accordingly, Transcendentalism appears to be the perfect philosophy for a people enthusiastic about the proposition that all men are created equal and ought to have the same undeniable right. Because of this principle, Transcendentalists started to be related to antebellum

endeavor for social reform. Taken the fact that all men and women are spiritually equal, they all ought to have a fair treatment as well as having laws that guarantee their rights of equality.

Many Transcendentalists were taking part in efforts to invalidate the conditions that hampered individuals from reaching the culmination of everything they worked for. Margaret Fuller, persuaded by Emerson's principle of "self-reliance," happened to be the leading promoter of women's rights during her era. Being brave enough to put her principles to work, she thereafter set sail to Europe to give an account of the political and social revolutions of 1848. Such reform efforts were the spontaneous outcome of Transcendentalist principles, and they effectively put reform at the core of their Transcendentalism.

The Transcendentalists considered the poor, the disabled, the prisoners, and the slaves as their equivalents in spirituality, and America's promise would not be realized until all its citizens were remunerated for their citizenship. The Transcendentalists called the poor the impoverished, the prisoners the imprisoned, and the slaves as the enslaved to tackle the issues of all those members of society with no prejudices.

Other Transcendentalists shifted towards what would be known today as communism. After walking out of his Unitarian pulpit, George Ripley started the Brook Farm Institute of Agriculture and Education.

Transcendentalists demanded the moral reform of the individual whereas the major transcendentalists, Emerson and Thoreau, had a strong faith in individuality. Some of the less renowned Transcendentalists gathered in groups that ranged between eight to over a hundred members and started communities in which they endeavored to live considerately. It is important to note that the idea of being part of such communities never appealed to the most renowned Transcendentalists. Thoreau had an indifferent position towards Brook Farm, and

Emerson gave a positive feedback but he turned down the offer of becoming a member. Until the 1840s, Emerson was not the actual leader of the Transcendentalists. Instead, it was Ripley and Brownson.

Ripley and Brownson started losing ground gradually to Emerson as he rose as a major Transcendentalist spokesperson after his infamous "Divinity School Address" (1838), when he upset the Harvard theological faculty by arguing that their preaching was boring, and the publication of his first book of essays three years afterwards. He hereby offered Transcendentalists an alternative way to act on their principles, one that puts the individual at the core of all reform efforts rather than engaging in a collective social reform.

Transcendentalists who had taken social reform forward, and that took account of giving women and workers more undeniable rights, are now more concerned with extinguishing the institution of slavery. The latter was an evil greater than any other and had to be brought to an end before all other issues. Numerous women who had up till then a commitment towards women's rights were persuaded by such line of reasoning and supposed that their turn for equality should come after that of the enslaved.

When the Civil War came to an end, many of the Transcendentalists had died mainly Parker, Thoreau, and Fuller. Others shifted their attention to new grounds. Following the breakdown of Brook Farm towards the end of the 1840's, Ripley moved to New York City, taking the place of Fuller as book reviewer at Greeley's *Tribune*. Brownson turned into a defender of Roman Catholicism. That allowed Emerson to become the most renowned figure of Transcendentalism.

III. 9. Destiny of America in "Fortune of the Republic" (1863)

In 1863, with Lincoln reelection open to question and stories about an agreed settlement going around, Emerson again took an important responsibly in public debates with an ardent speech entitled "Fortune of the Republic"[22]. It was delivered several times at a critical time of the Civil War. Though there were great Union victories at Gettysburg and Vicksburg in July 1863, by December the fighting had become an effective deadlock. With fatality reaching big numbers and no conclusion to the confrontation to be hoped for, war exhaustion started to take toll on Northern determination.

Conservatives, with Clement Vallandigham, Democrat from Ohio as their leader, were calling for an end of confrontations. These "Copperheads," as they were mockingly referred to, supported an agreed settlement that would take account of the reestablishment of the Union in keeping with the status ante, with slavery kept untouched. Emerson was outraged at this outlook, which he viewed as a would-be moral tragedy. He delivered "Fortune of the Republic" on numerous occasions during the winter season in attempt at backing President Lincoln and to boost the Union determination to continue the war till triumph, regardless of the detriment.

At the start of his speech, Emerson puts the war within a framework of a worldwide effort for universal human rights, the result of which will shape the future of humanity. He

[22] Emerson first delivered « Fortune of the Republic" in Boston on December 1, 1863. Many years later, in 1878, he delivered a lecture by this title in Boston that was later published in *Miscellanies* (1884, 1904). This later lecture, however, was a synthetic piece, a combination of segments from various lectures, fabricated by Emerson's daughter Ellen Tucker Emerson and his biographer and editor, James Eliot Cabot. It bears little resemblance to the 1863 address, which was not published in its original presentation until 1995 in Emerson's Antislavery Lectures (Tiffany 108-9)

then alerts against the contemporaneous lack of concern and gloom to induce a movement to agree on a thoughtless and peace, "on any terms." He maintained his position of continuing the fight to its ultimate culmination, which would naturally involve the complete eradication of the institution of slavery. Among the menaces to realizing this finale was the unstated assistance that Great Britain, the prominent global power at the time, was giving to the Confederacy. Emerson believed the English elite was supportive of the rebellious acts as they considered American democracy as jeopardizing their aristocratic tradition; besides, the cotton trade was of great importance to their economy. Correspondingly, Emerson was critical of even his friend Thomas Carlyle and the British intellectuals in general as he stated: "In sight of a commodity, her religion, her morals are forgotten. Even Carlyle, her ablest living writer, a man who has earned his position by the sharpest insights, is politically a fatalist" (Complete Lectures 314).

Also, during this very critical period, he tried his best to keep the nation's hope alive by stating that the "war uplifts us into generous sentiments. We do not often have a moment of grandeur in these hurried, slipshod lives. The people have met the dreadful issues so frankly. The youth have shown themselves heroes. The women have shown a tender patriotism and an inexhaustible charity" (Complete Lectures 325).

By 1863, Emerson had realized that no sacrifice was too serious when considering the noble principle of human freedom. In fact, he took those sacrifices as part of natural process, a necessity such as that of a" lactation, or dentition, or puberty." He wanted "a state of things in which crime will not pay, a state of things which allows every man the largest liberty compatible with the liberty of other man" (326). It is very important to note that in this speech, he finally put "the opening apologia" aside "of most of his antislavery statements.

Now he rose to defend the war and its principles vigorously, without hint of reluctance" (Myerson 205).

Emerson continues in the same line of thought but now with real life comparison of the status quo in America and the revolutions that brought about the rise of the Western world and would go on to transforming it into a better place where the outcomes of those revolutions primarily benefit society:

> *There have been revolutions which were not in the interest of feudalism and barbarism, but in that of society. A series of wars in Europe are read with passionate interest, and never lose their pathos by time. First, the planting of Christianity. Second, the driving of the Moors from Spain, France, and Germany.Third, the rise of towns. Fourth, the Reformation of Luther. Fifth, the decay of the temporal power of the Pope; the breaking of the power of the Jesuits…Sixth, the establishment of free institutions in England, France, and America. Seventh, the revolutions effected in all the arts of life by science. Eighth, the destruction of slavery. And these are distinguished not by the numbers of combatants, or the numbers of the slain, but by the motive (Complete Lectures 315).*

Emerson then started to hint at the progress that had been made since the Southerners were kept out of Congress such as the Homestead Act (1862), which gave the right of property to any citizen who wished to establish a farm in the Western frontier, and the Morrill Act (1862), which initiated the establishment of the first land-grant agricultural colleges and was a great move to promote public education. If the war culminates in a triumph of principle, the generation that would follow would vote for "their children,--not a dame school, nor a

Latin school, but a university, complete training in all the arts of peace and war, letters, science; all the useful and all the fine arts" (317).

Thanks to Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation, the country has started to unbind the "weaker race" that "snuffling hypocrites" had chained (320). The idea that freedom, equal opportunities, and social justice were the birthright of all citizens, no matter what race, was starting to be foundational. Undoubtedly, all this could not have occurred had it not been for the war.

The political development of the country has also been advanced by the war. Lincoln, an average American, has come out as a true people's leader, a near incarnation of the fundamental democratic notion that the governing body should be "of the people, by the people and for the people" (Tiffany 109). This principle, Emerson affirms, has been established under Lincoln and that "not such was America under previous administrations" (Complete Lectures 317).

In the view of these steps forward of the republic, returning to the dark era of slavery and social injustice would indeed be very appalling. "We, in the midst of a great revolution, still enacting the sentiment of the Puritans, and the dreams of young people thirty years ago, we—passing out of old remainders of barbarism into pure Christianity and humanity—into freedom of thought, of religion, of speech, of the press, of trade, of suffrage, or political right…"(319). Emerson asserts that American democracy is noticeably becoming more liberal and progressive that the achievements must keep on.

Emerson compares this new pattern to the course of social development throughout history and deems the former to be necessarily better as the world, in terms of progress, is heading forward. "Humanity asks that government shall not be ashamed to be tender and

paternal, but that democratic institutions shall be more thoughtful for the interests of women, for the training of children, for the care of sick and unable persons and the serious care of criminals, than was ever any the best government of the world" (320). The disparity between this outlook and that of slave oligarch is huge. Emerson repeats to the so-called accommodationists that it is useless "to say the war was avoidable by us, or, that both sides are in the wrong. The difference between the parties is eternal,--it is the difference of moral and immoral motive. Your action is to build, and their action is to destroy" (321).

He concludes his address with a serious but a positive tone. At this point, America is standing at a multidirectional point and only a conclusive chapter of the war will define the itinerary of democracy not only at a local level but worldwide. He admits that the price was so high but so were the results. Slavery as an institution is in ruins now though "one generation might well be sacrificed, perhaps it will be,--that this continent be purged, and a new era of equal rights dawn on the universe" (170). He repeats to his audience that the circumstances are challenging, "but heroic," as the war make us rise above miserly sentiments. His essential Transcendental outlook is of a reborn America where all will work for an honorable civilization, "for the poor, for justice, genius, and public good." At that point in time, this would-be great nation will eventually finds what it was destined for, and that is becoming "the charity of God" to humanity (325).

Emerson's political ideas came directly from his Transcendentalism. In his influential essays "The Over-Soul" (1841), Emerson affirms that all humanity part in that "Over-Soul, within which every man's particular being is contained and made one with all other" (Complete Essays 256). From this originates his belief in human equality, a "self-evident" truth pronounced by the Founding Fathers. He implemented this Transcendental theory unfailingly throughout his twenty-year old efforts against slavery. Democracy and freedom

have their origins in the "Sacred truth that every man hath in him the divine Reason," (Quoted in Tiffany 110) and since every individual has somehow something divine within him, slavery is systematically a deplorable cause.

Emerson's struggle with slavery culminated in "Fortune of the Republic." The latter is definitely his most explicitly political address. There were great nationwide conflicts when Emerson delivered the lecture. The prospect of liberal democracy and the moral value of human equality would be defined by the end the confrontation between the North and South. Had it not been for Lincoln reelection, then the moral development that nation had reached and which consisted of universal emancipation, social equality, and civil rights would be aborted. As soon as the war inflamed, Emerson was convinced that it would eventually show that it was the channel through which the nation's moral renaissance would go.

In previous lectures such as "Civilization at a Pinch" (1861), "American Nationality" (1861), and "Emancipation" (1863), he had advertised Transcendental values of universal freedom and social justice that are prevalent in "Fortune of the Republic." Emerson's awareness of the urgent situation is exposed in the fact that he had delivered the lecture no less than fourteen successive times all over New England and New York. He had never delivered a single address with such rate of recurrence. When Lincoln was finally chosen as President again in the fall of 1864, Emerson was delighted. He considered it as a great victory for humanity as a whole. He certainly felt a kind approval for the important responsibility he had undertaken to make a Transcendental victory happen (Tiffany 111).

During the mid-1850s, as Emerson was increasingly starting to commit to the antislavery cause that had been infused in him, Northern public attitude had been progressively swinging to the side of the antislavery campaigners. The Sims case in 1851 had

upset many backers of the Fugitive Slave Law in Boston and other places in Massachusetts who had supposed that the Southern interest had to be taken into account, regardless the abhorrent nature of slavery, as long as the Constitution acknowledged and defended slavery.

By 1854, when another fugitive slave was returned to slavery from Boston, the infringement of the rights of individuals acknowledged as citizens by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts started to appear too shameful even to the businesspeople and finance specialists that Emerson had constantly criticized for their moral dimness. The killing of Kansas settlers from Massachusetts, the fierce attack on Charles Sumner and the repeated fugitive slave cases all over the North hastened the vogue. And, likewise did the publication of Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom' Cabin* in 1852.

Emerson's influence on public opinion during this remarkable change of perspectives is not clear to identify. Undoubtedly, He was not a Wendell Philips or William Lloyd Garrison. His opinions were listened to only on specific occasions. He did not take to the streets and rally with protesters nor did he become a member of any abolitionist movement. Despite writing and speaking out against the institution of slavery, these words as an entity represent only a minor part of his work. However, as a chief figure in New England scholarly sphere, as the principle spokesperson for idealism in America, and as a prestigious personality highly recognized, Emerson uttered words of immeasurable importance and lasting outcome. On every occasion he had to criticize slavery, he always contributed his influential name to the abolitionist cause to add force to the intellectual and moral foundation of the movement. The enthusiasm with which he was looked for by antislavery campaigners is one reference of his far-reaching influence;

> *When abolitionists assembled their portraits for an 1857 lithograph print "Heralds of Freedom," Emerson was asked to contribute his likeness. It is a measure of the importance of Emerson's name, and an acknowledgement of his important contributions to the antislavery cause, that they made the request. It is a measure of Emerson's acceptance of the role that had been largely thrust upon him that he consented. The finished print shows William Lloyd Garrison's surrounded by portraits of six other "herald." Emerson's likeness hovers directly above Garrison's, as if to suggest that he was the guardian spirit of the group (Myerson 207).*

Overall, Emerson's contributions to the antislavery cause had been that of a poet, an essayist, or a lecturer. His approach to reform and social justice made his involvement seem superficial to the general public. However, if looked at closely, his writings could be taken as prophesies since he had the struggles against an issue such as slavery would take something as fatal as the Civil War that he had never considered as a blight but rather a process by which Nature rids itself of a bad state of affairs and traces new paths for progress to be achieved.

III. 10.Post-war Emerson

Emerson commemorated the new nation's state of affairs that would allow for the cause of humanity to be promoted after eradication of slavery. He deeply expressed his contentment in "Progress of Culture," delivered at Harvard in July 1867, by emphasizing the quality of change that America had the privilege to have. He considered all the bad times that America had to go through to achieve such historic glory, though never explicitly as

Transcendental triumph. Now that the war was over, Emerson began to unleash his sheer buoyancy:

> *We meet today under happy omens to our ancient society…No good citizen but shares the wonderful prosperity of the Federal Union. The heart still beats with the public pulse of joy that the country has withstood the rude trial which threaten its existence, and thrills with the vast augmentation of strength which it draws from this proof. The storm which has been resisted is a crown of honor and a pledge of strength to the ship. We may well be contended with our fair inheritance. Was ever such coincidence of advantages in time and place as in America today? (Complete Works 207).*

Emerson then described America as the answer to all wanderers who want to choose their climate and governments and all this is due to "the fusion of races and religions" and "science which surpasses the old miracles of mythology." "They [migrants] come from crowded, antiquated kingdoms to the easy sharing of our forms." Then he continued by stating some schemes that he deemed simple such as the land that was offered "without price" to the "settler," in addition to the "cheap education to his children." Emerson spoke of America as if shifted from "the stone age, or the bronze, or the iron, or the lacustrine" to the age of steal, of gold, of coal, petroleum, cotton, steam, electricity, and the spectroscope." All this has contributed to the improvement of life, "and to the scope of the intellect," and America, for its part, "added important features to the sketch" (208).

When the abolitionists were done with the slavery supporters, many of them started to work on other issue. Emerson, in particular, evoked "The new claim of woman to the political

status," and that it is "itself an honorable testimony to the civilization which has given her a civil status new in history. Now that by the increased humanity of law she controls her property, she inevitably takes the next step to her share in power." He never took any changes that happened in America for granted and he openly stated that the high humanity of the new legislation owed its improvement to the war;

> *The war gave us the abolition of slavery, the success of Sanitary Commission and of the Freedom's Bureau. Add to these the new scope of social science; the abolition of capital punishment and of imprisonment for debt; the improvement of prisons; the efforts for the suppression of intemperance; the search for just rules affecting labor; the cooperative societies; the insurance of life and limb; the free-trade league; the improved almshouses; the enlarged scale of charities to relieve local famine, or burned towns (Complete Works 209).*

The general mood is new. A quiet revolution has forced, little by little, "all this activity." Men are now speechless by witnessing "acts of good nature" and "common civility" and many other excellent activities. All the diversity that has emerged and created new professions and the "appearance of gifted men" and "the rapid addition to our society of a class of true nobles, by which the self-respect of each town and state is enriched" was the outcome of resistance impelled by the very nature of individuals (210).

Emerson takes Massachusetts as a great example of "boundless freedom" by comparing it to other places outside America where one could be "burned or stoned" for pronouncing things that "are commonplaces at all our breakfast-tables." Political topics can now be approached as any daily life subject. "Here [Massachusetts] the tongue is free, and the hand; and the freedom of action goes to the brink, if not over the brink, of license" (211).

Chapter Four
Women's Rights and Social Evolution

Chapter IV. Women's Rights and Social Evolution

IV. 1. Introduction:

"If women feel wronged then they are wronged…I should vote for every franchise for women"(McClure, p. 205).

The strong and independent-thinking women by who young Emerson was surrounded made of him a strong believer in women's potential to be amongst the leaders. From his mother that took it upon herself to take care of the family after the death of his father to his ambitious and intellectually-curious aunt Mary Moody Emerson, who stayed with them at times and was voracious in her intellectual and religious quest and was young Emerson's most influential figure. The Emerson home invited other ambitious women as well, like Hannah Adams, writer of the first American Dictionary of Religion, and the first book on Judaism by an American, and Sarah Alden Bradford Ripley, who knew Latin, Greek, French, Italian, and German and tutored Harvard students.

In 1850, Emerson signed "The Declaration of Principles" presented by the first National Women's Rights Convention held at Worcester, Massachusetts. In a speech on the subject delivered in 1855, Emerson stated that the women's movement is "no whim, but an organic impulse…a right and proper inquiry…honoring to the age." He explicitly urged women to claim their "one half of the world," their "full rights of all kinds, to education, to employment, to equality of property, equal rights in marriage, in the exercise of professions, and of suffrage." He argued that if women had no right to cast their ballots, they then should

not be taxed. "if the woman demand votes, offices and political equality with men…it must not be refused…[their] aspiration of this century will be the code of the next." Suffragists were among Emerson's earliest, and most sympathetic audiences, as they understood nonconformity within the established social structure. Although Emerson was not completely sure that women wanted their "equal share in public affairs," he affirmed "it is they and not we that are to determine it."[23]

As intellects, literary figures, and participants in public life, Emerson welcomed women. In Concord, along with his wife, Lidian, his intimate circle of intellectuals included Elizabeth Hoar, Louisa May Alcott, Sarah Ripley, and Margaret Fuller from whom Emerson derived many of his progressive thoughts on women in the nineteenth century. Like Margaret Fuller and most thinkers at this time, Emerson accepted the notion of innate differences between the sexes, of male and female principles in nature. But, also like Fuller, he believed that the best and most interesting natures had both elements: "A highly endowed man with good intellect and good conscience is a man-woman." Following Fuller's lead, Emerson pulled back from assigning women a separate, domestic sphere of influence. As Fuller once wrote, "If men look straightly to it, they will find that unless their lives are domestic, those of the women will not be." After considering women's limited status in society Emerson wrote, "I think it is impossible to separate the interests and education of the sexes…every country, in its roll of honor, has as many women as men."

Though his efforts paid off, Emerson remained the distant intellectual, and this got in the way of his relationships with women. However, he was profoundly fond of the tubercular

[23] Woman : A Lecture Read before the Woman's Rights Convention, Boston, September 20, 1855.

Eller Tucker only to lose her seventeen months after they tied the knot. His second wedding was deeply affected by the reminiscence of his first great love.

IV. 2. Emerson in the Context of Woman's Rights

With the purpose of understanding Emerson's varying standpoint about the woman rights movement, it is important to know how the movement came emerged, developed, and changed and the challenges around which the early debates were focused. Even before the first stages of the woman's rights movement in America, Emerson had been used to the concepts that enlightened it, particularly through the innovative work of his peer Margaret Fuller, who wrote *Women in the Nineteenth Century* 1945. It was the first book in America that supports women's rights. Its foundational notions first came into view in the Transcendentalist literary journal, *The Dial*, two years earlier. Fuller's thought, transeferred to Emerson through their direct debates and correspondence, happened to put Emerson's opinion about women within a particular context.

Fuller's exhaustively coherent approach would offer a basis for the arguments that would later be adopted by the progressing woman's rights movement. Hence, Emerson shared basic principles and values on the subject of women with the local woman's rights movement since its early stages, urging suffragists to accept him as one of their supporters.

After Fuller's insightful address on the question of woman's role in society, the woman's rights movement came out from "the crucible of the abolitionist movement, in much the same way that the contemporary women's movement would later spring from the furor of the civil rights movement." The World's Anti-Slavery Convention, organized in London 1840, quickened the process of the formation of the woman's rights movement;

> *After women organized and planned the first international convention, a massive undertaking, when they arrived at the site they were informed that they could not be seated at their own conference due to their sex; all women were to be excluded from the platform and convention seating, allowed only to stand voiceless and silent in the aisles gallery. Outraged, organizers Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton agreed to hold the first woman's rights convention upon their return to America (Myerson 212).*

By 1848, these American women had held their earliest significant woman's rights conference in New York, yet, genuine acknowledgement of the woman's rights came only after the Civil War. Debates were going loud around women being involved in social reform and a second National Woman's Rights Convention that was held in Massachusetts, in 1850.[24] Emerson was invited to the convention and he supported the move but could not be present because he was busy editing the *Memoirs of Margaret Fuller Ossoli*. Owing to the fact that Emerson was so close to Fuller and the woman's rights movement, he demonstrated to her influential attitude on his interpretations of women's issues since he first openly related himself to the movement, or even before.

Emerson, in spite of his well-known distrust of reform and reformers, took a paradoxical choice to put his signature on a convention to show support for the agreement on certain principles. It was a very unusual move from Emerson as a writer and poet to identify

[24] Ralph Waldo Emerson had been invited to speak at women's rights conventions in both 1850 and 1851, but he declined, finally agreeing to the request by Paulina Wright Davis to appear at the 1855 meeting. Other speakers at the event included representatives of abolitionism, such as Wendell Phillips and Thomas Wentworth Higginson, and the prominent women's rights activists Lucy Stone, Susan B. Anthony, and Transcendentalist feminist Caroline Dall …after 1855, women's rights leaders claimed Emerson as friend of the cause (Tiffany 285).

himself with a formal organization that would make his proclamations public and official. His aim to be openly involved as a supporter of the convention not only demonstrated his acknowledgment of the aspirations of the woman's movement earlier than most of the country was aware of its existence but also the power of his endorsement of its values.

He supposed that since women did not have equal rights of property and right of voting, their future was going down the wrong track or in contrast to that of social development. For him, this injustice evolved during barbarian times, when, for the reason that she could not defend herself, it was indispensable that she should be under the domination of a man who recompensed for protecting her. Now that the world has become different, it is normal that she claims her property, and, when married, the spouse can no longer take full legal possession of her possessions as soon as he is legally married to her. Emerson then voiced his displeasure with the existing state of affairs of women backing his view with actual real life situations and, at the same time doubted the adeptness of legislation in transforming the woman's situation;

> *I find the Evils real and great. If I go from Hanover street to Atkinson street, as I did yesterday, what hundreds of extremely ordinary, paltry, hopeless women I see, whose plight is piteous to think of. If it were possible to repair the rottenness of human nature, to provide a rejuvenescence, all were well, and no specific reform, no legislation would be needed… I should therefore advise that the Woman's Convention should be holden in the Sculpture Gallery, that this high remedy might be suggested (Journals 431).*

He sympathized with women to a far extent due to the view that only "Few" of them "are sane" as a reference to their "excess of temperament." Then, he deemed women as

releasing "a colored atmosphere," "floods upon floods of colored light, in which they walk evermore, and see all objects through this warm tinted mist which envelopes them." However, men are not as temperamental as women, and thus they, both men and women, and their problems, should be approached differently.

In 1855, Emerson would show up in person to tackle that year's woman's rights convention. His lecture for that specific event was soon after improved to form the essay "Woman" (1855). Both the initial address and the faintly revised form, the essay was Emerson's most known and comprehensive account of his views on women's rights, and his sincere devotion to the cause. The essay, nonetheless, was a source of disagreement and even vexation for contemporary readers. Emerson though made his political leanings to women's rights clear from the outset, first by putting on a claim for the significance of the issue, a view he held all through his career.

Emerson begins his address with the thought of considering women as "the power of civilization" and in case they given the right to cast their ballots, they will advance the political process, just in the way their presence improves aspects of other fields. He has faith in women's higher instincts. With regard to their responsibilities in society, Emerson likened life in general as "a ship of humanity" to "will" as a "rudder" which is "man," and the sentiment [woman] the sail. "When woman affects to steer, the rudder is only a masked sail. When women engage in art or trade, 'tis usually as a resource, not a primary object" (Selected Lectures 170).

Therefore if women retreat from their natural space to take part in "art or trade," it is only out of specific need, never a basic intention. Emerson then puts it plainly that "the life of affection is primary to them [women], so that there is usually no employment or career which

they will not, with their own applause and that of society, quit for a suitable marriage" (215). Such was Emerson's view of women despite the radical changes that were happening during the mid-nineteenth century. He even refers to Plato's view on women that they are "the same in faculty as men, only less," and finds them all "victims of their temperament." Emerson also quotes Samuel Taylor Coleridge on women as civilizers, stating that women are only "disfranchised" when they are not in the appropriate space (Tiffany 286). After stating the qualities women's nature, he admits that "there is no gift of nature without some drawback; if we are here we cannot be there; if we have day, we must forego night. And every extraordinary strength or possession that is added, usually lames the receiver on some part" So, to women the "exquisite structure" came with its "own penalty" that makes of women more vulnerable, more infirm, more mortal than men" (Lectures 218).

In the following part, Emerson makes use of religious metaphors to evaluate women with a reference to Eve as an example for all humanity. Unlike men, who see love as some sort of advantage, women find it very noble, carrying with it some divine aspects, and also have the ability to instantly figure out the characters with whom they converse. Emerson gives an example of a woman[25] who "was no statute book of practical rules, nor orderly digest of any system of philosophy divine or human, but a Bible, miscellaneous in its parts, but one in Spirit, wherein are sentences of condemnation, chapters of prophesy, promises, and covenants of love" (220). For Emerson these features make the exemplary woman.

Emerson categorizes some "instrumentalities" that enlighten women's strengths and weaknesses. Religion emphasizes woman's great importance through evoking examples such as "the deification of woman in the Catholic Church." Another example is that of "the

[25]According to some scholars, the woman he used as an example was an allusion to his aunt Mary Moody Emerson (Tiffany 286).

Quakers" who "have the honor of first having established in their discipline an equality in the sexes. It is even more perfect later with the Shakers." Another example of understanding woman's role is "the building of the Hotel Rambouillet" in France. A third, founded on a metaphysical basis, comes from the doctrine of Swedenborg," which revealed the difference of sex to run through nature and through thought." At the end he admits that the antislavery campaign played an important role in making major changes in women's roles. The movement has offered woman a new sense of public duty, and a further self-esteem. And as the pattern continues, women will be more and more demanding of their basic rights until claiming their "half of the world."

The path is now traced for women to claim fundamental rights such as voting which would be as a cure that is given at a critical time; "here, at the right moment, when the land is full of committees examining election frauds and misdeeds, woman asks for her vote. It is the remedy at the moment of need"(214). And, "if women demand votes, offices, and political equality with men, as among the Shakers, and Elder and Eldress are of equal power" (222).

In the section that follows, Emerson makes a distinction between his own arguments against a systematized reform group and of those who are against women's rights in the first place. It is "very cheap wit that finds so droll that a woman" do not have "sufficient moral or intellectual force" or who think that the only place where women are productive is the kitchen, and cannot mingle in the complicated world of business or politics. Emerson does not ascribe to this trend though he insists that women are victims of "their temperament," adding to that that they need to dedicate about twenty years for maternity, which is "of so supreme importance" (Journals 190), a really that makes them less likely to take part in public affairs.

Emerson acknowledges that the request of particular rights has to be accepted but at the end he argues that "the best women" do not ask for what the entire woman's rights movement calls for or as he stated in his correspondence with Paulina W. Davis that even if he would vote for what women asked and men denied, he "would not wish women to wish political functions, nor, if granted assume them." Then he explained his reasons for his ultimate wish by assuming that "a woman whom all men would feel to be the best, would decline such privileges if offered & feel them to be obstacles to her legitimate influence" (Letters 360). In his letter to Wendell Philips, drafted on February 19, 1853, and after reading the petition for women's suffrage, Emerson stated:

> *...this is my feeling to the whole matter: I wish that done for their rights which women wish done. If they wish to vote, I shall vote that they vote. If they wish to be lawyers & judges, I shall vote that those careers be open to them But I do not think that wise & wary women wish to be electors or judges: and I will not ask that they will be made such against their will if we obtain for them the ballot, I suppose the best women would not vote. By all means let their rights of property be put on the same basis as those of men, or, I should say, on a more favorable ground. And let women go to women, & bring us certain tidings what they want,& it will be imperative on me & on us all to help them get it (Letters 369).*

He is convinced that the movement is impelled by "people who intellectually seek them, but have not the support or sympathy of the truest women" (Lectures 222). For instance, he is apprehensive about those who would amend or change marriage law, holding instead the view that marriage with its current laws in America is an answer to a woman's problem. In the same way, he is of the same mind as the reformers that issue of the vote is not

a subject of woman's aptitude, and it would be strange to reject the principle of woman suffrage. For Emerson, women would rather focus on new career options, and in case the demands are answered, vote naturally follows.

However, Emerson goes back to his chief objection to the women's movement and believes it is not the right moment to try and implement premature changes: "I do not think it yet appears that women wish this equal share in public affairs." Then, he insists that the truest women should determine the path of their destiny and not the members of the movement or all citizens in general;" it is they [women], and not we, that are to determine it." He also wanted the laws to be changed according a civilized society: "Let the laws be purged of every barbarous remainder, every barbarous impediment to women" (Lectures 224).

He promotes access to education and property rights before women can decide for themselves if they truly wish to have a say in the lawmaking and insists on dealing with women "greatly: let them make their road by the upper road not by the way manufacturing public opinion, which lapses continually, and makes charlatans." Women should influence the lawmaking process instead of trying to be lawgivers. "The new movement is only a tide of shared by the spirits of man and woman, and you may proceed in a faith, that, whatever the woman's heart is prompted to desire, the man's mind is simultaneously prompted to accomplish" (225). Thus, women should know how to use their influence on men to their advantage instead of being involved themselves in a complicated life style of a politician or a campaigner.

In "Woman," Emerson maintains that women exercise a positive influence on men, society, and politics by means of their greater moral sensibility and sixth sense. This influence was more significant than taking part directly in public affairs, and he supposes that the

"truest women" did not want the vote. He restates the sentiment was impelled by an insignificant number of women, who acted wisely and spontaneously, and the mainstream American women did not adhere to the plea, and accordingly the movement did not truly respond to the women's demands. However, voices of other Transcendentalists did not necessarily echo Emerson's views though mostly they were of the same line of reasoning. The involvement of his colleagues and his close friendship with Fuller, and his commitment in publishing her memoirs after she passed away in 1850 possibly gives an explanation of the supposition by women's rights campaigners that Emerson could speak in support of their cause.[26]

Nevertheless, Emerson always refused to associate himself to any group or cause, insisting, as is the case in most of his writings that actual reform comes from within, as matter of individual sense of right and wrong and development. While he was continuously driven to lend his voice to the antislavery cause, "Woman" was the sole public address, and sole to be published as a revised essay, on the subject of women's rights. He did reveal privately in his journals, correspondence, and conversations on women's roles with his closest acquaintances such as Margaret Fuller, his aunt Mary Moody Emerson and his spouse Lidian Jackson Emerson. Yet, when faced with models of female talent, he still considered woman's essential

[26]Between the 1830s and 1850s, other Transcendentalists were increasingly connected with the cause of women's rights. In 1839, Margaret Fuller began her series of Conversations for women, promoting women's education and self-development, and in 1843, Fuller published an article in the *Dial* magazine titled "The Great Lawsuit. Man versus Men. Women versus Women." The main argument of the "The Great Lawsuit" (as indicated by the subtitle) was that limited social roles for both men and women prevented the full development of individuals both male and female. The male Transcendentalists such as Amos Bronson Alcott, Thomas Wentworth Higginson, and Theodore Parker also publically supported both the abolitionist and the women's movement by the 1850s (Tiffany 287).

role to be social; "But to women my paths are shut up and the fine women I think of who have had genius and cultivation who have not been wives but muses have something tragic in their lot and I shun to name them" (Journals 173).

Although his opinion on the subject of women's roles is a traditionalist one, and that their influence is mainly seen at level of the home and family, it sounded "hoarsely the attempt to describe didactically to woman her duties. Man can never tell woman what her duties are: he will certainly end describing a man in female attire" (304).

The major critique throughout the lecture was not the question of women's equality but the direct involvement in an organized reform campaign. He considers, according to his writings on reform, the upheavals and disputes as part of the natural progression of society, and thus reformers should approach the challenges they face with an awareness of the Nature ways. Emerson maintains that nature always tends to redress the balance and compensates for the inequalities:

> *The world looks like a multiplication-table, or a mathematical equation, which, turn it how you will, balances itself. Take what figure you will, its exact value, nor more nor less, still returns to you. Every secret is told, every crime is punished, every virtue rewarded, every wrong redressed, in silence and certainty. What we call retribution is the universal necessity by which the whole appears wherever a part appears. If you see smoke, there must be fire. If you see a hand or a limb, you know that the trunk to which it belongs there (Essays 176).*

Emerson wanted women who are confronted with unfamiliar tasks to depend on their own means,[27] and to "walk serenely on her way, accept the hint of each new experience, search in turn all the objects that solicit her eye, that she may learn the power and the charm of her newborn being" (257-8).

He draws a distinction between the pensive supporters of women's rights with the seemingly absentminded critics of the movement, whom Emerson condemned, using degrading expressions, ridiculing the shameful judgments on women and the extreme exaggeration "of every sexist writer from Aristophanes to Rabelais and the highly popular Tennyson" (Myerson 215). As he noticed in his journals, even poets backed a stereotyped and generic viewpoint of point of woman that saw herself "only in the plural" (qtd in Myerson 215). There, they turned into misogynists who considered every woman as a pretender because true women are nothing like these mediocre and normalized typecasts.

He had condemned this trend that belittled women, especially their intellectual efforts, during a specific period. Correspondingly, he commented very positively on Victorian Actress, Isabella Glyn, after seeing her deliver her Shakespearean readings, describing her as a woman of immense personal improvement, an exceptional talent, and a serene personality, and made a complaint about "her audience" which "was not worthy of her, impertinently read newspapers and had a trick of going out" (Journals 562).

Having founded the substance for the issue and the showiness of its enemies, Emerson endorsed his position by proving women's strong points. Regrettably, the strong points he

[27]Despite his qualified views on all questions of reform, in 1869 Emerson was elected a vice president of the New England Woman Suffrage Association. His was not necessarily in active role but rather a position biographer Robert Richardson explains as "ceremonial or conferred with an eye to publicity" (Tiffany 287).

recognized, no matter how approving they were to nineteenth-century women, "would come to seem problematic to late twentieth-century readers" (Myerson 216). As he maintained in the 1855 the lecture on at the Woman's Rights Convention: "I suppose women feel in relation to men as geniuses feel among energetic workers, that though overlooked and thrust aside in the press, they outsee all the noisy masters. And we feel overlook, judged, and sentenced." Addressing women with such courtesy, but one in which they would be reminded of the line "women's intuition" was something that they did not particularly like. Emerson states that it "was a cherished belief, that women had an oracular nature. They are more delicate than men, and, thus more impressionable" (Lectures 214).

Correspondingly, every time a woman had the right answer or did the right action after a quick reflection when surrounded by men, it was always owed to their "oracular nature," but never acknowledged as an indication of equal intellectual faculty. In the address, or later the essay, Emerson makes it clear that sounds like women's sixth sense is in reality the result of a quicker thinking process: "They inspire by a look, and pass with us not so much by what they say or do, as by their presence. They learn so fast, and convey the result so fast, as to outrun the logic of their slow brother" (215). Moreover, due his familiarity with the thoughts of German philosopher, Emmanuel Kant, he was not convinced at all that the intuitions of the mind to be inferior to reason, but at least the same, and potentially greater.

Similar to Fuller's thoughts, Emerson' believes that women's quick thinking process positioned them in the front line of social reform and that any interesting "opinion or movement shared by women" (Lectures 215) will indicate the outbreak of revolution. In this determined sense, women had an effect on the progress of society. Awareness of the influence of gender role conditioning was years away with the promising science of sociology, and Emerson's metaphors, though contradicting the postmodern sensibilities, were almost

identical to those of female activists and "suffragist contemporaries" (Myerson 217). Moreover, by trailing the lines of arguments put forth by Fuller and the suffragists that took over, Emerson showed how seriously he had faith in her ideas.

Therefore, Emerson's opinions as communicated in the address on which the essay "Woman" was centered "were what contemporary critics would today term essentialist," entailing an innate difference between the natural character of the genders that proved to be true "across the bounds of cultural and historical conditioning" (217). Though essentialism can be seen as a form of fiercely argued feminist outlook, in Emerson's day, due to the shallow awareness of social conditioning, it was the standard. It was actually the woman's movement in the nineteenth century, commonly consented to on the basis of essentialism and a request of equal legal rights, as judged against today's more variously driven women's movement, where a number of conflicting views have strived to have a voice. Emerson's supposition of natural emotional and physical differences in the genders was hence classified with time. As arguable as it is, a small number in the nineteenth century would oppose Emerson's reword of Swedenborg that the difference between the sexes runs "through nature and through thought" (qtd in Myerson 217).

The most honest suffragist of Emerson's era would not have opposed that women were more in a weak position than men, during an era when women exclusively had a high death toll, mainly at childbirth. Writer of Woman in the Nineteenth Century, Fuller, states clearly that "Men must soon see that, on their own ground, that woman is the weaker party, she ought to have legal protection, which would make such oppression impossible" (Fuller 13). Ellen Tucker, Emerson's first wife, together with Fuller, examples that were yet to become his most preferred. He had such an ideal picture of women in his mind, that in reality no one could be. Yet, after her death, he showed such admiration to women in general Ellen,

in particular, and "the divinity that speaks through her." Then he continues: "I can never think of woman without gratitude for the bright revelations of her best nature which have been made to me unworthy" (Journals 304). Emerson did cease to evoke her sayings and actions for the remainder of his life, and, so surprisingly, he continued to celebrate their marriage anniversary even after being settled down with another woman. Emerson appreciated women's writings possibly through reading her, as he put many of her poems in his journal.

Emerson sometimes did deal with the gender role orientations in some sort of androgyny; "A highly endowed man with good intellect and good conscience is a Man-Woman, and does not so much need the complement of Woman to his being as another. Hence, his relations to the sex are somewhat dislocated and unsatisfactory. He asks in woman sometimes the Woman, sometimes the Man" (Journals 285). Hence, the best individuals combine characteristics of both sexes in them and the development of the soul culminates in a "hermaphrodite…It was agreed that in every act should appear the married pair [in one person]: the two elements should mix in every act" (304).

In other instances, Emerson notices that feminine characteristics are most often to be found in a mastermind, and that when poetry is composed by a man, "he appears to assume the high feminine part of his nature" (qtd in Myerson 218). Yet, "Woman only can tell the heights of feminine nature, and the only way in which man can help her, is by observing woman reverentially and whenever she speaks from herself and catches him in inspired moments up to heaven of honor and religion…etc" (Journals 304). Emerson here, balances his opinion about the "hermaphrodite" that the best we can take from the feminine part of people in general can only be found in women. Nonetheless, "Men of genius are said to partake of the masculine & feminine traits. They have this feminine eye, a function so rich that it contents itself without asking any aid of the hand" (Journals 231).

He is then in line with Fuller's opinion that the two genders have a balance of personas that societies refer to as masculine or feminine, albeit arguably, "considering that they were already in advance of the mindfulness of their times", neither he nor Fuller was able to make this insight further relevant to reach today's supposition that social acclimatizing may create all "gender traits." Consistently, probably some modern readers have wished that Emerson stepped it up further to know about the impact of societal programming especially for the reason that, irrespective of Emerson's compatibility with ideas of his time, the address and the essay "Woman" contained a predictive statement of views that would not become modern until very recently. As Emerson began to observe the popular responses to the woman's movement, his voice sounded markedly related to that of women who would only start to write in the twentieth century (Myerson 219).

An illustration of this supposition would be the clichéd charge that women had not come up with any work of genius. In the initial lecture "Woman," on which the essay bearing the same title was centered; Emerson's answer to this accusation was that women, instead, outclassed men in life. This was in fact an advanced view in relation to his first thoughts about women, dismissing them as only inspirers of men. In addition, and as another argument, he realized that it had not been feasible that female mastermind would stand out until the establishment of an educational system that would be fair with both sexes. This, in fact, did not become true till the late nineteenth century. Therefore, the historical denial of women to access education had an impact on their potential during that century and before.

Emerson rejected the misogynists fanatical exaggeration and their tendency to see women as intellectually lower and of femininity as a disadvantage, anticipating what later analysts such as Charlotte Perkins Gilman, and English writer, Virginia Woolf, who stated in *A Room of One's Own*: "It would be a thousand pities if women wrote like men, or lived like

men, or looked like men, for if two sexes are quite inadequate, considering the vastness and variety of the world, how should we manage with one only?" (Woolf 104). When derisive views about women as constitutionally unacceptable turned into a medical condition, Emerson realized, women suffered as much deprivation as slaves, since the institutions were both created on a materialistic basis.

In the second part of the essay "Woman," if read between its lines by contemporaries, they will come across hints that Emerson was contributing to an agenda of women's rights that was rather fanatic even for the latter part of the nineteenth century, much less for its norm. He had gone from one extreme to another, considering his early acknowledgment of the popular excuse that women were in no need of rights since they were supported by men. Emerson held this view through the mid-1840s, but, "possibly seeing the plight of women, such as Concord neighbor Ellery Channing's wife Ellen, whose husbands manifestly did not care and provide for them, had dispossessed Emerson of this chivalric illusion" (Myerson 220).

Emerson outspokenly urged women to claim their "half of the world," implying here, equality in all walks of life, from education, marriage, property, suffrage, to employment. Fundamentally, Emerson was forging the whole agenda of the 1850 Women's Rights Convention, on which he had accepted to put his signature, confirming that he was completely responsible and conscious about his actions, and truthfully of all these then-radical and unwanted reforms (221).

Hence, "Woman," summed up Emerson's utter support for equality for women. During an age when colleges were accessible only by men, and the law did not permit them to claim their own property, Emerson's demands were becoming more and more radical.

Emerson cunningly evoked a historic protest and assimilated it to the women's case: "And, in a few years, it will easily appear whether they wish a voice in making the laws that are to govern them. If you do refuse them a vote, you will also refuse to tax them according to our Teutonic principle: no representation, no tax" (Lectures 224). Emerson was undoubtedly familiar with the very first female activists, exalting Lucretia Mott, co-planner of the first American's woman's rights convention, of whom he said: "That woman has a unity of sense, virtue, and good-meaning perfectly impressed on her countenance which are a guarantee of victory in all fights to which her Quaker faith and connection lead her" (Journals 412).

One more explanation for the modern vexation over the essay "Woman" may be that Emerson, just as many of the rather few Americans who first heard of and became implicated in the woman's movement, faced some puzzlement for considering the views of women who represented "both the pro-suffrage and the equally vocal anti-woman's rights campaigns" (Myerson 221). As for Emerson, he was for once by women like Ellen, who he named after his departed wife, who was against the suffragists with the view that the majority of women did not want change or a different lifestyle, and that it would therefore be imposed on them.

Mary Moody Emerson, though she was of the same mind with her nephew, Emerson, on the question of the complexity of the world that would be too overwhelming for women to get into, eventually convinced him that upgrading women's status was fundamental. At that time though, Emerson was yet to realize that even the highly intellectual women wanted the vote, as he affirmed in the 1855 lecture, "The answer that, silent or spoken, lies in the mind of well meaning persons, to the claims, is this: that, though their mathematical justice is not to be denied, yet the best women do not wish these things. These are asked for by people who intellectually, but have not the support or sympathy of the truest women" (Lectures 222). In spite of this assumption, Emerson did not soften his extreme views of demanding equality,

insisting on the fact that even if the most privileged women did not desire or rather need political equality, it must, however, be accessible for the "benefit of the women who lacked their social and economic advantages" (Myerson 222).

Emerson was aware of the fact that those women were dispossessed of an intellectual stimulation and were, as a result, more attracted to intellectual men. Similarly crucial was the issue of economic weakness. Emerson frequently reacted with strong consideration to the troubles of underprivileged and poor women. He was cautious enough not to succumb to trend that puts the blame on the victim and he avoided the stream that tended to point the finger at women more than men. He believed that women's financial dependence was a roadblock to their freedom: "Society lives on the system of money and woman comes at money and woman's worth through compliment. I should not dare to be woman. Plainly they are created for a better system which supersedes money" (Journals 326).

While Emerson was drafting his 1855 address, the woman's rights movement had made it clear to him that women in fact were aware of their docile economic situation that was the outcome of their lack of participation in public affairs and the deprivation from taking part at the political stage. This consciousness had to be expressed publically and needed an eloquent voice, not necessarily political but one that would influence the public opinion and stimulate intellectual women. "This awareness of the result of women's socioeconomic powerlessness and especially of plight of working-class women was relatively rare even in the woman's movement, as recent histories of the British and American suffrage movements have made clear" (Myerson 223). So, for Emerson to draw attention to this situation as early as the mid-1850s, was a proof of how much he was concerned about the topic. As he acknowledged that economic impediments to women were more oppressive to the disadvantaged, Emerson

did not consider them as inferior beings. He maintained that the deprived and working-class women reclaim their self-respect.

Moreover, Emerson admitted that the pressure of being exclusively responsible for raising a child was a heavy burden even for the blessed wife as expressed it in his poem "Holiday":

Year by year the rose-lipped maiden,
Play fellow of young and old,
Was frolic sunshine, dear to all men,
More dear to one than mines of gold.
Whither went the lovely hoyden?
Disappeared in bless wife,
Servant to a wooden cradle,
Living in a baby's life (Poems 101)

Emerson expressed sympathy for the several roles that were assigned to women especially as wives and that these responsibilities never ceased to accumulate. Men would never find a true place of comfort in the absence of women; "A man is sometimes offended at the superfluous supererogatory order and nicety of a woman who is a good housewife. But he must bear with little extremities and flourishes of quality that makes comfort for all his senses throughout his house" (Journals 170).

Society has badly interfered as far as young women's education was concerned, "Worst when this sensualism intrudes into the education of young women" (Essays 218), and makes the hope and friendliness of human nature fade, by instilling the belief that marriage means nothing but a housewife's carefulness, and that women's life culminate in this project.

This was also a view that Emerson once held: "Our marriages are bad enough but that falls from the defects of the partners; but marriage as it exists in America, England, and Germany, is the best solution that has been offered of the woman's problem" (Lectures 222). With no better alternatives to opt for, such was the model that every woman had to follow:

> *The fair girl whom I saw in town expressing so decided and proud a choice of influences, so careless of pleasing, so willful and so lofty a will, inspires the wish to come nearer to and speak to this nobleness: So shall we be ennobled also. I wish to say to her, Never strike sail to any. Come into port greatly, or sail with God the seas. (The) Not in vain you live, for the passing stranger is cheered, refined, and raised by the vision (Notebooks 445).*

Emerson's frequent reading of newspapers and periodicals broadened his vision about marriage and stimulated his interest in it. Marriage was institution that put all its focus on women's status, especially during the nineteenth century.[28] Nonetheless, many were of the opinion that marriage should be founded on mutual agreement, common goals, sincere respect, and sexual compatibility or as it is sometimes referred to "Marriage of the Minds." This appellation might have been the inspiration of Shakespeare's first line in the sonnet 116, "Let me not to the marriage of minds." Influenced by Swedish philosopher and mystic, Emanuel Swedenborg, Emerson believed that marriage is a state of a spiritual union. This view would prompt him to regard women as soul rather than property and to claim their equal rights in marriage. In the essay "Love," he clarifies that with absence of this spiritual

[28]He [Emerson] had begun his investigation of these ideas as early as 1817, at the age of fourteen, when he borrowed Hannah More's *Strictures on a System of Female Education*, which emphasized the need to develop women's intellect as well as her emotions, her logical as well as her affective nature, her sense as well as her sensibility (Myerson 224).

dimension will lead the couple to finally "discover that all which at first drew them together, those once sacred features, that magical play of charms, was deciduous, had a prospective end, like the scaffolding by which the house was built," then he continued to insist that "real marriage" is not a formality but requires "the purification of the intellect and the heart from year to year" (Essays 220). Emerson also approached marriage from different perspectives as when he quoted Socrates: "Whether you take a wife or not you will regret it" (qtd in Myerson 225).

As part of a whole system, marriage was no different and the wave of progress has to reach every aspect of life at once and that "no part of society or of life better than any other part. All our things are right and wrong together. The wave of evil washes all our institutions alike." Marriage is no exception despite its supposed privacy: "Do you complain of our marriage? Our marriage is no worse than our education, our diet, our trade, our social customs" (Essays 455). Thus, Emerson always draws attention to the big picture when tackling a specific social issue.

However, Emerson was aware of the danger of marriage failure as an institution, since that is the only it would, and that an incompatible relationship is a roadblock to individual development. Moreover, the requirements of marriage as a social element lessened its value as a spiritual or at least an emotional bond:

> *In life all finding is not that thing we sought, but something else. The lover on being accepted, misses the wildest charm of the maid he dared not hope to call his own. The husband loses the wife in the cares of the household. Later, he cannot rejoice with her in the babe for by becoming a mother she ceases yet more to be a wife. With the growth of children the relation of the pair becomes*

> *yet feebler from the demands children make, until at least nothing remains of the original passion out of which all these parricidal fruits proceeded; and they die because they are superfluous (Notebooks 297).*

Nonetheless, since women still could not be autonomous in society, marriage was the only option that could guarantee a lifetime stability in status and economics. The laws of marriage cannot be amended because they will bring in havoc in social relationships. Though, according to women, men cannot be trusted especially those who do not know how to handle their lower instincts. Therefore, the laws protect women from these men that cannot be trusted. Emerson also evoked a perception that men's repressed lower instincts can often translate into a psychologically driven assault on women. Women could not take faithfulness for granted without the assurance of marriage. Therefore, the laws that make marriage a relationship for life, "fit or unfit," cannot be abrogated, and Emerson had to admit that all laws of marriage are needed to limit our malevolence.

The approach of Swedenborg to marriage as a spiritual bond may give a clue to solve this issue of ill will, which Emerson owes to the lack of spiritual intimacy, as in marriage for social recognition or financial security. Pure marriage is when the partners are intimately near and helpful but not only physically near, when their insights draw near and come across, the cure of impurity come closer to them. Yet, those who indulge in pleasures that are of a pure materialistic mind think otherwise: "Meantime what a dupe is the libertine! He thinks he has the sparkle and the color of the cup and the chaste married pair only the lees. They say that he stays always in the base court and never has a glimpse of the high joys of a perfect wedlock" (Notebooks 305). After all, Emerson believes that marriage is meaningful despite the little disappointments that come as its aftermath:

> *How little think the youth and maiden who are glancing at each other across a mixed company with eyes so full of mutual intelligence, how little think they of the precious fruit long hereafter to proceed from this now quite external stimulus. The work of vegetation begins first in the irritability of the bark and leaf buds. From exchanging glances they proceed to acts of courtesy and gallantry, then to fiery passion, then to plighting troth and marriage. Immediately they begin to discover incongruities[,] defects. Thence comes surprise, regret, strife (297).*

Emerson goes on to decipher the absurdity of a pair that were drawn to each other "by signs of loveliness" and "signs of virtue." Though these virtues never cease to "appear and reappear," the affection changes, "quits the sign and attaches to the substance." This happens to diminish the displeasure, and as days take by, married life "proves to be nothing but a game of permutation and combination of all possible positions of the parties" to obtain under duress "all the resources of each and acquaint each with the whole strength and weakness of the other." At the end, the two partners under the legal status of marriage "discover that all that at first drew them together" was completely "caducous," had only a "prospective end." Yet, the surprising and the complete "unconscious" development "of principles from year to year" is the true marriage "foreseen and prepared from the first but wholly above their consciousness" (Notebooks 298).

A true, then, was founded on virtue and promoted by utter trust and dedication. "Nuptial love release each from his own and gives each again to himself and herself, so that they acquire their own features and proportion again, and new beauty and divinity in each other's eyes" (qtd in Myerson 229). On the whole, marriage is subjective and strangers cannot

expect to get the picture or get involved effectively though Emerson found himself involved in many "matchmaking attempts" of his unmarried people in his circle (230).

Taking into consideration all the social roles, prospects, and laws that had an effect on women's status, Emerson has been making quite a strong case for equal rights, as he states confidently: "They [women] have an unquestionable right to their property" (Lectures 222), and they want vote, offices, and equal opportunities in the political arena, their demands should not be rejected.

Without a doubt, Emerson was convinced that women would contribute fruitfully to the civilizing process and that was a genuine cause to give them the right to vote. This line of reasoning was focused on in the 1855 addressed to the Woman's Rights Convention. Woman is the pillar of civilization; it she who has fixed the brutal and careless ways of men. Hence, taking into consideration the election scam, extending the vote to women would make of it a more civilizing act; "Here, at the right moment, when the land is full of committees examining election frauds and misdeeds, woman asks for her vote. It is the remedy at the moment of need. She is to civilize the voting…" (Lectures 214). "It is said that when manners" are immoral and dissolute, change and reform are "always near: the virtue of woman being the main girth or bandage of society; because a man will not lay up an estate for children any longer than whilst he believes them to be his own" (Journals 373).

Emerson used this argument to the greatest extent to respond to other familiar opposition to women's suffrage, that it would "contaminate" women and "unsex" them (Myerson 231). "As for the unsexing and contamination, that only accuses our existing politics, shows how barbarous we are, that our policies are so crooked, made up of things not to be spoken" (Lectures 224). Instead of denying the woman's right to vote for fear of

involving her in filthy world of politics, Emerson proposed, the clever option would be to launch a crackdown on the political system. Banning women from being part of the system was only an avoidance of the problem. Emerson saw a true man as the one who enough self-assured, that he is no need to put others in an inferior position in order to enhance his own status or at least keep it. Therefore, for Emerson, a real man was one who consistently defended women's rights and demanded equality.

During the early 1850s, Emerson's voice on the issue of suffrage was not assertive, somehow not wanting to rush to a judgment that would soon be invalidated. For instance, at the beginning of his involvement with the woman's rights movement, he maintained that the vote was something that most women did not desire but it had to be offered to those who wanted it. His words at this phase bore a lot of reservation on the topic but soon his real intentions started to leak out though he had declared that he did not think that women wanted a share in public affairs; "But it is they [women] and not we, that are to determine" whether women wanted to be directly involved in public affairs or not, let alone voting (Lectures 224).

This judgment was objective given the paradoxical information at this time. He was convinced that the right to choose depended on them, not society as a whole. Emerson openly recognized the right for women to make up their minds on how far they want to be engaged in the decision-making on both the local and global levels; men's commitment, according to him, was merely to assist them to put into effect their choices in the face of the deep-rooted prejudgment.

However, typical Emerson would often return to his ways of perceiving things through applying his scopes of spontaneity and naturalness. As for women, he had well and truly wanted them to be strong, independent, and involved in public affairs as long as they would

remain in touch with their very nature and not envying men for their masculinity and their natural characteristics. The more natural women are, the more irresistible they become "all that is spontaneous is irresistible: and forever it is individual force that interests. I need not repeat you, your own solitude will suggest it, that a masculine woman is nit strong, but a lady is" (Lectures 255). The more a woman is ladylike, the stronger she is and that principle should draw a red line between what women want to feel empowered and the real things and make them so. These thoughts were already stated by Fuller but with a different tone, arguing that if women were free and "wise fully to develop the strength and beauty of woman; they would never wish to be men, or men-like" (Fuller 31). These lines were clearly stated in defense of the opponents of woman's rights who held on to the argument of femininity to obstruct the individual development of ambitious women.

Considering the time line, it follows that the development of Emerson's ideas on women, and, in particular, their right to be equally involved in politics as men during the forming of the American suffrage movement in the 1850s, Emerson was by now persuaded by and insisted on its inevitability. Though his arguments were embedded in the essentialist nineteenth-century terms of sanctified womanhood, courtesy, and instinctive superiority, his political request in support of women's rights were audacious.

His opinion of women's responsibilities was also constantly progressing. His preoccupation with the topic started as early as the 1830s, back when he was trying to settle the differences between the genders without considering any potential social evolution that would give women utterly new roles or take up those which had long been assigned to men: "I will add it to my distinctive marks of man & woman, the man loves the hard wood the woman loves the pitch pine" (Notebooks 308). Even in the early 1850s, when he wrote: "Bernhard told Margaret that every woman (whatever she says, reads, or writes) is thinking of

a husband," then he added, "Few women are sane" (Journals 431). Yet, by 1855, Emerson's ideas about the women's potential had grown to the point of demanding women to step up their efforts and claim their due share of the world.

After the Civil War, most Americans became familiar with the demands of the woman's rights movement. This phase marked a major change in Emerson's views about women especially after being stimulated by women such as Mary Moody Emerson and the novelist and poet Louisa May Alcott. The view that women did not desire the vote was changed to a radical opinion that not only should women have the right to cast their ballots but also directly take part in the political arena. Thus, after roughly thirty years, Emerson proved himself wrong and his updated outlook was not contradictory but rather the outcome of the evolving ideas on women's roles, rights, and repressed potential. Women, according, should sigh because they ruled over without their consent. "This process of transition in Emerson's views has not been previously recognized. Emerson himself would see this recognition of women's desire for emancipation" as a point that marked his shift towards the woman's cause, despite the fact that he had been keenly advocating it since the 1850s, "and in the 1860s and 1870s he would become an icon of the suffragist leaders" (Myerson 235).

Contemporary readers may be astonished that the suffragists would any feature of women's equality detestable. Yet, many women cherished the attributes that had emerged from the supposedly secondary or easier roles that had been traditionally assigned to them such as selflessness, spirituality, helpfulness, softness, caring. They worried, just as Emerson, that if women forced their way into public affairs, they would inevitably conduct themselves in a masculine way, a trait that "men had been conditioned to as to survive in patriarchal outer world and would lose these attributes" (235).

Nonetheless, Emerson, who himself backed away from public milieu, valued and cherished the highly spiritual thoughtfulness women had inevitably developed just as illustrated by how he described his wife, Lidian: "My gentle wife has an angel's heart" (Journals 181). In other instances when he spoke in general, he still pictured her as "an angel of system. Her love of order is a proverbial blessing. A house is her classification" (Lectures 19). Or as his friend, Fuller explained this complementary nature of a couple: "The man furnishes the house; the woman regulates it" (Fuller 36). Of course, Emerson here lauded women as housewives or in the traditional sense of a good woman. Maybe, because he did not want this idealistic view of women to change that he was satisfied with the status quo and even reinforced the conventional public opinion. Therefore, unless read chronologically, Emerson, on such subjects as women's right, his ideas would sound contradictory and unbalanced.

Emerson's democratic inclination and the deep esteem that he had for the women in his circle, he found himself naturally driven into supporting the woman's movement. Yet, he had a persistent suspicion of the public and, in particular, the political field, which women were going into by campaigning for their right to vote and would gain even more ground if they win the vote. Emerson was worried that women would persistently demand more rights and become too involved in politics and do the same blunders as their male counterparts. Additionally, their spiritual concentration had to be given up for the inevitable political dealings, and they would soon succumb to the temptations of materialism. Eventually, Emerson questioned the likelihood of anyone, women included, becoming what he deemed as an "innocent citizen" (Lectures 223).

For Emerson, the likelihood of being both guiltless and a citizen involved in the corrupted system that did not even criminalize slavery was extremely problematic. Ambitions of guiltless citizenship sounded to him praiseworthy in theory but, in actual fact, the system of the fraudulent state was unacceptably deceptive. But, he furthermore admitted that the ultimate decision was not his to make, but women's personal. If they had a faith that political and social equality was indispensible for their spiritual growth, his role was to back them in goals and join them in their fight. He would no longer restrict their territory to their houses to advertise their spiritual advantage more than he would "keep the slaves in captivity to enjoy the harmony of their songs for freedom" (Myerson 237).

Indeed, Emerson's standpoint was in line with nineteenth-century feminism, which back then simply meant the advocacy of women's rights on the ground of the equality of the sexes. The suffragists, for instance, openly expressed their gratitude for his contributions and valued his efforts "on behalf of women's empowerment, education, and equality" (237). The organizers of the suffragist movement distinctively tackled Emerson's role the way they perceived it in the woman's rights movement. Though Emerson, with typical reserve, would not credit himself for his first public announcements in favor of women's rights, but, social activists, such as suffragist Julia ward Howe, were reacting positively to his opinions. However, specifically, emphasized Emerson's high opinion of women's intellect.

Emerson transcended the Victorian estimation of women only on their decorative role, to admire them on the same basis as men, for their cleverness. Emerson was aware of the regrettable chagrin of women being measured on the basis of their looks: "I scarce ever see young women who are not remarkably attractive without a wish an impulse to preach to them the doctrine of character. I have sad foresight of the mortifications that await them when I see

what they look on. Could once their eye be turned on the beauty of being as it outshines the beauty of seeming, they would be saved" (Notebooks 389).

This type of beauty was accessible to all women regardless of social standing, even if the conditions would not allow them to meet the expense of the outer accessories of non-natural, socially determined beauty. Emerson respected women as an important audience, and cherished the new opportunities offered to women. He consistently spoke in support of women suffrage, and was for a number of years a voluntary member of one of the earliest women's club in the United States, New England Women's Club, to whose attendees he sometimes gave the honor of being present and sometimes delivering speeches. Also, the public reminiscences of his aunt, Mary Moody Emerson, an important character in the shaping of his ideas, were always an example of his characteristic respect for the women around him. He frequently referred to them and their witty remarks and thoughtfulness in his journals.

In fact, it could be supposed that women, particularly the suffragists, were part of Emerson's first and most supportive audience as they shared with him the quality of valuing isolation from the social space and were highly familiar with society's constraint against nonconformist attitudes. Aunt Mary had a great impact on Emerson's formative period, possibly the most influential figure in his career in terms of motivating and shaping his thoughts and prospects.[29] After he tied the knot for a second, his new wife, Lidian, became also a major influence on his thoughts. Both she and his aunt were frequently quoted or

[29]Emerson also cited Quaker Mary Rotch. He equally admired Rebecca Black, who shared his aunt Mary's unconventionality and original thinking. Jane Welsh Carlyle, wife of Thomas Carlyle, he regarded at least as highly as her husband. The same was true for Sophia Ripley who ran the Brook Farm community together with her husband, George. He also quoted and praised Anna Barker ward, Caroline Sturgis, as well as Louisa May Alcott, and other lesser known women (Myerson 240).

referred together with other women, as his mother, Ruth Emerson, and his daughter Ellen, who he named after his first wife. Emerson also often mentioned the insightful Sarah Alden Ripley who remained "a glowing domestic & scholastic centre" (Letters 325).

Emerson was also preoccupied with the influence of his addresses on women, particularly to what is now referred to as "empowerment." The suffragists thought of Emerson as a motivational contributor to women's intellectual independence and praised their literary reputation on utterly even terms with male counterparts. They hailed his respect for the women and youngsters and his endeavor to deploy accomplished women for his Concord circle. They had no complicatedness in bringing together his respect for women's spiritual edge with his recognition of their necessity of being made stronger and more confident in controlling their lives and claiming their rights.

He inspired his readers to independently reflect on the allusions of a specific idea. Women could put these allusions to the test by fitting them to their own conditions. His entire ideas on women's rights were not declared in public but must be deduced from the events he had been through in his life and his reaction to women who were audacious enough to accomplish the radical outcomes of his ideas on women. The suffragists were very engaged in making Emerson's well thought out support of the woman's right movement. Since Emerson was reputed as the Sage of Concord, his ideas contained moral value.

Despite the explicit expressions in his essays and journals, Emerson's position as a woman's tights advocate remained questionable for several readings. The most obvious one was the tendency to believe that all pre-twentieth-century men were alarmed about women and even disliked them. Another reason that denied Emerson public recognition was "the common nineteenth-century problem of posthumous memoir, or biography". His early

biographer, James Elliot Cabot "did quote only enough of Emerson's correspondence to give the impression that Emerson, like himself, opposed women's rights," and, for the most part, disregarding "Emerson's public record" (Myerson 243) on the topic. This example of late nineteenth-century writers intentionally or unintentionally twisting the views of their antecedents was recurrent during that century. For instance, Cabot did not refer to Emerson's letter to Paulina W. Davis, September 18, 1850, in which he stated:

> *The fact of the political & civil wrongs of woman I deny not. If women feel wronged, then they are wronged. But the mode of obtaining a redress, namely, a public convention called by women is not very agreeable to me, and the things to be agitated for do not seem to me the best. Perhaps I am superstitious and traditional, but whilst I should vote for every franchise for women, vote that they should hold property, and vote, yes & be eligible to all offices as men, whilst I should vote thus, if women asked, or if men denied it these things… (Letters 360).*

So, despite the then radical attitudes of supporting women to have equal rights with men, Cabot focused on the part in which Emerson declined the invitation. In fact, his refusal was characteristic as had always wished to withdraw from public life, especially politics. However, Cabot's accounts on Emerson made many readers think of his early works as the ultimate judgment on women and his disregard for women's rights. This confusion happened because Emerson's essays and letters were not published, and the public resorted to Cabot's biography to know about Emerson's opinions on the subject of women or the newspapers but were misled to believe that Emerson was an anti-suffragist. Hence, despite the letters to the *Tribune* and the *Woman's Tribute* "sought to reestablish" Emerson's true standpoint, the

impact of this "received opinion" had such influence "that even with the advent of scholarly editions of Emerson's works, it has remained largely unchallenged until now" (Myerson 244).

Thus, Emerson dealt with women's issues with the utmost concern and an enormous amount of time studying and reflecting on the responsibilities, rights, and position of women in society. As a matter of fact, the number of women with whom he corresponded reflected the extent to which Emerson was concerned eager to gather as many opinions as he could before finally reaching the point of explicitly siding with the suffragists and women's rights movements in general. "As we discover the suffragists and women writers of the nineteenth century, so we will continue to rediscover male suffragists such as Emerson. It is our responsibility to see that they are, finally, given the credit that their forward-thinking efforts deserve" (244). The study of his views from the excerpts from his journals or from the essay "Woman" shows a progressive change of his mindset that always tended to side with women.

IV. 3. Women's Suffrage:

Many reform efforts of late years have earned the admiration and captivated the attention of Emerson and he has expressed a positive attitude towards them as the upcoming hope. Women's political rights, in particular, appealed most to his sense of social improvement. As a matter of fact, "he signed with his wife the call for the first woman's-suffrage convention and attended its meetings" (Cooke 1982: 99). His support for this movement was remarkable, as well as for any action of a philanthropic nature that would take human culture to a new beginning as expressed in the passage from his lecture on the Progress of Culture:

> *Observe the marked ethical quality of the innovations urged or adopted. The new claim of woman to a political status is itself an honorable testimony to the civilization which has given her a civil status new in history. Now that, by the increased humanity of law, she controls property, she inevitably takes the next step to her share in power. The war gave us the abolition of slavery, the success of the Sanitary Commission and of the Freedman's Bureau. Add to these the new scope of social science; the abolition of capital punishment and of imprisonment for debt; the improvement of prisons; the efforts for the suppression of intemperance of prisons; the search for just rules affecting labor; the cooperative societies; the insurance of life and limb; the free-trade league; the improved almshouse; the enlarged scale of charities to relieve local famine, or burned towns, or the suffering Greeks; the incipient series of International Congresses, all, one may say, in a high degree revolutionary, teaching nations the taking of government into their hands, and superseding kings.*

Such was Emerson's outlook on the outcomes of the great upheaval that preceded these great changes; not focusing on its horrors or apocalyptic scenes. This is position from which he received the fiercest criticism as a writer whose mind and senses are oblivious to pain and misery. The logic of the critiques is that how an individual who is supposed to thoroughly observe every social phenomenon propose ways to uplift social reforms.

He severely criticized the political state of affairs of the nation and wanted a journal that would meet the actual wants of the time in reference to *The Massachusetts Quarterly Review.* In its first number, Emerson contributed with an address, To the Public. After

tackling the remarkable material changes in the nation, he points out that the spiritual faculty of man has not improved accordingly, and that the new situation is not laying the ground for a new trend of thought. This address shows Emerson's interests in socialism, in Swedenborg, and in the prospects of life in America. It straightforwardly classifies his line of thought with regard to all the reform efforts of his time.

The late 1840's was a period of social and reformatory campaigning, when Emerson insisted firmly on the purification of the soul and its ascendance to a level that would stimulate an urge to change the world for the better. Yet, he did not have great expectations as far as those agitations were concerned; all things need to be in harmony with nature and so should the individual soul be with the Universal Spirit as justified in many of his poems and essays., During her visit to the United States in 1835-36, British social theorist and Whig writer, Harriet Martineau, in Retrospect of Western Travel, had a good insight into Emerson's mind:

> *There is a remarkable man in the United States…his intellect and his character are the opposite of those which the influences of his country and his time are supposed almost necessarily to form. I speak of Mr. Emerson. He is yet in the prime of life. Great things are expected from him; and great things, it seems, he can not but do if he have life and health to prosecute his course. He is thinker and scholar…He has modestly and silently withdrawn himself from the perturbations and conflicts of the crowd of men, without declining any of the business of life, or repressing any of his human sympathies. He is a thinker, without being solitary, abstracted, and unfitted for the time. He is a scholar without being narrow, bookish and prone to occupy himself only with other men's thoughts (Martineau 1838: 204).*

This decent depiction from someone who was as ready to lay down a number of defects as to perceive them "is a fine testimonial to the pure and rich impression which Emerson has made upon all who come into personal contact with him, or into a sympathetic appreciation of his books. "The genuine sense of humanity of the sage of Boston is prominent everywhere, "full, rich, penetrating, infused through all his words and conduct" (Cooke 1982: 104). It has transformed him into an undying and stimulating voice of his time.

IV. 4. Society and Solitude

In later volumes The Conduct of Life (1860) and Society and Solitude (1870), Emerson openly passed judgment on the money-oriented and consumerist attitude of American culture and endeavored to make the American idea of success a more refined principle. He expressed disapproval of the shallow American principle that put all emphasis on the increase in wealth in whatever way as an accomplishment. Money can be an advantage in entrepreneurship but can also be obstructive.

Therefore, criticizing the values of American culture was an important part of Emerson's commitment as he called on his readers to lead a moral life of "high thinking" and advocating an attention to the aspects of common and daily experiences. His mind was also continuously provoked by the persistent presence of slavery and, as a result, he turned progressively more an open critic of it during the 1840s and 1850s, regarding the antislavery group as a great moral campaign;

> *Of particular note are Emerson's two addresses on the Fugitive Slave Law in 1851 and 1854, in which he emphasized the moral violation that slavery represented and fiercely attacked the public policy that condoned its*

> *continuation. The law, which required the cooperation of citizens and public officials in the North in the return of escaped slaves was for Emerson "contrary to the primal sentiment of duty," and therefore, "the resistance of all moral beings is cured to it." It was for him a case in which a higher law, grounded in moral duty, must override a flawed civil enactment (Myerson 169).*

Emerson called for those laws to be "inoperative" and that they must be abrogated and wiped out of the statute-book; but whilst it stands there, it must be disobeyed." (Qtd., in Joel Myerson). This appeal to withstand and go against the law indicated an increasing weightiness of the political conflict as Emerson perceived it, and despite him not approving of the rising tensions and the risk of division and confrontation, he saw no other option than facing with the principle of a religious sense of duty, putting obvious that slavery was a serious moral test, and associating its abolition with the large scope of the historical change for the better. Emerson's chronic positivity was an essential part of his position as an antislavery essayist and poet; for such a mind, slavery was a major defiance to the harmony of nature, and could not go on forever. However, the abolition of slavery, though possibly unavoidable, necessitated the efforts and the will of all the concerned with the cause.

IV. 5. Individualism and Authenticity

Individualism is one of the essential principles that Emerson linked to almost every topic he wrote about that is why he had held off all the temptations to join any reform association. Moreover, he also wanted it to be part of the new American culture that once

adulthood is reached, every individual should manifest a distinct attitude towards progress and social organization. This principle has to reach all individuals with an ambition;

> *I am of the opinion that every mind that comes into the world has its own specialty; it is different from every other mind; that each of you brings into the world a certain bias, a disposition to attempt something of its own, something your own, an aim a little different from that of your companions; and that every young man and woman is a failure so long as each does not find what is his or her own bias; that just so long as you are influenced by those around you, so long as you are doing those things you see others do well instead of doing that thing which you can do well, you are so far wrong, so far failing of your own right mark…I conceive that success is in finding what it is that you yourself really want, and pursuing it.*[30]

This view also goes with his appreciation of nature as a source of infinite knowledge. Doing what you are naturally inclined to is an act of harmony with your very nature and your environment. It is also a subject for another aspect of Transcendentalism that Emerson frequently puts forward, spontaneity; "Naure and mind exactly correspond with each other and correspond with each other, so that nature is the perfect symbol of spirit" (184). However, the Transcendental sense of it include the metaphysical and the personal experiences that best choices made are based on spontaneity which in itself also embeds authenticity. This is Emerson's way of leading the nation towards developing a local culture that makes every

[30]In January, 1872, being in Washington, he was invited to visit Howard University which he did. While there he was called on to speak to the students. In an entirely extemporaneous manner he expressed his great regard for books as a means of education, said that each mind has a specialty of its own which must guide the person in selecting his profession, and, apologizing for not being prepared to speak, suggested that a topic would help him to say something to the purpose (Cooke 172).

individual responsible for making it richer by doing things a little differently from the rest. The spirit of a community made only of likeminded people would not lead the nation towards reaching its ultimate goals but would rather result in a collective stagnation caused by conformity.

A society of conformists is more prone to collapse entirely than the one made up of self-reliant individuals who primarily depend on themselves for success and blame themselves for failure. Conformity may suppress talent and innovation for the sense of insecurity and rejection that a nonconformist feels growing up with people whose primary source of knowledge is imitation. This imitation may extend to the nation as whole by relying wholly on imported ideas from the Old World. This approach may extend to include the nation as whole to become a self-reliant one with a culture proper to its foundation and ambition.

The experiences that he had in the 1860s made Emerson a visionary of goodness and an inspirer of great expectations. As he aged, he became more keenly interested in the life of his countrymen and their relaxed approach to morals and spirituality. He has opened his eyes on a new form of faith likely to be free of dogma and that unites everyone spiritually but not historically. He has realized that common faith can help people achieve great things because the dictations come from within and are tied to the Universal Spirit. This is also an advocating to his principles of *Nature* whose interpreter is the poet.

Many have been pulled towards Emerson's thought because of his firm advocacy of self-reliance, or due to his well-expressed version of nature, others have been magnetized by the spiritual nature of his reflection, and by his positive approach to life. He has the benefit of the exceptional distinction of having climbed to the uppermost point that the human mind can

reach; a point where every sentence is gleaming and the connection of ideas is perceptible. He can be referred to when the profound laws of human nature and pantheistic philosophy are evoked. However, fellow Transcendentalist Theodore Parker does not agree with this attribution and showed that Emerson's position is nowhere near that of a pantheist and that he has been "foolishly accused of pantheism, which sinks God in nature; but no man is further from it." He never descends God to man, and possibly it was not obvious for him to have the idea of God defined. And, "with his confidence in God, he looks things fairly in the face, and never dodges, never fears…with the severest scrutiny, he joins the highest reverence" (191-92).

These traits qualify him as a universal mind and a serene one worth to be placed among the greatest. This position is owed to his insight into many of his predecessors' efforts from which he drew his wisdom and was a step back for a huge leap forward in the world of ideas that broadened his perspective and intensified his sense of observation. Therefore, he looked at the fluctuating state of affairs of his country with accuracy, never going with the mainstream opinions in most cases as an act of advocating both individualism and originality.

While he preached the importance of understanding of the laws of nature, he endeavored to make the act of reading simpler by being genuine in a that makes the reader feel he is directly being interacted with. He speaks from the depths of his soul what he deems as true and this made him sound characteristically American. It is, in fact, a combination of the insight of an eastern visionary, the sense of a German idealist, and the common good judgment on daily life, with a coherent and a consistent voice. He is capable of embarking on the discussions of the greatest themes as well as the simplest in almost a similar manner making his approach to the former sound as real as the latter. This is also shown in the manner he preferred to live his life which consists of having a domestic taste, with a flavor of

antiquity, but a universal and critical mind. He cherished simple family life and children. The living may be plain but the thinking must be high so, if the Americans are to seek any change, that should be at the level of intellects. He has himself been lucky in his family relations that were the real factor in attaining the sort of life he has wanted.

Though living the quiet peaceful life of a scholar, Emerson has been devoted to the great human interests of his day, the moral purposes in particular. With his focus on the Divine, he was qualified as a moral teacher hoping to see a virtuous life, one in which the perceptive soul comprehends the spiritual nature of things, and is in harmony with nature, in general. To this particular soul, knowledge is revealed on account of this harmony. Accordingly, all genuine writing is an inspiration from God as a form of award to the insightful mind. Since imagination is a spontaneous act that leads to the perception of spiritual realities, it must be valued as an important faculty that gives the poet a depth of thought and a thorough insight into the world. Imagination is a gift that reduces the likelihood of repeating the verdicts of other men, and makes us cherish the truth that comes out of each distinguished mind. This grace of God is the means of originality which "being one's self, and reporting accurately what we see and are" (Cooke 216). Most minds that are endowed with this power have come up with greatest moral, religious and personal books of the world. This also hints at the fact that the great religious scriptures have been put together thanks to this form of revelation, or imaginative power. This aspect of Emerson's thought is key to understanding his approach to religion and why he rejected all forms of institutionalized faith as well as the traditional religious teaching.

This awareness about the spiritual truths is the foundation of all faiths and literatures and a recognition of the universal hand of the Over-Soul. A meticulous study of the progress of civilization leads to it and stimulates the right critical sense to criticize the past. Together

with this line of thought, which is fundamentally skeptical, goes the individual prejudice that reinstates the natural unity of the universe to the perception of men. This sense of the infinite develops strongly, encompasses all literature, gives meaning to moral principles, makes men brave enough to concentrate on fighting the long-standing evil. Preaching about the power of the Over-Soul is a way to inspire the production of a remarkable literature of its own.

The sense of the tangible and the spiritual will continue to grow and throughout the process, genius will create in superior spirit, and a broader vision, and with a bigger convenient purpose, than ever yet channeled the ink of poet. It will mark a revolutionized world, depict the new life of bravery, and connect all into a blissful veneration for the surrounding whole. By means of this insight, should all books be assessed, and all that have it is dear to Emerson, and all that do not are insignificant. He regards this power as a foundational element for discovery which, consistently, invalidates past assessment. Thus, everything now has to be reviewed and reconsidered, and each novel mind should follow the example of Columbus, who set sail to the new world. Life with the same habits and attitudes cannot inspire a moral shift.

Though books contain great examples that are inspiring, they should only be used as a bridge to new ones of our time. Books are bridges and not the foundation or the culmination, of culture. The soul is the source and cannot be taken over by a stock of books whose absence is but a shortage in furniture. Reaching for the Divine, or seeking faith with a freed mind, is higher in worth than all that has ever been written. Regardless of what knowledge the books in the world may contain, the way towards truth is shorter by means of our own thoughts.

Studying history with an inquisitive mind leads systematically to criticizing it with audacity and confidence. In line with this method, which is fundamentally skeptical, lies

subjectivity which combines the natural bond of the universe to the notions of men. It guides the mind towards nature and the wonderful abstract facts that are the essence of the soul.

Emerson does not give the feeling that he has been hugely influenced by one writer or poet in the development of his literary style. The mark of Landor, Goethe, Coleridge, and Carlyle can hardly be felt in his writings. He may well owe a lot to all of them, but only to a low degree has his writing been shaped by either. He has always expressed disapproval of imitation and has transmitted his thoughts in the manner that suits his goals. The philosophy of Carlyle and German idealist, Fichte, which beholds that writers are the mirror of the God's view of the world is essential to Emerson's approach to literature.

Landor may have had an impact on his literary style but only at first glance for a thorough reading suggests the influence is merely superficial. Even so Emerson thinks "Landor is strangely undervalued in England" and regardless of whether the criticism he receives is "right or wrong, and is quickly forgotten; but year after year the scholar must still go back to Landor for a multitude of elegant sentences; for wisdom, wit, and indignation that are unforgettable" (Emerson 1950: p. 526).

This defense of Landor is for the sake of valuing audacity as a quality that brings authenticity. He is a great example of "complete independence in literary history. He has no clanship, no friendships, that warp him." Landor's books are filled with free and persistent thought, well developed and perceptive understanding, assiduous observations in every aspect of life, and his fluency "with the English tongue is unsurpassed." He is declared a master of compression and restraint. With his defiant nature and the "love of truth and beauty," he "belongs to the sacred class of inspirers; and among these, few of the present age have a better claim to be numbered than Landor" (Qtd., in Cooke 220).

Among the great figures that the Transcendentalists cherish is German writer, Goethe, classified by Emerson as an important mind of the present century. However, despite being impressed by the great genius and distinguished personality of Goethe, "the great German was too realistic, too little a Puritan, to fully receive Emerson's sympathy. His criticisms show the wide space between them." Among the ideas that the ideas that would cause a notion as The American Dream" to stall are Goethe's, for he was the poet of the concrete and the perceptible and not the ideal, thus limited to the direct observation of the physical world. He was not the poet of spirituality and prospects; "in short, the poet of prose, and of poetry" (Ibid. 221). He says Goethe's moral sensitivity was not balanced with his other qualities that is why he almost left no impact after he passed away. Therefore, this trait held Goethe from becoming the poet of the ideal that Emerson hoped he would be and his realistic tone too cold for him to tolerate. In fact, his criticisms all stem from this stiff outlook of Goethe, that if assessed by "the ordinary canons of criticisms," his thinking "is of great altitude, and all level, not a succession of summits, but a high Asiatic table-land." He admits that Goethe "has an eye constant" to the realities of existence, and that never stops in its progress. Yet, he does not have "the great felicities, (and) the miracles of poetry." Emerson further assessed Goethe and says of his style and vision,

> *It is all design with him, just thought and instructed expression, analogies, illusion, illustration, which knowledge and correct thinking supply; but of Shakespeare and the transcendent muse, no syllable. He is the king of all scholars; let him have the praise of the love of truth. We think, when we contemplate the stupendous glory of the world, that it were life enough for one man nearly to lift his hands and cry with St. Augustine, 'wrangle who pleases, I will wonder.' Well, this he did. Here was a man, who, in the feeling that the*

> *thing itself was so admirable as to leave all comment behind, went up and down from object to object, lifting the veil from everyone, and did no more. His are the bright and terrible eyes, which meet the modern student in every sacred chapel of thought, in every public enclosure (222).*

He does not take the fact that Goethe's moral perception was not in harmony with his other powers as a mere concurrence. Though a subtle poet, he refused to create. From Goethe though, he drew an inclination to understand life poetically rather than spiritually. He was provided more with poetic philosophy than the meticulous and the ambiguous of Kant and his followers. Emerson's conception of the nature of art is mainly drawn from that of Goethe. The influence of Goethe's works on him was not really direct and explicit as he was introduced to him through Carlyle's essays and translations. Emerson agreed with the German that originality is essentially a matter of reconstructing elements drawn from other sources.

Goethe had an important position in the foundation of American Transcendentalism which derived to a great extent from German literature and philosophy. In the essay, "Goethe; or, the writer" (1850), Emerson gives explanations about the role of the writer in society, which is to give account of the events of the extraordinary spirit of life. The writer looks at the facts and defines what is universal, the typical happenings. Nature gives records of its owns history by way of things like bones and fossils, humans by means of memories and their impact on others.

The work of the writer does not only serve personal interests because society needs a category of men with a power of expression that can see through the dark and bring reason to light. Similar to all great men, the writer partly covers the past, present, and future, siding with both his generation and "the ages." Because of this he is exposed to mockery, at least

from shallow people. Emerson notices that currently, "public opinion" and "the practical man" are having a bigger importance, concealing the position of the scholar; the people prefer "social order and comfort" than thoughts.

Nevertheless, Emerson alerts that execution without deep reflection jeopardizes the balance of man. It is perilous that the ritual or the covenants are of a bigger importance than the power of ideas. There must be a link between "the speculative and the practical faculties and great decisions must be inspired by "the spiritual nature." Only shallow men think action is more significant than speculation, because even men at the top of hierarchy take actions based on "real and remarkable" thoughts. For this, society should have no greater interest than the well-being of the literary class," and if their position is not honored it is because of this class itself. It has succumbed to the public opinion, writing about government and law and writing novels instead of "sacred verse" and "epics" (Wayne 123).

Goethe had a mastery of multiple disciplines, and his writings are encyclopedic and universal encompassing the different eras with their different dogmas, politics, and ways of thinking. No matter what topic he wrote about, he always showed a magnetism to truth. The Gothean trait with which Emerson can identify himself most is the recurrent reference to the inner truth, which is a current in German philosophy.

Emerson insists that "talent alone cannot make a writer. There must be a man behind the book." If some truth is to be made public, it is the writer's mission to make it reach out to the minds by means of his skill. The message is more important than the form or method. Therefore, if someone is taken as a writer, it is not by definition a holder of laudable opinions. So great should the role of a writer should be that "Bibles" have to be written "to unite again the heavens and the earthly world" (123).

Goethe also attracted Emerson with his capacity of perceiving "the connection where the multitude see fragments." The essay on the German writer evokes Emerson's call for intellectual freedom in "The American Scholar" (1837), and shows again the judgment that the United States is yet to have a writer of Goethe's caliber who, according to him, "has said the best things about nature that ever were said."

Selecting Goethe, to be amongst the *Representative Men,* was only about what he conveyed, but because of the direct impact that German idealism had on American Transcendentalism in the nineteenth century. Emerson places Goethe within a specific German intellectual approach to seeking truth. This very feature made him recognize the German impact on American thought and philosophy and Goethe is "the head and body of the German nation" (124).

Emerson is primarily identified with the Idealists, whether they are Christian mystics, Buddhists, Transcendentalists or Sufi and the thinkers who most near his thought, to name a few, are Fichte and Carlyle, and also, Plotinus and Schelling, who have projected idealism in the form of mysticism. An idealist is one who values ideas and considers the mind's existence as prior to that of the body. Idealism regards the realm of ideas as original and contributory; it considers the physical world as resulting from the mind and as formed by it. Matter is only a garment of spirit; the physical world is exceptional. Man is himself a product of this world according to the materialists and that is their starting point. For the idealist, however, everything starts at the level of his consciousness while the world to him is only an appearance. The materialist values only the tangible matters whereas the idealist has other standards as Emerson expressed in the "Transcendentalist":

> *Mind is the only reality, of which men and all other natures are better or worse reflectors. Nature, literature, history are only subjective phenomena. Although in his action overpowered by the laws of action, and so, warmly cooperating with men, even preferring them to himself, yet when he speaks scientifically, or after the order of thought, he is constrained to degrade persons into representative of truths. He does not respect labor, or the products of labor, namely property, otherwise than as manifold symbol, illustrating with wonderful fidelity of details the laws of being; he does not respect government, except as far as it reiterates the law of his mind; nor the church nor charities, nor arts, for themselves; but hears as at a vast distance, what they say, as if his consciousness would speak to him through a pantomimic scene. His thought,--that is the Universe (Emerson 1950: 89).*

Idealism had to be furthered and preached in the antebellum North to magnify the horrors taking place in the South. The South embraced materialism to no ends and their vision of the world starts at the level of appearances, that the ideal had to be the concrete or the lucrative. Meanwhile, the mindsets in the North are undergoing a change and bracing for new challenges where the South will be swept along the way. It all started with ideas that infiltrated their way to the intellectual elite by means of valuable literature and philosophy that allowed for a moral breakthrough. The more literary works were produced, the more the difference between North and South grew culminating in stark choices for both parties.

For the idealist, or the Transcendentalist, all things "have a subjective or relative existence," and these views "of all things in the mind, follow easily his whole ethics." As a characteristic materialistic or fatalist, the quality of life is decided by the conditions and the mind only has to follow or adapt to the situation. Thus, progress is never desired unless there

is a direct benefit for the men with the most power. Emerson goes completely against this by saying: "You think me the child of my circumstances: I make my circumstances. Let any thought or motive of mine be different from that they are, the difference will transform my condition and economy" (90).

Nature and man are both manifestations of the Universal Spirit from an idealistic point of view, "a Spirit which is not only the original, but the immanent and sustaining cause of all things." Emerson adds to this form of idealism his pantheistic views of that "Nature proceeds from the same source…the thoughts of God; its laws are his ideas. All that nature contains was first in God as types, ideas, thoughts; and its sole purpose is to serve as an outward expression of these" (Cooke 268). This approach to life in relation to metaphysical realms definitely put Emerson in a position that completely discards Biblical teachings. Expression of such ideas is a disapproval of traditional religious dogma that could no longer stimulate or inspire a moral revolution that would infiltrate its way to politics.

IV. 6. The Influence of a Visionary

Emerson is commonly believed to be the most renowned Transcendentalist. His enthusiasm attracted others like Thoreau to embrace the transcendentalist ideals in young America. Thoreau proudly said of Emerson in his personal journal:

> *Emerson is a critic, poet, philosopher, with talent not so conspicuous, not so adequate to his task; but his field is still higher, his task more arduous. Lives a far more intense life; seeks to realize a divine life; his affections and intellect equally developed. Has advanced farther, and a new heaven opens to him.*

> *Love and Friendship, Religion, Poetry, the Holy are familiar to him. The life of an Artist; more variegated, more observing, finer perception; not so robust, elastic; practical enough in his field; faithful, a judge of men. There is no such general critic of men and things, no such trustworthy and faithful man. More of the divine realized in him than in any.*[31]

Emerson read poets and great moral writers very exhaustively. English idealists, Coleridge, Wordsworth, and Carlyle, had a great share of his concentration together with Goethe, Schiller and other Germans. However, he notably became more familiar with the ideas of Fichte, Schelling and, to a higher extent, Kant. He owes a lot to the British romanticists through whose translations and interpretations, he took an insight into German idealism. Swedenborg was studied attentively along with other writers of the Christian times. Great ancient philosophers such as Plato and Plotinus were also studied with great interest. He also had a keen interest in learning about Eastern religions and Bohemian mysticism. All these influences appeared clearly in his poetry but more importantly in his character and broadened view of the world.

He has been to a great extent both a reader and a poet and as his perspective grew broader, he started to impress many great names that came into contact with him. The period stretching from 1840 to 1860 marked his most efficient and influential contributions making the spectrum of his impact grow larger, all owing to the following of his personal genius and the expression of his heart. The build-up of his reputation was due to what he was able to produce and deliver amidst an agitated society that mainly sought change by means of collectivity and association. His disapproval of such collective endeavors made him face a wave of criticism and degrading judgments before he established himself as an acknowledged

[31]American Transcendentalism Web: Transcendental Ideas archive.vcu.edu

and respectable new thinker. During this interval, he set sail to Europe for a second time, and started to lecture beyond his geographical location, and more remarkably, he had his say on the subject of antislavery as it came up and terminated. It was a great period marked by the genius of many political and literary figures; and in the course of it, American literature rose to become worth the acknowledgement.

His volume of *Essays* was first published in 1841 that included some of his most excellent writings that would expose his potential as a thinker and writer. They are loaded with the clever arrangement of his thoughts, and deliver a clear message that bears the core of his philosophy. In a volume of lectures on *Christianity in its Various Aspects, from the Birth of Christ to French Revolution*, published in 1845, French historian and intellectual, Edgar Quinet dedicated a part to discuss about the reform efforts in America and shared his impressions about Emerson and how struck he was by a character that seemed to be resiliently defying the mainstream culture and the political inclinations of North:

> *In that North America, which is described to us as so materialistic, I find the most ideal writer of our age..A virgin philosophy was destined at length to spring up in those virgin forests; it begins to bud. The man I have just named is sufficient to prove that there are bold pioneers in America devoted to the pursuit of truth in the moral world; what we publish here from the summit of the ruins of the past, he very often proclaims, in like manner, in the vigor and solitude of an entirely new nature, what mean these voices, these souls, which meet, without knowing each other, across the ocean? Though we have abandoned the past, we have neither of us lost our way, like men in the desert island. Upon the immaculate sand of the New World, behold the footsteps of a*

man who advances towards the future by the very path we have taken! (Quinet 1846:126)

Quinet, though indirectly, testifies that Emerson's endeavor in defying the cultural ideology of his time was to establish a new, authentic culture proper to the New World. The virginity of the land required a "virgin philosophy" that would shape the social norms and the political trends. The seeds of this new frame of mind started to flower as soon as his first volume of Essays was published in 1841. The suggestion put forth is that the way towards originality is preaching the culture of individualism. In a country with a long history of religious dogma and outdated social conventions, America should not be built on the ruins of the past but rather find itself a path that has never been taken before and the New World has to stand for what its appellation implies.

In 1843, the second series of Essays was published and was better received by critics. As Emerson launched his new status of a thinker and writer at home, he had already left his mark in England and that path had been traced by Coleridge, Wordsworth, and Carlyle. The fame of his lectures being listened to in England, and his essays reaching more and more readers thanks to low-priced editions, an urge for him to be physically present and debated with was developed. On his home soil, he was urged to establish an audience base, and to lead his readers towards the adoption of his ideas. At this stage, philosophy was the last interest of the vast majority that had been accustomed to the tone of the English and German books.

In 1856, *his English Traits* was published, which had a good reception both in England and America. It is a great analysis of the important features of a distinguished society, notable for its clever judgments and for its unambiguous understanding of national currents; the

analysis of national life and the classification of the traits that make a great nation. The lectures he delivered in this same year were on English Civilization and France, and the emphasis was probably the assimilation of the characteristics that made of these two nations one of the greatest of time. Another important lecture, comparable to those on the English and French was the Anglo-American Race delivered in New York a year before. In it, he shows how "the leading features of the Americans are best seen at the West, where there people have free play." And then he started to put out the traits of the Anglo-Saxon race which is characteristically devoted to politics and that "in this country a prodigious stride has been taken through universal suffrage." He describes the scheme of voting in America as one which seeks to put "the best and wisest men" in the "helm of power."

He later unleashes an open comparison between the American and the English mind judging that the former is "more intellectual" than the former. "The American…has more chambers opened in his mind which the Englishman has not." The former European mindset has now evolved and within the new circumstances of the New World, the "American" has become "a pushing, versatile, victorious race, with a wonderful power of absorption." Yet, the "statesmen are not men of ideas. They represent property rather principle" and only "the individualism" that America has together with the "intellectual organization" can take the nation towards a position that makes it "see and feel moral distinctions." As the course of history led to the enactment of laws based on the profitability of businesses, now "the largest thought and widest love" (Qtd in., Cooke 1982: 126-27) will redirect the destination of the New World and reshape its landscape.

During the period between 1860 and 1870, Emerson had established a readership base and reached an audience upon whom his influence was of a great importance during a time of extreme opinions. He is now more than ever sympathizing with the movement of the day. The

impact of his ideas started to manifest. He had turned into a visionary to be listened to with pleasure, whereas those who held opposing views started to rather consider his truths than his faults. As a renowned figure now, his fellow citizens felt they could be glad of his reputation as he became a recognized figure in American thought and literature.

The ideas he has always defended now have more acceptance than before. It is also important to note that friend's from his intellectual circle passed away, Parker 1860 and Thoreau 1862. After the death of Parker, he become more unfriendly with the Unitarians and made him believe that the church only took care of superficial things, and he had completely quit praying, and ceased to practice any visual form of worship. Accordingly, he refused to enter Parker's pulpit, as a form of disapproving the traditional manner of giving a sermon, a practice that he had long abandoned. He was fortunate, however, that Parker had transformed the pulpit into one of freedom. His attitude towards religion very much relate to the Enlightenment preached by French philosopher-writers, namely Voltaire, Diderot, Condorcet, Montesquieu and Rousseau.

Using as a resource the rationalist ideas of René Descartes," the mechanistic physics of Isaac Newton, and the empiricism and political writings of John Locke, the philosophers in their works criticized the irrational dogmatism they perceived in Catholicism and the tyranny of 'divine-right absolutism." From a positive point of view, they started to endorse the use of reason in the law making process to achieve a form of freedom that honors all humanity and rids of inequities. These ideas propagated throughout Europe among the literary circles and political leaders. "In Britain, philosophers such as David Hume reflected the spread of the Enlightenment to Scotland," which for its part had a remarkable influence "on American students such as Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson. Lockean and French Enlightenment ideas found their way into the basic ideology of the American revolutionaries

and are reflected in important passages of founding documents, such as the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of 1787" (Wayne 335).

The American region on which the Enlightenment had the most influence was New England as its cultural landscape during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, started to embrace the ideas of individualism and religious skepticism. The mechanistic physics of Newton put the keystone for Deism, a spiritual dogma based the belief that God was not have a direct control over nature but only created the world and made it work under the basis of unchangeable natural laws. Deist rejected the notion of the heavenly miraculous interference with human dealings, or some specific revelation. This trend of reinterpreting the idea of God paved the way for the creation of the liberal Christian circle of New England, Unitarianism.

Transcendentalism, as dividing off from the organization of Unitarianism in many aspects, went too far with the idea of individualism and ended up denying the authority of conventionalism. Instead of rejecting faith as a whole, Emerson and his contemporaries on the whole wanted to adopt an intellectual and spiritual experience originating from Kantian ethics. Therefore, as they continued to support basic Enlightenment ideas of individual freedom, equality, and democracy, Emerson's circle essentially declined the cold rationalism and valued a more romantic approach instead. In actual fact, "Emerson and other Transcendentalists such as Margaret Fuller, Henry David Thoreau, Bronson Alcott, and George Ripley drew at least directly from the cultural background of the Enlightenment in their participation in reform programs in education, women's rights, and abolitionism" (336).

While many have written of promoting a religious revival, the Transcendentalists, on account of their background, argued that the real revival is that of the human mind, "so that

man's duty may extend to the proper use of his intellectual powers. This change must be brought about by a revival of the popular science of mind." If every man looks honestly and with consideration, he will discover a light within him which as a guiding force is higher than him. It is the "inner knowledge," which under ideal circumstances, it is named "genius" (Cooke 163). In the early stages of a life of an individual, the mind is naturally skeptical if the idea of the existence of truth has not been instilled in it. Early life should honor the intellect. Owing to these influences, religion is now looked at as universal sentiment with the same essential principles, and a sacred knowledge monopolized by clerics, and it has to be studied in the light of the new age to better understand its impact on the progress of culture.

Though Harvard was for many years fiercely against him, and from its professors came the harshest criticisms. The heresies of his beginnings, the Divinity School Address 1838, and his siding with the antislavery campaigners, had made him long hateful to the traditionalist current of Harvard. He made his way through little by little till the public opinion found a voice in him and Harvard thus had only to forget and acknowledge his new status. It was an accomplishment as far as he was concerned, reached with nobility and was duly deserved. His opponents had become his supporters, his infamous speeches were forgotten, and only his talent was recalled. The ideas he had advocated for long, now have to be put into practice, appealing his countrymen to adopt a more authentic culture that would be the best promise for them.

The postwar period, as described by him when meeting intellectuals and audiences, releases a "healthy sentiment," and referring to antebellum era as a time of "negation, a decay of thought, and a consequent national decline." He also expresses how exclusive it is to be surrounded by people with "high personal worth," love of men, hope, and "that the most distinguished by genius and culture are in this class of benefactors" (166-7).

In 1867, Emerson published "May-Day," a thirty-one stanza poem, celebrating the coming of spring in six hundred and sixteen lines that manifest a high appreciation of nature. In its composition, he made use of Christian characters, "classical allusions, pagan rites, and detailed observations on the passing of the season to show from different perspectives, the significance of the first day of May." The "May-Day" stanzas stir up "a felt sense of order" that it is difficult to identify because it is not explicitly communicated, just in the way he wanted his "real poet" to comprehend "the spiritual truth of nature behind the *facts* of nature" (Wayne 162-3). Charles Eliot Norton[32] described his poems as the ones "more fitted to invigorate the moral sense than to delight the artistic." Norton here outlines what the poem suggests implicitly with regard to morals and man's relation to nature and finds Emerson "felicitous in expression" and that "no poet is surer of immortality than Mr. Emerson; but the greater part of his poetry will be read, not so much for its artistic as for its moral worth." Contemporary reviewer

William Dean Howells, in *The Atlantic Monthly*, is even more passionate in his admiration of the genius and originality of Emerson's poetry; "Everywhere the poet's felicity of expression appears, he says, a fortunate touch transfuses some dark enigma with color; the riddles are made to shine when most impenetrable; the puzzles are all constructed of gold and ivory and precious stones." *Graham Magazine and Literary World* literary critic, Edwin Percy Whipple said that Emerson's "command of English shows a careful study of the best sources of the language; but no sign of imitation can be found in his writings, not even the use of

[32] Norton, Charles Eliot (1827-1908) was a Bostonian of many scholarly and literary interests. Although he is not particularly well-known today, his accomplishments were many. He was the first professor of art history in the United States (he taught at Harvard University from 1875 to 1898). He was also a prolific editor, working for the *North American Review* from 1864 to 1868 and later editing for many of his associates, among them Ralph Waldo Emerson (Wayne 362).

imagery which has been consecrated by the habit of ages" (Cooke 167). Such references from the *American Monthly* and *Graham Magazine and Literary World* are great testaments to his endeavor for the call of the establishment of an authentic culture.

IV. 7. Cultural and Political Independence

Emerson believed that society and institutions, particularly organized forms of faith and political groups damage the goodness of the individuals. He believes that people reach their utmost potential when really self-reliant and independent. It is exclusively through such individuals that true unity can take shape.

In the latter decades of the nineteenth century, America was remarkably prospering economically but was in need of feeling proud of its culture and success. North Americans did not value their promising culture and democracy and instead looked to Europe in quest to find their ancestry and identity though they could list political icons such as Lincoln to be one of theirs. As for the culture that was in the process of developing, Americans did not really feel it was on a par with the longstanding European one. The case for North Americans was somehow similar to Latin Americans' attachment to the Spanish cultural and political model.

In Emerson's writings, two concepts of independence are found: the liberation of the individual, and the pursuit of establishing an independent national identity. Both concepts are in relation to each other and reinforce one another. This philosophical endeavor was a justification put forth to inspire the nation to free itself from foreign cultural and political influences. The liberation of the individual is possibly best explored in the essay "Self-reliance where Emerson criticizes conformity and conventionalism. He maintains that in due

course our instincts are to be resorted to for the question of good and evil, otherwise, morality can longer stand as a scheme that constitutes a community.

Emerson defends individualism with the idea that, looking inside oneself, a divinity is found with each of us. If men had the required faith to put their focus on this Self, society would notice a remarkable change at different levels. However, it is society that is holding itself back by indirectly forcing the individuals to conform to the longstanding norms and, unless society undertakes to allow them trust themselves, no real progress can come about.

The repressive nature of social schemes against individual freedom has always been denounced by Emerson. Though man is born free, society always tends to shape a model that is consistent with its structure and it is everywhere "in conspiracy against the manhood of everyone of its members," and the virtue that is most demanded is conformity. In "Self-reliance," Emerson overtly expresses disapproval of this historical pattern that restrain creators:

> *Whoso would be a man, must be a non nonconformist. He who would gather immortal palms must not be hindered by the name of goodness, but must explore if it be goodness. Nothing is at last sacred but integrity of your own mind. Absolve you to yourself, and you shall have the suffrage of the world. I remember an answer which when quite young I was prompted to make to a valued advisor who was wont to importune me with the dear old doctrines of the church. On my saying, "What have I to do with the sacredness of traditions, if I live wholly from within?" my friend suggested, "But these impulses may be from below, not from above." I replied, "They do not seem to*

me to be such; but if I am the Devil's child, I will live then from the Devil." No law can be sacred to me but that of my nature (Emerson 1950: 148).

One of the most efficient tools that society makes use of on to mould its members is religious doctrine. That latter has permanently defined good and bad regardless of how better modern thought may come up with. The doctrines of the church anchored morality in the distant past that laid the ground for the medieval era. As society develops so should the morals, nor should anything be eternally classified as good or bad as this principle may undermine any philosophical endeavor that aims at bettering society. There should be no reliance on any association or institution to have things defined for everyone. Rather, "a man is to carry himself in the presence of all opposition as if everything were titular and ephemeral but he." And, it is such a shame that man has to surrender "to large societies and dead institutions." In fact, it takes courage to "speak the rude truth in all ways," but this truth "is handsomer" than the pretentiousness of love. Since the standards are reversed, "I cannot," Emerson insists, "consent to pay for a privilege where I have intrinsic right" (149).

IV. 8.1. The Declaration of Cultural Independence

Almost a century after the drafting of the Declaration of Independence, America still did not see itself as culturally independent from Europe. It had lacked the philosophical justification for a change at the social and cultural levels. Yet, as the Transcendentalists came along and put forth a new philosophy, the intellectual elite became more inclined towards putting the new ideas into work.

As far as cultural independence is concerned, Emerson's most influential essays on the topic were "The American Scholar," and "English Traits." By "scholar," Emerson means all who engage in thought and deliver efficient literary statements. In "The American Scholar," Emerson bravely and straightforwardly stated: "We have listened too long to the courtly muses of Europe"[33] and encouraged the scholars gathered in Cambridge to live and think like free men and not like "a timid and apologetic" one who cannot be "upright." Listening to these figures who always have to "quote some saint or sage," make us "like children who repeat by rote the sentences of granddames and tutors," and all this requires the memory to be disburdened "of its hoarded treasures as old rubbish. When a man lives with God, his voice shall be as sweet as the murmur of the brook and the rustle of the corn" (Emerson 1950: 157-58).

With the new importance given to the individual so as to feel that the world is his, the collective spirit is signaling that the dependence on the achievements of other nation is coming to an end. The US is now ready to take on a new, free role of thinking as asserted in "English Traits," that America has to wake up to a cultural self-esteem. Though this essay mirrors how impressed Emerson was by England, it also points out his conviction of the difference between his mother land and the mother country. He did not particularly appreciate the deep-rooted traditions in spite of his admiration of English individualism which cannot be a good example for his emerging nation.

[33]Quoted in the Biographical Introduction by Brooks Atkinson xi in the Complete Essays and Other Writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson 1950.

General Conclusion

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Emerson's journey as a skeptic started with the targeting of the ideas that were woven into the fabric of American society, most of which came through Christianity with its different forms. He considered all religions as institutions that hijacked spirituality and built their legacy upon it. All institutional forms of faith were a barrier to all genuine spiritual experiences which ought to be private and personal. In fact, the foundational ideas of his philosophy, mainly individualism and self-reliance, cannot be preached with presence of traditional religious teaching. The latter endorsed conformity and created a society that policed itself and it was a tool to maintain an order that serves the state.

Many of Emerson's contemporaries were on the same wavelength with regards to the state of philosophy, religion, and literature in America. Yet, his philosophy had the unique features to undermine the conventional creed and provide alternatives. As his euphoric vision started to fade, he became more and more interested in shaping the public opinion and proposing a practical theory that uses religion only as one of the sources of ethical principles. Religion has to be all about morality that comes from the Universal Spirit that is present in all individuals. Eventually, he stepped out of his circle, giving up his post of a Unitarian minister, to invent the new American religion as stated by Harold Bloom. Self-reliance, for instance, as a way of trusting one's insight, was a reaction against the faith placed on the deities proposed by the systems that restricted spirituality.

Occupying a pulpit as a Unitarian minister made of him an insider in religious matters, and gave him the insight to become an enlightened investigator in the realm of spirituality. Moreover, being aware of the importance of the latter, he bothered to offer the alternative mainly through his essay “The Over-Soul” (1841). He believed that there is a spiritual essence or a vital force in the universe that is present in every soul and allows the transcendence of the individual consciousness. Such an idea would appeal to those who seek faith independently and develop in them a sense of mysticism. The dismantling of social bondage that was approved by religion started with the introduction of transcendental ideas and the redefinition of the notion of fate that always contradicted the freedom of the individual soul. His essay on “fate” dismissed the judgments that deemed him as someone who was oblivious to the horrors of the world after he admitted the binary behavior of nature. Taking fate as something absolute is an obstacle for human freedom and leaves no margin for choice. Triumph over the circumstances cannot happen with classical understanding of fate that had been instilled in multiple generations by means of indoctrinations.

With the turbulent events sweeping all across the nation, there had to be a new conception of notions such as evil, fate and destiny that the religious tale deemed as absolute. The redefinitions proposed by the likes of Emerson bore mystic elements that reconciled religious faith with the transcendental outlook and allowed for the human potential to be unleashed while the conventional narrative had failed to draw a line between evil and the human will. Moreover, insisting on the importance of the individual to be completely unrestrained and independent to follow his own thinking to achieve success in the land of plenty gave a reason for the idea of the American Dream develop and for the dependency on European tradition to be reconsidered.

To allow for a system such as democracy to be established, Emerson proposed a rethinking of concepts such as power and authority in a reaction against the European philosophic tradition. With a firm insistence on the individual, who he always dubbed as exceptional, governments are always challenged and defied the new ideas of the nonconformists. Therefore, the process of lawmaking would always take into account the outcomes of all possibilities. Urging individuals to break free from social, political, and religious conventions was the root of the foundation of an unprecedented democratic system. Nonconformity could not promote the dictations of external influences, especially the ones coming from a higher governmental institution. The trend of breaking tradition and not being an adherent to any political dogma defined the interpretations of Emersonian scholarship and classified him outside all strains of antebellum philosophy.

Another important element that Emerson brought in to the political thought was morality, arguing that it is the moral identity of individuals that shapes the foundation of the state. Members of the public are ought to be in agreement with what is dictated by the ones at the top of the pyramid and should not be distracted from speaking out by what benefits them individually. Their moral identity should be mirrored in the decisions that promote individual development and defend individual rights. As for the issue of slavery, the poem, “Boston Hymn,” was both a prophesy to the end of what he referred to as an evil institution and a call to a mission for the Americans.

Though he primarily believes that reforms start within the individual sense of right and wrong, he realized that an institution that subjugated fellow humans and treated them in the most scandalous ways required an urgent reaction from the Boston elite. His efforts to bring about changes in the way this issue was viewed started as early as 1844, when he delivered an inspiring address in Concord on the abolition of slavery in the West Indies, later by condemning the enactment of the Fugitive Slave Act, and ultimately by supporting president Lincoln's plans of maintaining the Union and abolishing slavery in the United States. Despite his reluctance to being part of any collective reform efforts, his writings throughout the 1840s and 1850s always hinted at the slavery issue. He was rather concerned with the changing of the society's perception to make it see slavery as a scandalous practice before considering the enactment of laws that criminalize it. All was done within a transcendental outlook, fusing the principles of self-reliance with those of abolitionism.

Another issue that became increasingly a matter of concern for Emerson was the advocating of women's rights. Whilst he held conservative views about women's role in society in the early part of his career, he shifted towards the idea of empowering them by getting them more involved in public affairs. He believed that the emancipation of women from social bondage was dependent on their will to explore new positions in society that is why he addressed them directly and urged them to claim their rights to education, to employment, to equality of property, to equal rights in marriage, and to suffrage.

Emerson had been familiar with the women's demands before becoming a suffragist due to his friendship with fellow transcendentalist, Margaret Fuller, writer of the first book *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* that particularly defended women. Hence, his views on women were being developed within a specific framework, sharing the same foundational principles with the local women's rights movement. He even put his signature on a convention, agreeing on some principles of the movement, thus allowing his statements to be public and official. From then on, he wrote extensively about women's role in the progress of society in his journals, arguing that the status quo of one half of the society did not allow for the creation of a free society. Ultimately, the then-radical and unwanted changes had to be approved by the likes of Emerson who were pushing the agenda of the 1850 Women's Rights Convention.

In the "Conduct of Life" (1860) and "Society and Solitude" (1870), Emerson started to assess the consumerism that almost defined the American culture and tried to redefine success in a way that honor the nation. He urged his readers to lead a moral life because wealth would not be a worthy legacy or a criterion for greatness. This very argument targeted mainly the supporters of the slaveholding states who, in the name of business, subjugated fellow humans in the most scandalous ways. As an antislavery essayist, he romanticized the image that the major events in America reflected and put them within the transcendental realm, for instance, regarding slavery as a practice that defied the harmony of nature.

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