

## SLAVERY AND MORALITY IN THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE: TRANSCENDENTALISTS' STAND

Dr. Abel Ngor MARONE  
*Senegal*

**ABSTRACT :** This article intends to put in parallel the fundamental principle of the Declaration of Independence of the Founding Fathers and the practice of slavery in order to demonstrate not only its contradictory rhetoric but also to demonstrate the position of the Transcendentalists. For, despite the fundamental principle of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness cherished and idolized by the Founding Fathers, the practice of slavery was far from reaching its epilogue. By declaring in the Federal Paper that *all men are created equal*, the Founding Fathers did not mean the individual equality. Rather, they meant the equality of the American colonists as *the people of the United States*, which brought them to systematize slavery and take political commitments that federally and constitutionally recognized the status of slavery. It is in that sense that the Transcendentalists raised with hue and cry to denounce and fight against the practice of slavery.

**KEYWORDS:** *Founding Fathers, Slavery, Morality, Declaration of Independence, Transcendentalism.*

### I. INTRODUCTION

The Declaration of Independence of the thirteen colonies in 1776 constituted a turning point in social, cultural, economic and political history of the United States of America. In the early 1770s, the founding fathers became convinced that the British Parliament intended to take away their freedom by a series of tax laws to which they considered unjust, and of which the principle constituted to levy taxes on products that the colonists needed the most. As subjects of the Crown, the colonists did not seek to bring to an end these tax laws, but to reason the British Parliament to reconsider them for the benefit of both the colonists and the mother country. But as the British Parliament increased the coercive measures, they started questioning the supremacy of the British government over the colonies. This was fueled by the feeling of a series of historical and natural rights. For, as British subjects, the question of historical rights started haunting the colonists' minds. They were imposed to pay taxes to a government in which they have no representatives. And as human species, they assumed that they were free to order they acts, and to dispose of their properties.

Fueled by the usurpation of the King, and spurred by the writings of great thinkers such as Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and Thomas Paine, the transformation of the economic conflict became, then, a constitutional debate triggering the revolutionary crisis that led to the Declaration of independence in 1776. Yet, this revolutionary rhetoric sounded contradictory to the practice slavery. For, in its essence, the Preamble of the Constitution included all the "People of United States" while excluding blacks as Americans who were endowed with certain unalienable rights by their Creator. They declared themselves free from British domination while maintaining Blacks in bondage and forcing them to work on cotton fields. Moreover, they framed a new nation and culture while disintegrating the black families and cutting them from the roots of their history and culturally uprooting them. Such is the economy of the Declaration of Independence that led us to investigate this topic. In fact, the aims of this article is first to make a parallelism between the philosophy underlying the Declaration of Independence of the United States and its current practice after the independence of the thirteen colonies. The second motivation is to put a conspicuous position the contradictory inherent of the Federal Paper but also and its legacy in the American politics and the stand of the Transcendentalists in the political chessboard of slave-owning America.

### II. THE CONTRADICTION INHERENT OF THE FEDERAL PAPER

When the Declaration of Independence stated that, "all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness", everything suggested that the Federal Paper would be a moral principle and a supreme law applying to all men living the thirteen new states that formed the United States of America. Yet, the reality was quite different for, the Founding Fathers were tangling between the ideal freedom and the reality of the new nation, sectional

interests and the safety of the new Republic and Nation. What is more, by cherishing the principle liberty and right, the authors of the Declaration of Independence forced Africans drudging on the cotton fields and in the plantation households while undergoing cruel enslavement and bondage, cultural destruction, and death.

But to better grasp the essence of the issue, it proves important to analyze the contradictory rhetoric of the Founding Fathers in the first place and then investigate the undersides of the Continental Congress as well as the issue of slavery.

### 1. The Contradictory Rhetoric of the Founding Fathers

Though the American Constitution proves to be the oldest and the most stable one in the world, there is no doubt that it went through compromises. The goal of the founding fathers was to establish a much stronger central government from which each state may have the protection of the whole while protecting the interests and the particularities each state. The reality is that there were many thorny issues that might jeopardize or alter the genius scheme of the Founding fathers in the making of a strong and viable Union. The has turned the question of slavery to be inappropriate as a public debate.

Yet, the Founding Fathers acknowledged that the practice slavery was against the principle of the Declaration of Independence, and that it violated the core principle of the essence natural rights to which they chanted and extolled. This approach contrasts the thought of the Federal Paper by betraying the core of the Revolutionary ideal: life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness they cherished. Saving, then, the Union, and protecting the best interest the states urged the Founding Fathers to a simultaneous commitment to private property rights, and to framing principles of a controlled government. Moreover, another key factor that can corroborate to our thesis is that the economy of the Founding Southerners was based on slave-based staple agriculture, added to the deep-rooted racial prejudice. Such are some obstacles, among many others, that make the contradictory rhetoric of the Founding Fathers to which this part is dedicated.

In fact, the main goal of the authors of the Declaration of Independence was a subversive one against the British domination. But to understand this contradictory rhetoric, we are going to tackle it a spiritual and historical angle.

The spirituality occupied a fundamental place in the history and the founding of the United States of America. Sources of inspiration and guidance for the public opinion, and for the Americans as a whole, the Founding Fathers based their subversive actions first on the divine character. For, in deciding to seek their independence from Great Britain, the Founding Fathers, first, justified their cause under Divine Nature. And for good reasons, one can read the phrase that starts the last paragraph of the Declaration of Freedom of Independence: "We, therefore, the Representatives of the United States of America, in General Congress, Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions ...."<sup>1</sup>. On pronouncing these words, the framers of the Declaration of Independence referred to the Universality of God as the Creator of all men to whom He endowed with certain unalienable rights, which are the right to live a peaceful life, to freely enjoy liberty, and the willingness to pursuit a better life without any constraints. And in doing so, the Founding Fathers relied on the protection of the Divine Providence as the Creator of all men.

Yet, this spiritual rhetoric, and theory, obviously, appeared to be in contrast with regard the practice and the status of Blacks. For, by justifying the cause of the Revolution under the angle of God's Nature, the authors of the Declaration of Independence, purposely, denied the fundamental rights to the Blacks as men created in the image and the likeness of God. And despite their bravery and their loyalty in the front line, they were considered as inferior race doomed to serve the Whites. They contributed to the development of the colonies, but were taken as mere muscular masses that, mechanically, were charged to implement the most daring tasks. They were endowed with reason and intelligence, but the framers of the Declaration of Independence did not imply them in the process of the creation a new republic and the framing of a new nation. Black slaves were seeking shelter by running out their grinds, but they passed massive compromise measure laws designed to make it easier for slaveholders to take back the fugitives. They confessed that all men are created equal by the Creator, but they put the blacks in the background as inferior beings. They hold black slaves in bondage in the plantations while denouncing the usurpation and injustice of the British Crown.

In a few words, when the Founding Fathers hold the Continental Congress on July 4, 1776, while excluding blacks in the process of adopting the Declaration of Independence, there is no doubt that they did not intend it to mean equality of all Americans, Blacks included. The Congress expressed a call for the right of the statehood and not for individual equality or liberty. Rather, it was designed to American colonists, as *People the United-States* who were invited to form a more perfect union.

However, this contradictory state of facts, one can be brought to believe that our experiences in life give birth to our ideas and concepts. In other words, our perceptions of the world, our actions and conducts good or evil, are

---

<sup>1</sup> The Declaration of Independence July 4th, 1776.

determined and designed by the material and social world around in which we move about. For, by leaving Great Britain out of individual liberty and religious freedom, the pilgrims and the Puritans respectively landed in what they termed the “Promised Land” or better “the land of freedom” from 1620 to 1630 by crossing thousands of miles of the Atlantic Ocean. This seeming exodus could be put to parallel with the one of Moses crossing the Red Sea to the Promised Land with his people seeking shelter and freedom. And founded on these principles, the framers of the Declaration of Independence, however, betrayed the memory of the Pilgrims and the Puritans on the special relationship of Americans with God. It is this sense that Tomas Jefferson said:

Kindly separated by nature and a wide ocean from the exterminating havoc of one quarter of the globe... to honor and confidence from our fellow-citizens, resulting not from birth, but from our actions and their sense of them; enlightened by a benign religion, professed, indeed, and practiced in various forms, yet all of them inculcating honesty, truth, temperance, gratitude, and the love of man; acknowledging and adoring an overruling Providence, which by all its dispensations proves that it delights in the happiness of man here and his greater happiness hereafter... a wise and frugal Government, which shall restrain men from injuring one another, shall leave them otherwise free to regulate their own pursuits of industry and improvement, and shall not take from the mouth of labor the bread it has earned<sup>2</sup>

In this passage, Thomas Jefferson, recalled the myth of the Promised Land by describing the special relationship between the new homeland and the left one, between them and God. Moreover, Jefferson gave great importance to the sense of honor and confidence based not on birth, origin or status but rather on the actions and even better on the power and good intention which steer them. Jefferson rhetoric of the “Promised Land” or the “Land of Freedom” was, in reality, designed for the purpose of nation-building. For, by closely observing the situation of Africans who were brought to North America in 1620 earlier than the Puritans who landed in American 1630, and who were forced as slaves to work on the cotton fields and in the plantation households, dehumanized and culturally uprooted, it is obvious that America was far from being a Land of Freedom but rather a new land where the worst injustice over human beings was done; a new land where were cruel enslavement and bondage, and cultural destruction, and death were exercised on blacks..

In short, although the Founding Fathers freed the thirteen colonies from the British Crown domination out of natural rights and Divine purpose by building viable republic and establishing an egalitarian society, it is clear that there was a dark side of the picture. They fought for life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness while oppressing black people. They sought a better life while cruelly enslaving and holding in bondage Africans. They hopefully and blithely promoted equality while passing laws which nipped in the mud blacks’ hope for a better life, and eclipsed any glimmer of hope for a brighter future of the African-American.

## 2. The Continental Congress and the issue of slavery

If there is compromises and compromising which transcend generations in the history of the United-States of America, the issue of slavery represented one of the most debated in the Continental Congress. The question of slavery constituted a thorny issue in the process of the Declaration of Independence and the making of a new viable republic and a sustainable nation. The Founding Fathers had to find the right formula that allow them to find the balance between the industrialized Northern colonies, and which required little slaves and the South with slave-based economy. In this economic, geographic, and political configuration, the future of America’s institution of slavery was one of the most contentious issues debated in the Continental Congress.

The Founding Fathers did not seek to separate the north and the South but rather to unify the two areas as one republic and nation. The first congress demonstrated that for, in that meeting, the main purpose of colonists was to unite the colonies so as to find together the best strategical measures which would bring the British government to loosen the legal grip and to make concessions. But the reality was quite different, because it resulted in compromises both in deeds and words. It is in that perspective that the colonists of whom most were slaveholders did not have a substantive debate on the issue of the slavery in the Continental Congress despite the crucial role that slaves played in the revolutionary war.

In fact, it is clear that if the issue of black lives has still remained a public debate in the United-States of America after more than two-hundred years, one can assume that the Founding Fathers purposely used a vague language and ambiguous wording in the rhetoric and the drafting of the Declaration of Independence. This has brought us to question about the real intent of the authors of the Continental Congress. In its essence, the Declaration of Independence morally and legally expressed the immorality of practices and the unjust laws which the British Crown exercised on the colonies. And by denouncing those unjust treatments, and justifying their actions, the Founding Fathers took the whole world as a witness. Yet, as eager as they were to free themselves from the British domination, it unquestionably admitted that the delegates of the Continental

---

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Jefferson, First Inaugural Address, March 4, 1801.

Congress arrogated themselves to duty and right to institutionalize the worst injustice of humanity, that is, the practice of slavery.

In fact, based on the contradictories of the Declaration of Independence, one can assume that the only intention of the delegates was to form a stronger general government, which suggests the impurity of the Federal Paper. For, by wanting to unite the thirteen colonies as one nation *E-pluribus Unum*, they purposely expressed a strong desire and willingness to lay the foundation of the new republic and nation based not on objective but rather on subjective motives. Obviously, this state of fact was not a surprising policy but rather a decisive turning point for the Union and the future of the United States of America. The first reason is that the thirteen colonies shared the same fate and that their salvation would come from their union as one geographical entity. The second reason is that they were diversified private interests and which the common sense would like them to join together in order to idealize a nationalist public interest while protecting and preserving the economic interests of each state as a pledge and a guarantee for the national unity. This brought the Founding Fathers to make compromises with an unprecedented pragmatism in the forming of a united front. Forming a stronger union while preserving the diversified private interests were, however, one of the main challenges to which the southern states held on. And it is in that sense that Rawlins Lowndes, in a Speech in the South Carolina House of Representatives, declared that:

Without negroes, this state one of the most contemptible in the Union; Negroes were our wealth, our only natural resource; yet behold how our kind friends in the north were determined soon to tie up our hands, and drain us of what we had<sup>3</sup>!

In fact, by declaring that Negroes constitute the driving force behind the economy, while seeking compromises to save the union from the British domination, Rawlins Lowndes epitomizes not only the contradictory rhetoric of the Founding Fathers as regard the unalienable rights such as life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness on the one hand but also contrasts the common sense according to which no one has the right to subject his fellowmen nor to deny them the natural rights which apply to all individuals by its nature.

Rawlins Lowndes highlights the imperfection of men and though the Founding Fathers were political figures, it must be admitted that they were not exempt from this imperfection rather they maculated the American Constitution by taking biased decisions and passing discriminatory laws which revealed the gross injustice and cruelty from which the slaves constantly suffered. It is in that context that Frederick Douglass, in a Lecture at Corinthian Hallon, said: "What to the slave is your Fourth of July?...it is a day that reveals to him (slave) more than other days in the year, the gross injustice and cruelty to which he is the constant victim"<sup>4</sup>.

In this passage, Frederick Douglass takes the stock of blacks' democratic achievements on a lecture he delivered at Corinthian Hall. By making a parallelism between the past and the present, he realizes that blacks remained and have still remained in constant victim despite the bravery and the patriotic effort they made in the Independence war.

In fact, the history of blacks in the United-States of America, in the broad sense of the term, is summed up in domination and exclusion. This domination results in undergoing injustice and cruelty generated and fueled by the prejudice of the white supremacy and exclusion of blacks justified by a systemic segregation and discrimination that relegated them to second zone. Yet, the preamble of the Constitution begins with "We the People of the United-States", a symbolic phrase which has brought many intellectuals to infer that blacks were literally excluded from the Constitution.

In short, the history of the United-States is intimately linked with the one of blacks. Economically and politically, there is no doubt that blacks participated in the foundation upon which the Founding Fathers built the nation and the Republic. And despite of the conflict of interests between the Southern and Northern States, slavery helped weld the Nation and cement the different regional entities. Yet, the delegates of the Continental Congress seemed to minimize or better ignore the contribution of the slaves in the decisive turning point of the history of United-States. Because it must be acknowledge that contesting the rains of taxes from Great Britain dumped on the thirteen colonies constituted the click which raised public opinion, strengthened the patriotic fiber, and fueled the feeling of blacks' self-determination.

But despite of the place that blacks occupied in the history of the colonies and the invaluable contribution they brought to the shaping the of Nation and the Republic, the delegates of the Continental Congress did not imply them to the process of the Declaration of Independence even less to the main actors who would help make fluid

---

<sup>3</sup> Rawlins Lowndes, Speech in the South Carolina House of Representatives, 16 January 1788(was an American lawyer, planter and politician who became involved in the patriot cause after election to South Carolina's legislature, although he opposed independence from Great Britain. Lowndes served as president/governor of South Carolina during the American Revolutionary War, and after the war opposed his state's ratification of the U.S. Constitution because it would restrict the trans-Atlantic slave trade.

<sup>4</sup> Frederick Douglass, Lecture at Corinthian Hallon July 5, 1852.



integration and social cohesion. This combination of circumstances around the issue of slavery continued to be an integral part of American society well beyond independence.

### III. THE LEGACY OF THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE IN THE AMERICAN POLITICS

In the philosophy of the Declaration of Independence, one can mention the idea of the American Dream. This ideal of life in abundance reveals the idea according to which we all have an equal opportunity and that Nature provides us with the necessary means to shape our daily life in order to give sense to the words “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness” as inscribed, sung and idealized in the Declaration of Independence. And though the American Dream ideal portends the possibility to any person to make his dream into a reality by the hard work of his own hands and by extension to build an economic dynasty for his posterities, we have to admit that this assumption or better belief, however, has been repeatedly denied to the Black Americans by the American’s government by passing laws and signing decrees that maintained them in constant victim and dependence and by denying them the opportunity to demonstrate their greatness or to fully value their potential, which is a pledge to wealth-building. In fact, this discriminatory and segregationist policy of the American’s government has wearied sequelae that impact not only Blacks lives or Whites but also the relationship between Blacks and Whites.

#### 2. 1. The Impact of the Declaration of Independence in Blacks lives

With a view to free the thirteen colonies from Great Britain and to form the United-States of America, the Founding Fathers wrote a Declaration of Independence approved on July 4, 1776, and which proclaims that “all men are created equal” and “endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights.” Yet, the reality was quite different. For good reasons, the author of the Federal Paper theatrically idealized a viable Republic and a strong Nation where the sacred-saint principle of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness appeared as an essence that reveals the spiritual dimension.

But the reality was quite different for, in a systemic way and systematically the colonists excluded Black-Americans from any process related to the establishment of the new Nation and Republic. Moreover, they implied Blacks in the Independent war to free themselves from the domination of the British Crown while denying them the right to dispose of themselves. In reality, the Founding Fathers theorized the phrase “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness” as a fundamental principle of the equality of all men but practically they did not believe that sacred-saint principle. Ultimately, Blacks were violently denied the principle of freedom in the “Promised Land” such as the compromise of Missouri in 1820, the Kansas-Nebraska Act in 1854, and the Dred Scott case in 1857 demonstrated it.

To begin with, it proves fundamentally important to bow to the fact. When a nation wisely declared its belief in freedom and equality, and took them as sacred-saint principles, it is obvious that any taken action or decision needs to be justified. In that sense, the Compromise of Missouri in 1820 appeared as one of the first taken act which overtly justified the view of the framers of the Constitution according which Blacks were systemically excluded from the “We the People of the United States”. It all starts with Missouri going to join the Union in 1820. At that time, the stake was high. Obviously, the entry of Missouri into the Union would upset the balance of power between the North abolitionist and the South traditionally conservatives and slaveholders. In fact, the adoption of the Compromise of Missouri at Capitol Hill proved to be a crucial momentum in the turning point in the political history of the new nation. Politically, this compromise has an important aspect to the fact that it prohibited any state to the north of the South border of the state of Missouri in 36° 30’ to enter the union as a pro-slavery state. This and which the principle of the agreement was to prevent the propagation of slavery. But though the Compromise appeared to be the Congress’s first attempt aiming at rationalizing particular interests and calming regional tension down on the question of slavery, there is no doubt that the Compromise was far from addressing the underlying issues. This state of fact had brought John C. Calhoun, a Senator from South Carolina declared before the Senate that:

This is to be found in the fact that the equilibrium between the two sections in the government as it stood when the Constitution was ratified and the government put in action has been destroyed. At that time there was nearly a perfect equilibrium between the two, which afforded ample means to each to protect itself against the aggression of the other; but, as it now stands, one section has the exclusive power of controlling the government, which leaves the other without any adequate means of protecting itself against its encroachment and oppression.<sup>5</sup>

In this passage, John C. Calhoun showed the dangers that might undermine the Union. He demonstrated the domination of the North, which undermined the equilibrium that tied up the North and the South. In that sense, he exposed the impotence of the southerner states against the Northerners to which he considered to monopolize

<sup>5</sup> John C. Calhoun, Senator from South Carolina, speaking before the Senate, March 4, 1850

the Union leaving no room for maneuver to the Southern section to protect itself against the Northern states domination in the broad sense of the term.

In fact, the concerns of the Southerners were how to preserve the Union. The two houses adopted measures that allow the Southern States to remain in the Union such as the Compromise of Missouri while preserving not only their interests but also their honor and security. In reality, the ghost of blacks' exclusion from the Declaration of Independence seemed to pursue the endeavor of the Founding Fathers by fueling and reviving the controversies on issue of slavery in the 1850s. The creation of the Kansa-Nebraska Act in 1854 in the 37° 40' parallel and Nebraska to the north of the 40' parallel livened up the tensions between the North and the South for, it gave the choice to the pioneers to practice slavery. This new decision represented a new downside that would be leading to the Union to the American Secession. But prior to that decision, the controversy on the slavery had grown with what known as the Dred Scott v. Sandford case in 1857 in which the supreme court ruled that a slave who resided in a free state and territory was not thereby entitled to his freedom while declaring unconstitutional the Compromise of Missouri. As a reminder, Dred Scott was a slave from Missouri and who moved with Jefferson a military officer his master to Illinois, a free state where slavery was not practiced and who once back filed individual suit.

In short, since the Declaration of Independence of the United States, many compromises and laws were designed and passed to preserve the Union while preserving the interests of the Southerners. Yet, the Founding Fathers purposely "profaned" the sacred saint principle of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness extolled in the Declaration of Independence in 1776. What is more, they expressed that "all men are created equal" while subjecting thousands of blacks in the south plantations. In summary, the authors of the Federal Paper were aiming at separating from British domination in order to tie up the Union, to preserve the interests of each state, and to protect one another while signing compromises, and passing fugitives laws that maintained Blacks in constant bondage and servitude. As a result, this unprecedented situation has brought some intellectual to take position in the cause of slavery such as the Transcendentalists.

## 2.2. The Transcendentalists' Stance on Slavery

If there is a social and political problem which pervades the United States Institutions and which polarizes the public opinion, it is no doubt the question of slavery. The issue of slavery is intrinsically linked to the history of the Union States. It turned to be an important event that engaged a great deal of intellectuals to take positions on that great human injustice that humanity has ever experienced. Slavery was the machine behind the southern colonies economy dominating American politics in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

In fact, the expansion of new territories and the admission of new states in the Union marked a turning point for the future of slavery in general and Blacks in particular. The compromise of Missouri in 1820, the Kansas-Nebraska Act 1854, the Dred Scott Case in 1857, just to mention these, constituted crucial events that would change the course of the social and political history of the United States of America. In fact, this unprecedented human injustice brought many great thinkers to question the legitimacy of slavery and to probe the moral sentiment that might justify this inhuman practice that dehumanized black people by cutting them off from the roots of their culture, history and religion on the one hand and devalued them by considering them as just muscle masses who mechanically had to implement the daily drudgeries and endure both his master's humiliations and bullying on the other hand. But such treatment and consideration of blacks could not leave some intellectual men and women indifference. It is that sense that the Transcendentalists such as Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau made it a matter of consciousness and took actions in the cause of slavery. Emerson was known to be a zealous advocate for self-reliance, individual actions and reforms. This moral and political stance brought a great deal of people to question the position of the Transcendentalists on the issue of slavery. And although Emerson's subsequent works did not focus on political rights but rather on natural one, it is clear that his commitment in the cause of slavery is no longer to be demonstrated. His commitment was not to fight the injustice to which black people were enduring but rather to free men and women from bondage of their mind that locked up their imagination and ingenious creativity. But how is it possible to carry while dehumanizing and devaluing a segment of the population? How can we cut off the Blacks' tree from their cultural, language, and religious roots without disintegrating and altering the principle of "E Pluribus Unum"? Such are a series of questions that justified Emerson's stance on slavery. But one of the disruptive elements that livened up Emerson's stance in slavery is the Fugitive Slave Act in 1850 passed the Congress in 1850 to which he considered to be a national tragedy. For, beyond mandating the return of "runaway slaves" from any part of the country, the law legally prevented any support to them. And considering the new disposition to be morally wrong and heinous, Emerson he wrote:

Now I have lived all my life without suffering any known inconvenience from American Slavery. I never saw it; I never heard the whip; I never felt the shock in my free speech and actions; until the other day when Mr. Webster his personal influence brought the fugitive Slave law in the country. I

say Mr. Webster, for though the bill was not his, yet it is notorious that he was the life and soul of it<sup>6</sup>.

Not only expressed Emerson his indignation of the application of the new law but he denounced its incarnation by Mr. Webster to whom he attributed to be the life and the soul of it. Biased and in contrast with the American idealism, the law reflected the contradictory rhetoric of the Founding Fathers in the writing of the Declaration of Independence and misguided the sacrosanct principle of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Emerson denounced the sham trial and castigated what he considered to be a parody of justice which fixing the fate of Blacks in a white America.

In fact, Emerson subsequently had an argument that advocated the secession on the ground that the Union is but an unnatural alliance and that manipulations and compromising could not save. But the fugitive law made him lives a new experience in his life. He manifested a deep indignation and negatively disapproved it. And by taking Mr. Webster as the life and the soul of the law, Emerson demonstrated the moral corruption of the politicians.

Henry David Thoreau was also in the same wavelength as Emerson. His experience in the meeting of the citizens of Concord made him realize that his duty as a true patriot should not consist in following mechanically his fellow citizens. Surprised and disappointed, he wrote:

lately attended a meeting of the citizens of Concord, expecting, as one among many, to speak on the subject of slavery in Massachusetts; but I was surprised and disappointed to find that what had called my townsmen together was the destiny of Nebraska, and not of Massachusetts, and that what I had to say would be entirely out of order<sup>7</sup>

Thoreau reminded us the all-set issue of slavery in the United States of America. For, instead of talking through the question of slavery as he was expecting it in the meeting of the citizens of Concord, his fellow men put in priority the intersectional interests rather than fusing on the question of slavery which ripped off the new country and shred the young nation.

In fact, Thoreau's opposition to slavery did not come out of blue. He grew up he had in a family that regarded slavery as evil. For, being one of the early members of the Concord Woman's Antislavery Society founded in 1837, Thoreau's mother early impregnated him in the feeling of antislavery. For Thoreau, the practice of slavery appeared to be an evil that humanity had ever done. That is why he participated in helping a great deal of slaves escape from the grip of corrupt politicians through the Underground Railroad to Canada, which brought him later to apply the principle of civil disobedience.

Although the transcendentalists had a well-defined mission, their support in the cause of slavery proved to be crucial. Emerson and Thoreau advocated a free and democratic society where equal individuals live together so as to build an idealized America. Their commitment to the antislavery is cause deepened over time Emerson sought to reconcile his ideal of self-reliance with organized political action necessary to fight slavery.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Although a great deal of the Founding Fathers were aware of the evil of slavery and that its practice was against the core principle of the American Revolutionary ideal, there is no doubt that intersectional interests, principles of limited government and the willingness to save the Union turned out to be a legitimate cause that made the Founding Fathers helpless to put an end slavery. But though the reality was quite different, it is unquestionably admitted that the Transcendentalists played a fundamental role in the cause of slavery in the United States of America. And by making it a matter of consciousness and a moral duty, they took audacious positions to denounce what they considered as social and political evil against African American slaves, which, later, brought about to protests and resistances leading to civil right movements.

#### Bibliography

- [1]. Hewitt, John. The Dilemmas of the American Self. Philadelphia: Temple University, 1989.
- [2]. Paine, Thomas. Le Sens Commun( Common Sense). Paris: Editions Aubier Montaigne, 1983.
- [3]. Thoreau, Henry David. Walden and Civil Disobedience, edited by Thomas Owen. New York: University of California, 1966.
- [4]. Tocqueville, Alexis De. Democracy in America. New York: New American Library, 1956.
- [5]. Ziff, Lazer. Ralph Waldo Emerson: Selected Essays. New York: Penguin Books, 1982.

<sup>6</sup> Ralph Waldo Emerson, ESSAYS AND POEMS Nature; Address, and Lectures Essays: First and Second series Representative Man, The conduct of Life, Other Essays and Addresses Poems 1847, Uncollected and Manuscript Poems, New York, The Library of America, 1996, p. 994.

<sup>7</sup> Henry David Thoreau : Slavery in Massachusetts 1854, An Address Delivered at the Anti-Slavery Celebration at Framingham, July 4<sup>th</sup>, 1854, p.01.

**Webliography**

- [6]. [https:// minds. wisconsin. edu](https://minds.wisconsin.edu) 5h: 06 p.m
- [7]. [https:// www. umbc.edu](https://www.umbc.edu) 5h : 05 p.m
- [8]. [https:// www. bolles. org](https://www.bolles.org) 18/12/2021- 5h:07 p.m
- [9]. [https:// digitalcommons. law. seatleu. edu](https://digitalcommons.law.seattleu.edu) 18/12/2021 5h: 30 p.m
- [10]. [https:// www. jstor. org](https://www.jstor.org) 11/12/2021- 5h::07 p.m