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# DIPLOMOVÁ PRÁCE

**Transcendentalism in Practice: Thoreau's "*Civil Disobedience*" and Fuller's *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* in Light of Emerson's Essays**

**Transcendentalismus v praxi: Thoreauova "Civilní neposlušnost" a Fullerové "Ženy devatenáctého století" ve světle Emersonových esejích**

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## Abstract

This diploma thesis deals with theoretical ideas of transcendental movement, conceived in the essays of Ralph Waldo Emerson, the promoter of this movement in the United States, and their application in practical life, as they were understood by authors and human rights defenders Henry David Thoreau, in his essay "The Civil Disobedience" and Margaret Fuller's work "The Women in the Nineteenth Century." Thesis analyzes the conflict of transcendental philosophy to the real conditions of the company in the nineteenth century, the limited individual potential in this age, and a fight strategy to remedy injustice that is against nature, and which society perpetrated against its members. It illustrates therefore need to find an independent, self-confident individual who will take responsibility for his own life to make it better.

## Anotace

Tato diplomová práce se zabývá uvedením teoretických myšlenek transcendentního hnutí a jejich pojetím v esejích Ralpha Walda Emersona, zakladatele tohoto hnutí ve Spojených státech amerických, jejich následné aplikace v praktickém životě tak, jak tyto myšlenky pojali autoři a zastánci lidských práv Henry David Thoreau v eseji „Občanská neposlušnost“ a Margaret Fullerová v práci „Ženy devatenáctého století.“ Práce analyzuje střet transcendentní filosofie s reálnými poměry společnosti devatenáctého století, omezené možnosti jednotlivců této doby a způsob boje za nápravu nespravedlností, které jsou proti veškeré přirozenosti a kterých se společnost dopouští na svých členech. Mapuje tedy potřebu najít v člověku nezávislého, sebevědomého jedince, který přijme odpovědnost za svůj život a učiní ho tak lepším.

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## **1. Introduction**

The amazing philosophy of transcendentalism, based on the believe in a particular power and influence of nature, inspired people all around the world. Transcendentalism is a movement that celebrates insuperable power of nature that is an inseparable part of everyone's life. Man is connected from the base with this strong power, and whenever he attempted to break the harmony between him and nature, man suffers of forfeiting himself.

Ralph Waldo Emerson, the greatest representative of the transcendental movement in the United States of America in the nineteenth century, came with the idea of happy and contented man who is free in a wise, new but unsystematic way. This conviction is intended for anyone who is interested. Every one can feel freedom of his being when he follows his nature and live with himself in harmony mainly by means of self-education of man's character and self-reliance. The own action of the individual is important.

A man is for himself the most valuable, and when he respects his own nature before a bad influence of society and depends just on himself, only then does he find his freedom. All options are opened for him.

Self-reliance was very important for Emerson. It is also one of the foundation stones of his philosophy, and the thesis statement of his essay is what the diploma thesis works with. It develops Emerson's thought of an independent man who should live out of effect of society and emerge from its, even his own bounds.

Other Emerson's essays which this diploma thesis deals with are focused on self-reliant man and scholar who should be educated to an independent life without acclimatization to imitation. Even here, man's own nature is more important than anything else.

There are many authors who followed this revolutionary thinking in those days, this diploma thesis will deal with two of them: the first is Henry David Thoreau – transcendentalist and abolitionist – who among other things devoted his life to the fight against injustice that he found in government; the second one is Margaret Fuller – journalist and feminist – who was active in feminist movement for equal civil rights of woman; and how transcendental thinking of

especially Emerson, influenced their point of view in their essays and how they put Emerson's philosophy into working practice.

## **2. Emerson as a Father of the Idea**

Ralf Waldo Emerson was the greatest American thinker of the mid-nineteenth century. He had a very specific image of our world, especially of man – living as a free man in harmony not only with trees, animals, and everything that we call nature, but also in harmony with his mind and himself.

Emerson had got the impression that man is a far away from his natural environment and role that our world grows to the end, and our society is one which causes it without any notice. All this he describes in his famous essay "Nature" that many readers found to be in agreement with his "rebellions" ideas and followed him. For them Emerson held hundreds of lectures, and some of them were transformed into further essays.

The essay "Nature" was not the only earth-shaking work in Emerson's life. He brilliantly developed his vision of the role of individual and importance of independent thinking of American society that he developed also in the essays called "Self-reliance" and "The American Scholar."

### **2.1. Emerson's Bibliography in Brief**

Ralf Waldo Emerson was born on May 25, 1803 in Boston Massachusetts as a son of Unitarian minister, who exerted a great influence on him and his interest in philosophy, religion and sociology. After Emerson was ordained, he became a junior pastor. However, his beautiful world had been shaken with the loss of his beloved wife. He changed his point of view about the accepted values around him and left his church. His God had the temple



somewhere else – in Nature, as he describes in his famous essay of the same name published in 1844. His new view of the world brought unexpected development not just for Emerson, who found a new spiritual way of living based on the natural aspects of life, but also for many people who were inspired by his words:

In the woods, we return to reason and faith. There I feel that nothing can befall me in life, -- no disgrace, no calamity (leaving me my eyes), which nature cannot repair. Standing on the bare ground, -- my head bathed by the blithe air and uplifted into infinite space, -- all mean egotism vanishes. I become a transparent eyeball; I am nothing; I see all; the currents of the Universal Being circulate through me; I am part or parcel of God. (Emerson 1981: 11)

## **2. 2. Emerson's Essay "Nature"**

Man has been longing and searching for answers for so long time and living in the tradition of our father's theories that he even forgot about his natural being. In this time, Emerson's society was looking up to a father's cult. He saw man marching in the footsteps of his predecessors trustfully as it were the only way for him. "Our age is retrospective. It builds the sepulchres of the fathers. It writes biographies, histories, and criticism. The foregoing generations beheld God and nature face to face; we, through their eyes." (Emerson 1981: 7) How can one be so sure about the correct way? Why does the first one have the exclusive right to see the difference between good and bad? Even Emerson wanted to know: "Why should not we also enjoy an original relation to the universe?" (Emerson 1981: 7)

Emerson ultimately negates the answer to this question: Is a man really destined to go in footsteps of someone else, just because of history, religion, tradition or belief?

Emerson was convinced that the answer is found when a man decides to stand away from the crowd, as he says: "To go into solitude, a man needs to retire as much from his chamber as from society" (Emerson 1981: 9) to see his own thoughts and desire. In Nature you can see the true nature of life. Emerson believed that this picture of Nature was able to arouse the "right man" in us and please our soul. Just Nature has this power, nothing else, because man finds there a beauty, delight and harmony. Hence: "(...) all natural objects make a kindred impression, when the mind is open to their influence" (Emerson 1981: 9) as Emerson states.

It is also Nature that attracts the poet in a man who is able to hold his childhood in the heart, and it is such a pity that only a few men still have the child inside, not losing their connection with Nature, because most of them, unfortunately, leave their nature for society and therefore its habits and priorities. Emerson was convinced that man should be in love with Nature and belong to her as her child. In a while, when man is standing naked before himself, in the woods, he can be happy there, living in harmony.

However, man as a human being owes to Nature more than his natural being, but also all his senses, as Emerson correctly noted. The closer man stands to Nature, the more refined his senses are. Thanks to them he feels stronger. This tight connection between man and Nature produces a balance. Therefore Nature should not be perceived just as a good source of a material, the more so if it is also a whole process in which Nature works for man, helping him to sow the seed by wind, water it with rain and grow it on the sun just to provide a good nutriment. (cf. Emerson 1981) Emerson saw the world as a man's home in which: "Beasts, fire, water, stones, and corn serve him. The field is at once his floor, his work-yard, his play-ground, his garden, and his bed." (Emerson 1981: 12) By this provided help, that Emerson named Commodity, Nature cuddles a man.

Emerson states that in the Nature there is everything needed for man, but he also continues with the important perception that man is not excluded from participation in the whole process. On the contrary, the natural process

necessitates man's helping hand in every single step, because "[a] man is fed, not that he may be fed, but that he may work." (Emerson 1981: 13)

Another help provided by Nature that satisfies man's needs is a colourful exhibition of Beauty. This never ending show glitters into the artist's eye of every man. Emerson observed the world around him very closely and noted rightly that all objects have their beauty in a right light, and the artist uses this to interpret the beauty of a certain part of the world in the best way they are able to. Yet the experience is not transferable, because the satisfying feeling comes when it is seen in man's own eye. In this way Nature is the most amazing, partly also for its uniqueness and unrepeatability.

Besides the Beauty that fondles man's heart, Nature provides an important background for man's actions. Nature is where all being takes place and everything happens. As Emerson described in his essay, famous victories that could be won, beautiful sceneries that could be seen or glorious history that can celebrate our fathers, that all happens there, and even more – Nature is the biggest stage of the Universe where art, according to Emerson, is created as the evidence of man's love for it. This kind of love urges man to search and catch fragments of natural beauty, and produce art as can be seen in one of Emerson's most famous poems:

#### The Snow-Storm

Announced by all the trumpets of the sky,  
Arrives the snow, and, driving o'er the fields,  
Seems nowhere to alight: the whited air  
Hides hills and woods, the river, and the heaven,  
And veils the farm-house at the garden's end.  
The sled and traveller stopped, the courier's feet  
Delayed, all friends shut out, the housemates sit  
Around the radiant fireplace, enclosed  
In a tumultuous privacy of storm.

Come see the north wind's masonry.  
Out of an unseen quarry evermore

Furnished with tile, the fierce artificer  
Curves his white bastions with projected roof  
Round every windward stake, or tree, or door.  
Speeding, the myriad-handed, his wild work  
So fanciful, so savage, nought cares he  
For number or proportion. Mockingly,  
On coop or kennel he hangs Parian wreaths;  
A swan-like form invests the hidden thorn;  
Fills up the farmer's lane from wall to wall,  
Maugre the farmer's sighs; and, at the gate,  
A tapering turret overtops the work.  
And when his hours are numbered, and the world  
Is all his own, retiring, as he were not,  
Leaves, when the sun appears, astonished Art  
To mimic in slow structures, stone by stone,  
Built in an age, the mad wind's night-work,  
The frolic architecture of the snow.

(Emerson 1904: 42)

Next to omnipresent Beauty there is also the gift of Language that was given at the instigation of Nature. It is logical when art is deemed as a reproduction of natural beauty, and therefore as a kind of Language, that it has been developed for ages to name Nature around man. Emerson added in his work: "Every appearance in nature corresponds to some state of the mind, and that state of the mind can only be described by presenting that natural appearance as its picture." (Emerson 1981: 20)

Simple Language utters simple Truth. However, Language is also one of these spheres from which man turned away from Nature. According to Emerson duplicity, secondary desires and falsehood of a man created secondary meaning. Old words connected with Nature started to stand for new thoughts, became ambiguous and lost their intelligibility. It is like conversations in these days should not serve for sharing information about Nature any more, but now for hiding it as much as possible.

Back to Nature itself, we can find her picture even in proverbs in which we can see the relation between man's mind and matter. Here are two examples of proverbs given by Emerson:

- The last ounce broke the camel's back;
- A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.

They express old truth, but are still repeated for their valuable import that can be used in similar situations. Moreover, Emerson believed that this simple language based on natural expressions and facts are the key to any scriptural understanding.

This understanding is very important for man. The notion that Nature teaches him its laws and rules every day, year after year in man's life without rest was quite natural for Emerson as he remarked: "The exercise of the Will, or the lesson of power, is taught in every event" (Emerson 1981: 28). As Emerson also concluded, Nature gives Discipline to man to make him strong enough to survive. It is a very worthy lesson of not only discipline, but also of morality when man is led by Nature to get know all relationships and connections between him and the world around him. There he would not be able to live in harmony without that knowledge.

A man is likewise a good pupil. His desire for knowledge polishes his discipline into something that Emerson called Idealism; something that answers man's questions of the end of the world, and consoles himself with the ideal answer of the everlasting and strong nature of our world. The questions about the final cause have gone with man through many centuries, waiting for an answer. This is the right moment when idealism can take its opportunity and dazzle a man, groping in the dark, by amazing him with prospects. Emerson wrote about the powerful Nature in a round way that is clever enough not to commit it away from a committed man's own interpretations. Idealism just leads a man more away from Nature breaking its laws. This may have a destroying effect on a man. Emerson explained it in his essay like that:

God never jests with us, and will not compromise the end of nature by permitting any inconsequence in its procession. Any distrust of the permanence of laws would paralyze the faculties of man. Their permanence is sacredly respected, and his faith therein is perfect. (Emerson 1981: 33)

There are many ideal theories, and each of them presents a beautiful world without any real danger for a man. It is easy to understand that a man tends to believe in ideology, because it provides him a harmonic and safe home. For Emerson, every ideal theory has got the only one advantage, except the beneficial feeling of safety for a man, and “that it presents the world in precisely that view which is most desirable to the mind.” (Emerson 1981: 40)

By this reflection Emerson referred gratefully to the importance of idealism for a human mind. This presumption of everlasting Nature, no matter how much it lets a man relax during his life, but degrades its value as a substance, which leads a man to take Nature for granted. However, that is a basic mistake. Emerson highlighted that Nature is on our world by accident and exists as an effect which it has got on man.

Emerson highlighted two main points of view on Nature. The ones see it strong and fast and evaluate Nature as something that can be lacking only as an appendix; and the others see Nature as fluid and esteem it. That leads back to the soul of a poet in man that some lucky ones own from their childhood to adulthood again. According to Emerson, the poet is influenced by society around him. Metaphorically speaking, his soul is tied by habits, weighed down by the example of predecessors and formed by rules and laws. Of course there are also religion and ethics, by which Emerson claims constitute the biggest examples of the degradation of Nature: “Ethics and religion differ herein; that the one is the system of human duties commencing from man; the other, from God. Religion includes the personality of God; Ethics does not.” (Emerson 1981: 39)

Emerson left his protestant church, but it did not take God away from him. He knew theology and his knowledge of God could be a basement for his

naturalistic theories that quite differed from Christianity, however, still he was not for the exclusion of religion from man's life, at least until it is not only phenomena of matter - matter closes man's eyes and weakens his spirit: "Yet, if it only deny the existence of matter, it does not satisfy the demands of the spirit. It leaves God out of me. It leaves me in the splendid labyrinth of my perceptions, to wander without end." (Emerson 1981: 42) He was convinced that most significant matter is the soul and spirit, which is contented from wisdom, love, beauty and power. These four essences need to function all together to create spirit, because without any of them, he would be uncompleted.

Although Emerson had burning doubts about human development in the nineteenth century and the bad influence of society on Nature, he still admitted that the situation here need not to be so wicked:

The ruin or the blank that we see when we look at nature, is in our own eye (...) The reason why the world lacks unity, and lies broken and in heaps, is because man is disunited with himself. He cannot be a naturalist until he satisfies all the demands of the spirit. Love is as much its demand as perception. (Emerson 1981: 48)

It could be said what a man sees around him is Nature looking exactly in this way of coexistence with man, but what he lacks there is his vision of Nature in the way it should be. Hence the damage of Nature has a different level dependent on man's perception and sensibility that both grow in a man the more he keeps himself in closer connection with Nature.

### **2. 3. Signs of Transcendentalism in the World**

Emerson had a very specific image of the world and man's role to be played there. His opinions seem to be logical, supported by sound principles. It

is no wonder that his vision received so many followers. However, he was most certainly not the first one who had his doubts about God, religion and ethic of human.

According to Russell Goodman (2013), a part of the liberal New England Congregationalists did not respect orthodox Calvinism, because they did not share the Puritan idea of a sinful man who is dependant only on the good will of his God. Moreover, they believed that even man has got a part of this divinity, and by hard work he can grow to become like the Supreme Being. They preferred the unity of God to its trinity (who later adopted the name Unitarians). These ideas were very familiar to Emerson. However, while Unitarians believed in divine power of the Bible not only as an evidence of God, but also as given truth, for Transcendentalists could not exist any given Truth that would be satisfactory enough. Truth must be found and pursued. Scepticism about Bible, as Goodman stated, was also supported by F. D. E. Schleiermacher who saw the Holy Writ as “a product of human history and culture” (Goodman 2013), and Johann Gottfried van Herder who claimed that it shook the line between divine scripture and humanly-produced poetry.

Goodman (2013) also named Frederic Henry Hedge, a very audible opponent of slavery and a protagonist for women’s rights, as a man who introduced many new ideas into that what later becomes transcendentalism. He even mentioned Hedge’s successful effort to make ideas of Kant and the post-Kantian more understandable for the English-speaking audience. “Hedge organized what eventually became known as the Transcendental Club, by suggesting to Emerson in 1836 that they form a discussion group for disaffected young Unitarian clergy.” (Goodman 2013) This group supported *The Dial* (an American magazine published between years 1840 and 1929 that provided major works of transcendentalists), and the Brook Farm (an experiment in communal living in USA during 1840s inspired by transcendentalist’s thinkers).

There are many names that are mentioned by Russell Goodman like Thomas Carlyle, who accepted, with Coleridge and Wordsworth, *natural supernaturalism* – the view of nature with the same power and authority that is “traditionally attributed to an independent deity.” (Goodman 2013) They shared



with Emerson the idea of human education together with nature that is also echoed in Emerson's essay "The American Scholar". This certain kind of devotedness to nature, as Goodman (2013) mentioned, can be seen even in the poetry of William Wordsworth who described an idea of a human mind that is active and powerful, and that power should be shaping, which corresponds with a concept of Emerson's "Nature".

Emerson did notice three important things as Kant did, Goodman (2013) added. First, the human mind is formed thanks to experience. Second, the existence of such mental operations, Goodman continued, is a counter to scepticism. Third, the word "transcendental" means something which can be experienced or lived through, and not something "transcendent" or beyond human experience, as it could be misunderstood.

#### **2. 4. The term "Transcendentalism"**

Transcendentalism could be defined by many theses and definitions for there are many important facts that just cannot be overlooked. For the purposes of this diploma thesis the definition written by Russell Goodman is used. He is author and professor of Department of Philosophy, University of New Mexico.

For many of the transcendentalists the term "transcendentalism" represented nothing as technical as an inquiry into the presuppositions of human experience, but a new confidence in and appreciation of the mind's powers, and a modern, non-doctrinal spirituality. The transcendentalist, Emerson states, believes in miracles, conceived as "the perpetual openness of the human mind to new influx of light and power. (Goodman 2013)

### **3. Importance of Self-Reliance**

To believe your own thought, to believe that what is true for you in your private heart is true for all men, -- that is genius. Speak your latent conviction, and it shall be the universal sense; for the inmost in due time becomes the outmost. (Emerson 1965: 19)

By these words Emerson began his second famous essay "Self-Reliance" published in 1841, in which he stressed the individuality of each man – the theme brought out in his essay "Nature," but wrote his essay called "Self-Reliance" to explain in details the importance of having independent mind here.

Emerson took the view of an independent man who is able to not just listen to his intuition, but also he is not afraid to follow it: "A man should learn to detect and watch that gleam of light which flashes across his mind from within, more than the luster of the firmament of bards and sages." (Emerson 1981: 19) The essay is a call to independent thinking rather than imitation.

Man should not just take the same path as his predecessors, as he suggested in his essay "Nature". Following in footsteps of someone else means, according to Emerson, to suppress a man's own individuality – actually himself – when staying back and nodding to brilliant words that are pronounced by someone else. Man "dismisses without notice his thought, because it is his. In every work of genius we recognize our own rejected thoughts: they come back to us with a certain alienated majesty." (Emerson 1981: 19)

Emerson tried to emphasize that standing alone against the crowd of the "clever ones" holding a man's own original idea is the only way to hold man's individuality, creativity and his own life, because it is a shame when "to-morrow a stranger will say with masterly good sense precisely what we have thought and felt all the time." (Emerson 1981: 20)

That is why man should have “put his heart into his work and done his best” (Emerson 1981: 20) – but when he deserts his genius, no muse, no invention or hope is with him. If not, there is just beaten track of our own predecessors who tell us what is true and right, and with every step we end up losing ourselves. Children, youth and puberty have their power to follow their heart and intuition, and this happens the more they are younger. “Do not think the youth has no force, because he cannot speak to you and me.” (Emerson 1981: 21) They just need support of adults who are able to keep their mind open, being sure of their place in the society.

### **3. 1. Man in Hands of Society**

Emerson believed that society holds a big influence on man and harnesses him by rules and presumptions, showing him the only way. Why is man so dependant on society? One of Emerson’s most famous quote answers this basic question:

Society everywhere is in conspiracy against the manhood of every one of its members. Society is a joint-stock company, in which the members agree, for the better securing of his bread to each shareholder, to surrender the liberty and culture of the eater. The virtue in most request is conformity. Self-reliance is its aversion. It loves not realities and creators, but names and customs. (Emerson 1981: 21)

Emerson felt ashamed how easily a man succumbs to these names and badges of society. He should be able to be himself going with his head high to tell his latent truth in all sides of the world, because the real man should not let “malice and vanity wear the coat of philanthropy,” (Emerson 1981: 22) and support in that way all fanatic ideas like Abolition that he called as the doctrine of hatred:

If an angry bigot assumes this bountiful cause of Abolition and comes to me with his last news from Barbadoes what should I not say to him, "Go love thy infant; love thy wood-chopper; be good-natured and modest; have that grace; and never vanish your hard, uncharitable ambition with this incredible tenderness for black folk a thousand miles off. (Emerson 1981: 22)

By this statement Emerson not only pronounced his disapproval with a practice of South society, but he preferred active action against law to protect and help black people, because it is natural and obligation of each right man. In addition, Emerson felt some kind of slavery on himself caused by the society that holds his life, and he did not like it:

There is a class of persons to whom by all spiritual affinity I am bought and sold; for them I will go to prison, if need be; but your miscellaneous popular charities; the education at college of fools; the building of meeting-houses to the vain end to which many now stand; alms to sots; and the thousandfold Relief Societies; - though I confess with shame I sometimes succumb and give the dollar (...) which by and by I shall have the manhood to withhold. (Emerson 1981: 22)

Participating in charities or some kind of courage is paid as an excuse for not being interested and active in help every day. Man tries by buying indulgence when he does not really care about the human being's relations to each other and to his nature world: "Men do what is called a good action as some piece of courage or charity, much as they would pay a fine in expiation of daily non-appearance on parade." (Emerson 1981: 22) That is not, according to Emerson, the real life for a real man who should live for himself, and not for his audience.

### **3. 2. Man in his own Bound**

Emerson saw a big influence of society on man, and the huge pressure that it puts on him over the centuries, using fame of his predecessors, history and customs to hold his life back in its ways: "(...) you will always find those who think they know what is your duty better than you know it." (Emerson 1981: 23) That is why man should be much stronger to face this pressure, being independent of the world's opinion.

However, he pointed out another important fact: man is also bound by his own mind and fears. Standing alone means being against the others who are watching your moves showing you their face – sweet or sour – according to the "blowing wind and newspaper direct," (Emerson 1981: 24) and man is afraid of standing alone, because he enjoys sharing his life with people around him.

A man cares about his outside look to attract his company, studies history and thoughts of famous predecessors to fit the concept of the present society, and is taught to satisfy his audience: "As soon as he has once acted or spoken with éclat, he is a committed person, watched by the sympathy or the hatred of hundreds, whose affections must now enter into his account." (Emerson 1981: 21) He forfeits his neutrality.

This kind of fear is supplemented by man's consistency that is eroding his self-trust. Man venerates his past acts and words, instead of being wise, and never dependent on his own memory. He should "bring the past for judgment into the thousand-eyed present, and live ever in a new day," (Emerson 1981: 24) because each of the days brings something new that can make a man rethink the past, and change the point of view: "Speak what you think now in hard words, and to-morrow speak what to-morrow thinks in hard words again, though it contradict every thing you said to-day." (Emerson 1981: 24)

This Emerson's request can sound illogical. When man says every day something a little bit different, it surely causes misunderstanding. Surprisingly, this is Emerson's intention based on historical development of thoughts and

their harbinger. He took a notice that being misunderstood is not so bad, when every great man like for example Pythagoras, Luther, Copernicus, or even Jesus were misunderstood too: "To be great is to be misunderstood." (Emerson 1981: 25)

### **3. 3. No Man Can Violate his Nature**

A character is like an acrostic or Alexandrian stanza; -- read it forward, backward, or across, it still spells the same thing. (...)  
We pass for what we are. (Emerson 1981: 25)

This is the reason Emerson warns not to pretend to be someone else, because it is impossible to violate man's nature. Not for long, not without a bad impact. Man's character is dependant on his will that influences his virtue or vice every moment of his life, so it is important to make all of man's actions in agreement to his will – they became "honest and natural." (Emerson 1981: 25)

A man looks up to famous names of his predecessors, because his own name sounds strange to him. Moreover, this happens especially when he is a young boy without any support of power and property which make him strong in his status: "In history, our imagination plays us false. Kingdom and lordship, power and estate, are a gaudier vocabulary than private John and Edward in a small house and common day's work (...)." (Emerson 1981: 27)

This kind of behaviour could relate with history when man felt really strong loyalty to his king, suffered for him in battles, and helped him to establish the law system. A man does not stand on his own. He just blindly follows his destiny that is defined by his predecessors and leaders.

However, where is self-trust? Even Emerson wanted to know: “What is the aboriginal Self, on which a universal reliance may be grounded?” (Emerson 1981: 27)

It can lie between man’s free mind and his taught perception. “But perception is not whimsical, but fatal.” (Emerson 1981: 28) What a man sees and feels, he teaches his children to see and feel, and children are not worst than their parents. They are more natural, and they should be supported to stay with their nature even if it is against history or set customs. A man should trust himself and his instincts, and he needs to realise that “[t]he centuries are conspirators against the sanity and authority of the soul.” (Emerson 1981: 28)

Emerson said that a man is “timid and apologetic,” because he is scared to pronounce his thoughts, and instead of being proud that he has got his own head, he quotes saints or sages. A man is embarrassed to be different and secede from the crowd, because he is bound by the tradition and customs of his ancestors, and scared to stand alone. “He is ashamed before (...) the blowing rose. These roses under my window make no reference to former roses or to better ones; they are for what they are; they exist with God to-day (...) perfect in every moment of its existence.” (Emerson 1981: 28) That is why man should live in the present and in harmony with Nature believing in his own genius.

Let Nature be the example of self-sufficient power that is dependant on itself – it has got a self-relying soul.

When good is near you, when you have life in yourself, it is not by any know or accustomed way; you shall not discern the foot-prints of any other; you shall not see the face of man; you shall not hear any name;-- the way, the thought, the good, shall be wholly strange and new. (Emerson 1981: 29)

In belief of the same blood running in the veins of every man, Emerson encouraged people to speak the truth and obey the eternal law. A man is not meant to live under the expectations of the others, because he has got his own life. When a man admits his self-reliance to himself, he will be happier – both of sides should be. If that is not happening, Emerson gave an example of his own:

“I will still seek to deserve that you should. I will not hide my tastes or aversions.” (Emerson 1981: 31)

Of course, this kind of behaviour like speaking man’s mind can have a destroying effect on people around him, on their feelings, but still Emerson insisted on that no one can sell himself, his liberty, or power to protect one’s tenderness.

### **3. 4. Man is Godlike**

According to Emerson there is also the “danger” of antagonizing society, because it presumes man complying the standards and norms that has been set down through many centuries. Any little trace of not going with the crowd can shake its power and the whole idealism of society. “The populace think that your rejection of popular standards is a rejection of all standards, and mere antinomianism; and the bold sensualist will use the name of that philosophy to gild his crimes.” (Emerson 1981: 31) Here is the reason Emerson emphasized self-reliance and an independent man who is not afraid to choose his own way, keeping to his nature and his own sense of ethics.

It is like a territorial fight in which a simple man tries to hold his own nature and thoughts instead of the ground under his feet against anyone who comes to misguide him, and every one who can bravely get by this fight is like a hero: “And truly it demands something godlike in him who has cast off the common motives of humanity, and has ventured to trust himself for taskmaster.” (Emerson 1981: 32)

Emerson talked about this in means of a revolution that shakes all offices, education, and even religion. The infertile habit of praying when a man is on his knees begging “for some foreign addition to come through some foreign virtue, and loses itself in endless mazes of natural and supernatural, and mediatorial and miraculous” (Emerson 1981: 33) shall disappear, because praying for a



concrete commodity is malicious, and disuse of prayer as an instrument for contemplation - thinking of all facts of life, their causality and effects on a man himself. Prayers for a better personal end Emerson called a meanness and a theft, because this kind of thinking is based on dualism and not on the unity of man's conscious acting and his nature. "As soon as the man is at one with God, he will not beg." (Emerson 1981: 33)

Another false prayer, according to Emerson, is a man's own regret that bound his hands and the calamities of his future life, because his mind is filled by hopeless thoughts and doubts about man's genius. This dissatisfaction is a token of man's desire for self-reliance. This so-called "infirmity of will" leads a man to notional misfortune. He negatively influences his mind, the perception of his nature, so for he makes a negative impression on others.

"The secret of fortune is joy in our hands. Welcome evermore to gods and men is the self-helping man." (Emerson 1981: 33) For this kind of man the doors are opened, because everyone honors him for being self-sufficient, and his good nature charms them, because he, as an independent man, does not really need anyone's honors.

### **3. 5. The Power of One Man**

Emerson believed in a self-sufficient man, and the power of his nature that fascinate other men. He mentioned that every man has his own nature, mind and perspective. This fact determines his individuality that should not succumb to the influence of any other. Man should be able to believe in his own genius and be self-sufficient, governed by his own nature and will, because every one is important, every one is a worthwhile being who can bring a new point of view to the others.

It does not matter what is precisely set, when a man filtrates it by his own mind, using his own perspective, but his good nature. "Every new mind is a new

classification.” (Emerson 1981: 33) This personal classification can be imparted to other men, and may create a new system like Calvinism, Swedenborgism, or Christianity. Unfortunately, the new classification is idealised when being created by an unbalanced mind.

To prevent following someone’s bad nature, a pupil should not lose himself in a new classification that is been submitted to him, and be strong enough to keep his own perspective, because as was mentioned above, a young mind has got the same power as an adult, and our children are not worse than their parents.

The pupil takes the same delight in subordinating every thing to the new terminology, as a girl who has just learned botany in seeing a new earth and new seasons thereby. It will happen for a time, that the pupil will find his intellectual power has grown by the study of his master’s mind. (Emerson 1981: 34)

### **3. 6. Imitation Kills Self-reliance**

Emerson found self-reliance very important, because it creates an individual man who respects his own mind and nature. Every pupil believing in his intellectual power depends just on his own classification, and does not need any kind of imitation. He chooses his own words instead of repeating learnt thoughts and phrases, he prefers his own creativity and self-expression to brought foreign art. He does not follow the beaten track of the Past, he resists call of the Distant.

A self-sufficient man does not need travelling to pump the beauty from ancient civilizations, foreign taste or distant countries; he is able to create it all by himself.

Insist on yourself; never imitate. Your own gift you can present every moment with the cumulative force of a whole life’s

cultivation; but of the adopted talent of another, you have only an extemporaneous, half possession. (Emerson 1981: 35)

The habit of imitation is given, as Emerson said, by a man's want to please society by "beauty, convenience, grandeur of thought, and quaint expression" (Emerson 1981: 35) that can be studied. However, where is the teacher of Shakespeare and other brilliant authors? This kind of art could not be learnt. "Every great man is a unique." (Emerson 1981: 35)

This pleasure that man wishes to provide to his society is vain, because it is neither developed by imitation, nor does it advance at all. "It recedes as fast on one side as it gains on the other. It undergoes continual changes; it is barbarous, it is civilized, it is Christianized, it is rich, it is scientific; but this change is not amelioration." (Emerson 1981: 36) It does not provide any development, just the causality: a man brings something in name of society – by which every one loses something. "Society acquires new arts, and loses old instincts. (...) The civilized man has built a coach, but has lost the use of his feet." (Emerson 1981: 36) A man goes against his own nature for something that he calls civilization.

Emerson likened society to a wave that is moved forward in the unity, but it is composed of individual drops. This unity is just an illusion. "The persons who make up a nation to-day, next year die, and their experience with them." (Emerson 1981: 37)

#### **4. The Vision of "The American Scholar"**

As was mentioned above, Emerson was convinced of the importance of self-reliance. He wanted a man dependent just on his own mind and nature. The task for lecturing his vision came to essay "The American Scholar" that

transfers his more detailed concept of a self-sufficient man, predicated on the pupil. Being addressed in the first place to Mr. President, it cries for original thinking and a new tradition - the tradition of self-reliance. "Our day of dependence, our long apprenticeship to the learning of other lands, draws to a close." (Emerson 1965: 224)

The author described an old creation fable about a Man (the first creation of man itself) who was divided into men by gods just as a helping hand developed into fingers. In this fable the Man is presented as an integral unification of all men, therefore the whole society has to be taken to find "a whole man". A man who is not just "a farmer, a professor, or an engineer, but he is all." (Emerson 1965: 224)

This division into social roles parcels the society into individuals not according to their individual genius and nature, but for their "stint of the joint work." (Emerson 1965: 224) This parcelling the men according to their social role leads them to think about themselves in a way of limited and uncompleted being that influence their whole life and their participation on it.

The state of society is one in which the members have suffered amputation from the trunk, and strut about so many walking monsters, (...) but never a man.

Man is thus metamorphosed into a thing, into many things. The planter, who is Man sent out into the field to gather food, is seldom cheered by any idea of the true dignity of his ministry. He sees his bushel and his cart, and nothing beyond, and sinks into the farmer, instead of Man on the farm. (Emerson 1965: 224)

Man is forced to do his work by the society and its needs without participation of man's heart. His job is then just a routine, and his nature or soul is sold for money. According to this, Emerson named a scholar as a Man Thinking, if he has got the opportunity to it by rightly functioning state. In the other way he is just a parrot repeating words of others.

#### **4. 1. Who a Scholar Is**

Emerson described a scholar as a one who is able to set one's own independent value in one's mind in means what one's nature really is, resisting the influential powers, still engaging things around, always returning to oneself. This process assumes the own spirit that is boundless. Then a new classification that is always created in everyone's mind in conformity to his nature can be set:

To the young mind, everything is individual, stands by itself. By and by, it finds how to join two things, and see in them one nature: then three, then three thousand; and so tyrannized over by its own unifying instinct, it goes on tying things together, diminishing anomalies, discovering roots running under ground, whereby contrary and remote things cohere, and flower out from one stem. (Emerson 1965: 225)

#### **4. 2. Still in the Past**

A mind of a scholar also needs to resist the mind of the Past, whether it is literature, art or ideology. Emerson points to books as the most common transfer of it. At first the scholar studies the world around him through books to find out their value, obtaining his own interpretation. "It came into him, life; it went out from him, truth. It came to him, short-lived actions; it went out from him, immortal thoughts." (Emerson 1965: 226)

To obtain the truth every generation should write its own sort of literature to fit the next generation, because the older books are not able to do so. As an example Emerson cited a panegyric poem by a poet who was regarded as a divine man, therefore his poem was divine too. As such he was able to describe a hero of his age truly for his readers, giving him a shine and fame. This love

for a hero degenerates as time flies into worship of his imaginative divinity, concealing the fact of his oppressiveness. This is harmful, all the more when the education system is based on worshipping faded fame of old heroes. "Books are written on it by thinkers, not by Man Thinking; by men of talent, that is, who start wrong, who set out from accepted dogmas, not from their own sight of principles." (Emerson 1965: 227)

Emerson saw danger in a scholar spending his time studying books, and believing in the duty to accept all the thoughts of his famed predecessors. When he is not able to do it undoubtedly, he is feared of failure. "Hence, instead of Man Thinking, we have the bookworm." (Emerson 1965: 227) Then here is a man who inhibits his own thoughts and genius to fulfil his mind and heart by the verdicts of the others.

However books as themselves are not bad. It would be useless to denounce this medium, just because it is such a powerful transfer of thoughts, or it is taken unfair advantage of a scholar's ignorance or a weak mind. Even Emerson saw their benefits: "Books are the best of things, well used; abused, among the worst. (...) They are for nothing but to inspire." (Emerson 1965: 227) The only thing a man needs to resist of leads-in is a strong and active soul that can see the absolute truth.

Why a man should look backward and be subjected to voices of the Past, even Emerson wonder, a real man looks forward, since he was born with his eyes set in his forehead. If he should not face his future, and he was to follow only the way of the Past and his famous ancestors, his eyes could only be looking backward.

### **4. 3. Education of Children and the Youth**

The book, the college, the school of art, the institution of any kind, stop with some past utterance of genius. (Emerson 1965: 228)

Being over-influenced are the ills in literature all over the world, as Emerson remarked in his essay. As an example he provided the English poets who have been “Shakespearized” for more than two hundred years. However, there is nothing good about this for a Man Thinking who is not able to afford to subdue by any of instruments he uses.

Man is surprised that an author who lived in past times speaks with the same genius that is so close to a soul of the present man. Emerson categorizes this as some pre-established harmony that is set in our minds as a foresight for man’s future “like the fact observed in insects, who lay up food before death for the young grub they shall never see.” (Emerson 1965: 229)

Every wise man should be able to read and write in a creative way, using from books just the absolute truth like historical facts or exact science that have to be learned. The rest of the written text should be used only for the scholar’s inspiration for his future work, not for imitation, not for copying. “Colleges, in like manner, have their indispensable office, -- to teach elements. But they can only highly serve us, when they aim not to drill, but to create (...).” (Emerson 1965: 229) In this way they should help any scholar in creative thinking that is in congruence with his authentic nature, providing him with important facts that a scholar subjects to his own classification and use an in individual way.

For Emerson the leadership of scholars was more important in a helping way when a teacher serves to him as a friendly support of a scholar’s nature, and do his best to foster it, because a man is not a sheep to be driven to pasture.

#### **4. 4. Teacher to Himself**

The world around attracts man. This attraction is the prime in a process of cognition not only of the world itself, but it also teases man's senses and his mind to identify himself the most. His nature unlocks new thoughts, and leads him to a new man who is taught by instincts and his own experience. "Drudgery, calamity, exasperation, want, are instructors in eloquence and wisdom." (Emerson 1965: 230) Acquired experience is converted then into a new thought.

Emerson finds this as a natural process. The basic knowledge of the world comes from man's childhood when he observes the world around calmly. These pictures are in man's mind fulfilled by his nature – his nature creates its own classification in his mind, and according to that experience it identifies the world around him.

To cognize things calmly does not mean being idle, as Emerson warns. Even if the teachers expect the passive absorption of their wisdom; a scholar should not capitulate and inhibit his nature, because the taken thoughts and imitation create a parallel, unreal world that has got nothing to do with the real genius of each man. "Whilst the world hangs before the eye as a cloud of beauty, we cannot even see its beauty. Inaction is cowardice, but there can be no scholar without the heroic mind." (Emerson 1965: 230)

A real man is an active man leaning against his nature, using his creativity. Experience within a system of education illustrates the inferiority of a scholar, but this subordinated relationship is not so bad for the process of finding the truth and man himself as Emerson says: "Action is with the scholar subordinate, but it is essential. Without it, he is not yet man. Without it, thought can never ripen into truth;" (Emerson 1965: 230) and it is just a scholar's task to grasp it by his senses.

The world---this shadow of the soul, or *other me*---lies wide around. Its attractions are the keys which unlock my thoughts and make me acquainted with myself. I run eagerly into this



resounding tumult. I grasp the hands of those next me, and take place in the ring to suffer and to work, taught by an instinct (...). (Emerson 1965: 230)

Any scholar of this world should not miss the opportunity and let the experience pass by without any action, because it strengthens his power. Every scholar is like a grub – “it cannot fly, it cannot shine, it is a dull grub. But suddenly, without observation, the selfsame thing unfurls beautiful wings, and is an angel of wisdom.” (Emerson 1965: 231) There is nothing, according to Emerson, that could stop a man in his journey to be an empyrean.

#### **4. 5. Life Is the Dictionary**

Through observation of the world around man raises his knowledge of words connected with all the things he is doing, seeing, feeling, or creating atc. These kinds of information make an imprint in the mind of the observer, and then through a man’s language can be perceived how much he has really experienced, or lived. “Colleges and books only copy the language which the field and the work-yard made.” (Emerson 1965: 232) No imitation has anything close to the value of authentic experience!

According to Emerson, the only way to teach man’s mind and beautify his soul is simple – he preaches just to live. Far from property, far from fame, a man should strengthen his soul and be active in his being, because a labour is the only instrument that can empower not only a body, but also man’s will. “And labor is everywhere welcome; always we are invited to work; only be this limitation observed, that a man shall not for the sake of wider activity sacrifice any opinion to the popular judgments and modes of action.” (Emerson 1965: 233)

By these Emerson fittingly expressed three ways of a scholar's education. A real man does need nothing but live in direction of nature itself, use books just as a source of inspiration, and make his life active to fulfil his mind by experience. These all create a real man, Man Thinking, who has god powerful mind and bright instincts. Still, a real man should not forget that his character is the biggest value that he has got.

Character is higher than intellect. Thinking is the function. Living is the functionary. The stream retreats to its source. A great soul will be strong to live, as well as strong to think. (Emerson 1965: 232)

#### **4. 6. Set a Scholar Free**

In self-trust all the virtues are comprehended. Free should the scholar be,--free and brave. Free even to the definition of freedom, "without any hindrance that does not arise out of his own constitution." Brave; for fear is a thing which a springs from ignorance. (Emerson 1965: 234)

A scholar, seen by Emerson through the time, is leaning against his self-trust, and thanks to the support of his teacher who guides him, becomes a Man Thinking. The process of growing into a real thinking man is long, and every step to get up on higher level is very slow and unhonoured. The man's desire of fame needs to be abandoned. This is the price that needs to be paid, but a clever man does it gladly, because thanks to it he reaches the highest level of being, which is self-reliance in means of free and brave mind that does not want to blindly follow his ancestors – he will find his own truth.

For the ease and pleasure of treading the old road, accepting the fashions, the education, the religion of society, he

takes the cross of making his own, and, of course, the self-accusation, the faint heart, the frequent uncertainty and loss of time, which are the nettles and tangling vines in the way of the self-relying and self-directed; and the state of virtual hostility in which he seems to stand to society, and especially to educated society. (Emerson 1965: 233)

It is a long way for a scholar, as Emerson states, to become a strong man who goes along his own way in set conditions. He needs to believe in his feet which will carry him all the way and in his instincts that they will protect him and will not mislead him, and mainly he has to get a strong belief in himself, when his head is filled with doubts and regrets. Only a man who is ruled by his self-relying determination can reach his goals; and standing on his own, hived off of society, he becomes the freelanced one.

In silence, in steadiness, in severe abstraction, let him hold by himself; add observation to observation, patient of neglect, patient of reproach; and bide his own time, -- happy enough, if he can satisfy himself alone, that his day he has seen something truly. (Emerson 1965: 234)

Being alone by means of self-reliance in Emerson's concept provides a big observation for a man, because he has got a unique opportunity to descend deep into his own mind and understand it how it functions without the influence of other men and subsequently comprehend what the desires and needs of man are. Through it man finds a key that unlocks not only his heart, but also creates a new classification that reveals the heart and mind of others. "He learns that he who has mastered any law in his private thoughts is master to that extent of all men whose language he speaks, and of all into whose language his own can be translated." (Emerson 1965: 234)

#### **4. 7. No Fear Is for a Man**

A man should not be afraid of anything. There is nothing to be worried except of man's own fear. Fear as a paralyzing phenomena namely originates from ignorance, according to Emerson. No one should cower under the bed. There is no excuse for letting fear discourage a man from his action, because every single man should face it. "The world is his, who can see through its pretension." (Emerson 1965: 235)

Thanks to man's trust, man is able to formulate his own thoughts and make his own place in society, regardless of his property, social class, or level of education. "Wherever Macdonald sits, there is the head of the table (...). The day is always his, who works in it with serenity and great aims." (Emerson 1965: 235) Man should not wait for right moment to find his own opportunity because it is probable it will never come to him. He needs to be the one who creates the opportunity through his active efforts. Here everyone's genius is important.

A man does not need to hide himself in a shadow of any one who has been pronounced a hero by society, no matter what his act, achievement, or words might be. Man's own experience of the world and his own creative thoughts are more important than knowledge of some words pronounced by someone of the past. Man should not be bounded exclusively by echoes of long dead minds. "The human mind cannot be enshrined in a person, who shall set a barrier on any one side to this unbounded, unboundable empire." (Emerson 1965: 237) No one can say that his vision of the world around is the best and has the absolute truth. Therefore every man can be an original actor in society thanks his own genius, good nature and strong heart. Everyone has the power to lead his own life, when he does not follow the predetermined destiny that has been set by society, but rather when he is able to follow his own genius, and believe in it. The only thing that he needs is to create his own self-reliance.

We will walk on our own feet; we will work with our own hands; we will speak our own minds. (...) The dread of man and the love of man shall be a wall of defence and a wreath of joy

around all. A nation of men will for the first time exist, because each believes himself inspired by the Divine Soul which also inspires all men. (Emerson 1965: 240)

## **5. Transcendentalism Put into Action**

Emerson's burning call for an independent scholar impressed many faithful followers who were not contented with the situation around them, in a similar way as Emerson was, and with the world they were living in – the world of political strife, oppression and injustice. These all people were in a spiritual fight for freedom as well as civil freedom.

One scholar noted regarding the contest in which Emerson wrote: "Although political injustice was a complaint as old as the country itself, slavery was bringing the country closer to imminent warfare." (Donahue 2007: 247) The northern tolerance of slavery was reached its peak in 1850 when The Fugitive Slave Law was passed by Congress.

The "Bloodhound Law", as this contract between the South built on the back of slavery, and the North of anti-slavery ambitions, understood a run-away slave as property in the free North as well as the South, and as such must be returned to his owner; and residents of free, non-slavery states had the duty to follow this law in order to protect the property rights of slave-holders.

The greatest demonstration against this law is provided in the essays of Henry David Thoreau.

Thoreau appears to have seen ethical commitment as the greatest glory of the active mind. In the act of conscientious objection featured in "Resistance to Civil Government" and in his sympathetic response to John Brown, Thoreau expands upon Emerson's conception of the moral sentiment by suggesting an ethically oriented progression of ideas that originates in an

intuitive grasp of morality and ends in a practical commitment to conscience (...). (Duban 1987: 219)

Transcendentalists reflected on various issues, especially of slavery as it legally reflects Northerners. Moreover one essay supports point of view on this issue in the same way as John Brown did. He was called a “transcendentalist above all, a man of ideas and principles,” an “intelligent and conscientious man” by H. D. Thoreau in his “A Plea for Captain John Brown” (Thoreau 1859: 115, 116, 118).

### **5. 1. Thoreau, an Independent Man**

Henry David Thoreau was a teacher, writer, and leading transcendentalist, who moved many of the transcendental notions about man into practice. He took a big part in the abolitionist movement, fighting against legalized slavery in the United States.

Thoreau was born on July 12, 1817 in Concord Massachusetts. After studies at Harvard, he returned back to his birthplace and met Emerson. The elder Ralph Waldo Emerson was not only his friend, but they were also connected by transcendental movement and their love to nature. It seems that Emerson became Thoreau’s patron, supporting him in his interests, and paying his taxes when Thoreau was put into jail (after he refused to pay taxes in protest).

Thoreau was an independent man who was able to use his genius during his participation on the experiment in independent living in nature that is brilliantly expressed in his work called “Walden, or Life in the Woods”, where he describes the beauty of simple life when a man has his own soul and life in his hands from two points: the practical one with numbers and costs of

unnecessary needs, and the beautiful lyrical interpretation of the nature with him, while at the same time mediating on Greek and Latin classics in solitude.

Thoreau was both a Transcendentalist and a Natural Historian. He never surrendered on either front, though the last years of the Journal show how desperate was the effort to keep both standards aloft. (Miller 1961: 159)

Yes, Thoreau was a man of impressive writing, and mainly he was the man who most famously put transcendental philosophy into practice. He believed that slavery and the Mexican-American War were against democratic nature and neighbourly manners, so he refused to pay taxes not to participate on it in any way at all. This disobedience led him to be imprisoned. After this experience Thoreau held a lecture entitled "The Rights and Duties of the Individual", lately called "Resistance of Civil Government" (also known as "Civil Disobedience") wherein he explained the purpose and reasoning behind his resistance of paying government taxes. He describes his jail experience like this:

I was put into a jail once on this account, for one night; and, as I stood considering the walls of solid stone, two or three feet thick, the door of wood and iron, a foot thick, and the iron grating which strained the light, I could not help being struck with the foolishness of that institution which treated me as if I were mere flesh and blood and bones, to be locked up. I wondered that it should have concluded at length that this was the best use it could put me to, and had never thought to avail itself of my services in some way. I saw that, if there was a wall of stone between me and my townsmen, there was a still more difficult one to climb or break through before they could get to be as free as I was. I did not for a moment feel confined, and the walls seemed a great waste of tone and mortar. (...) As they could not reach me, they had resolved to punish my body. (...) I saw that the State was half-witted, that it was timid as a lone woman with her silver spoons, and that it did

not know its friends from its foes, and I lost all my remaining respect for it, and pitied it. (Thoreau 1988: 96)

### **5. 1. 1. Civil Disobedience**

Thoreau's essay "On the Duty of Civil Disobedience" strongly criticizes the government laws. His strong disagreement with this institution lies in Thoreau's personal experience with it, but with the effects it places on all citizens. Actually, he does not acknowledge only its way of working or its preferences, but also just its being, as he says in the beginning of the essay: "That government is best which governs least," (Thoreau 1988: 85) which is a quote from one of the founding Fathers, Thomas Jefferson, who wrote the Declaration of Independence in 1776. In essence, Thoreau writes in this essay man's personal independence of U. S. government laws and actions which he deems unjust.

### **5. 1. 2. Government Goes Astray**

Thoreau suggests that the government chosen by people to execute their will should not be constant as the stars on the sky, because in that way it is not able to satisfy the will of all men. Instead, it works for only a few individuals. Thoreau connects the standing government, contented of these individuals, and standing arm which functions as its tool.

Governments show thus how successfully men can be imposed on, even impose on themselves, for their own advantage. It is excellent, we must all allow. Yet this government never of itself furthered any enterprise, but by the alacrity with which it got out of its way. *It* does not keep the country *free*. (...) *It* does not educate. (Thoreau 1981: 85)



The power of government is typically in the hands of the strongest ones, not because it is fairest or that they are in the right. According to Thoreau, no government can be based on justice for the simple reason that the majorities decide what right is and wrong without any conscience. This feature of government is not surprising. No institution has its conscience, because it is a nonliving and abstract object, and even it is a complex collection of men, the conscience is missing there, because in the nature there is nothing like communal or united conscience that could be transferred into such an institution to make it just.

Simply said, there is nothing like just government. However, when the statesmen are not just, why does every single man has got a conscience then?

### **5. 1. 3. Object or Human Being**

Thoreau realizes the injustice of statesmen who govern the country, creating a very unpleasant ambience for life, and every just man respecting its given unnatural rules has to fight against his nature and conscience. In this political process of governing a man is deprived of individuality, humanity and rights – a man becomes a simple object in the political sphere. Thoreau strongly disagrees with this objectification, because it has bad repercussions: an objectified man feels the state's disrespect of his being which forms the base leading to a citizen's disrespect for the state, actually its leaders and the laws they create. For that reason, a just man should start to listen to his own nature and believe in his instincts. "I think that we should be men first, and subjects afterward. It is not desirable to cultivate a respect for the law, so much as for the right. The only obligation which I have a right to assume is to do at any time what I think right." (Thoreau 1981: 86)

Thoreau did believe that a man can get his respect for the right only by nature. As an example, he cites the common soldiers marching off to a war "against their wills, common sense and consciences, which makes it very steep

marching indeed, and produces a palpitation of the heart.” (Thoreau 1981: 86, line 79) Where is the heart of these men now? Are they still whole men or are they just a movable formation figured as a coloured pin in a geographical map at the command and in the hands of powerful men?

Thoreau responds: “The mass of men serve the state thus, not as men mainly, but as machines, with their bodies. (...) In most cases there is no free exercise whatever of the judgment or of the moral sense (...).” (Thoreau 1981: 87) Thoreau comes up with the idea that a man could serve in a better way when he were made of wood in a manufacture, for their value is knocked down in this process of the objectification of man. The great social problem of that age concerned Thoreau’s transcendental heart. “I cannot for an instant recognize that political organization as *my* government which is the *slave’s* government also.” (Thoreau 1981: 88)

#### **5. 1. 4. Revolution as a Solution**

According to morality and nature, a man should grasp at this right to refuse obedience to government, and resist its tyranny. Every man should follow his consciousness and nature, and fully use his right to express his disagreement, lest freedom is endangered. A conscientious man has a right to a revolution.

In other words, when a sixth of the population of a nation which has undertaken to be the refuge of liberty are slaves, and a whole country is unjustly overrun and conquered by a foreign army, and subjected to military law, I think that it is not too soon for honest men to rebel and revolutionize. (Thoreau 1988: 88)

Thoreau highlighted very fittingly that the big number of slavery supporters is not a crowd of politicians at the South, but simply people like

merchants and farmers who are interested in their business and the prosperity of their farms more than in the freedom of fellow human beings or humanity. The important thing for Thoreau was that the amount of slave-supporters was equal to those who opposed slavery and the Mexican war. The sad fact is that these people talking about freedom sit idly looking at the tyranny. “[W]ho even postpone the question of freedom to the question of free-trade (...)?” (Thoreau 1988: 89)

Every American citizen is sitting idly by, while pretending an action by believing in government and its power to move things. According to Thoreau, even voting in an election is a game in which a voter hopes in a chance of the politician, because he believes it is right, leaving his moral state in the hands of a majority that makes a decisions, so that the action is been postpone waiting for its chance. Therefore, “[e]ven voting *for the right is doing* nothing for it. It is only expressing to men feebly your desire that it should prevail. A wise man will not leave the right to the mercy of chance, nor wish it to prevail through the power of the majority.” (Thoreau 1988: 89) Much worse, the majority vote making laws does not necessarily mean it is doing right. Of course a man cannot repair all wrongs, but still he should listen to his nature and be able not to support these wrongs at all.

### **5. 1. 5. Responding to Unjust Laws**

What is a man able to do with an unjust law? Thoreau defines in his essay three possible ways to respond. Firstly, he can accept it against his moral sense, and try to be contented in this way. Maybe he could be happy with a bended back, but the question is how much a life may be satisfied for a just man while he is fighting against his basic nature and conscience. Secondly, he can also put into action his life by means of changing the unjust law in its bounds until it is really changed; as a just man is trying to acts in a harmony with his nature, reflecting the law restrictions. However, there is the real danger

of long waiting while the majority gets inverted. In addition, this controversy between man's nature and behaviour could have a bad effect on his psyche. The third choice that a just man can do is ignore the unjust law altogether, crossing the notional barrier of right away, because there is no other way when the government does not hear your complaint. In other words, a just man should liberate his nature and follow his heart to change the world in the fight for a better place.

If the injustice is part of the necessary friction of the machine of government, let it go, let it go: perchance it will wear smooth,- certainly the machine will wear out. If the injustice has a spring, or a pulley, or a rope, or a crank, exclusively for itself, then perhaps you may consider whether the remedy will not be worse than the evil; but if it is of such a nature that it requires you to be the agent of injustice of another, then, I say, break the law. (Thoreau 1988: 92)

#### **5. 1. 6. Every voice supporting**

The real appeal for every man, Thoreau makes to every one is counted one by one into the large number of opponents. Every one's active help is needed. There is no way to stand aside when gross injustice and tyranny take place in society. In times like that it is more important than ever before to be an independent, self-reliant man who has the power to negate the laws of the majority that is trampling freedom of the weak ones. "For it matters not how small the beginning may seem to be: what is once well done is done forever." (Thoreau 1988: 93)

A nation of a state is not one symbiotic unit moving in one way like water drops in a single wave, it is a crowd of men consisting of the individuals who, each of them, has his own power - the choice to move things around. The state should respect this individuality and personality of each one in it. Without that respect the harmony collapses, and the law is broken by one side or another,

and when a government is unjust to a man, he breaks the law to be with his nature and conscience. This in turn directs him right into prison. For Thoreau, it is a simple equation with clear answer: "Under a government which imprisons any unjustly, the true place for a just man is also a prison." (Thoreau 1988: 94)

### **5. 1. 7. Freedom Feels like Prison**

Naturally, Thoreau understands the aftermath of behaviour that is in contrast with the law pursuant his own life experience, but still he believes in a man's basic good nature and a good heart, which is in contrast with Christianity that defines man as a sinner. There could be a presumption that a just man does not feel happy while some one else feels miserable or is being hurt. This sense of compassion makes a just man feel threatened from his basic rights when the freedom of someone else is violated, and this fear is a cell for a man's soul.

### **5. 1. 8. Peaceful Rebellion**

Rebellion was not Thoreau's original plan, as it could look for first time; but it is a very productive kind of communication between the nature of simple man and his government that misleads from the good and just way. This communication could be easier, as Thoreau mentions in "Civil Disobedience", when a man pronounces his disappointment with the development of society without any worry, and make his draft for changes to a listening ear. It could be a place "where the State places those who are not *with* her, but *against* her,-- the only house in a slave State in which a free man can abide with honor." (Thoreau 1988: 94) Unfortunately, this was not possible even in Thoreau's times, so he encourages his readers to state their opinion and disagreement

loudly everywhere in visible action: “Cast your whole vote, not a strip of paper merely, but your whole influence,” (Thoreau 1988: 94) to stop the hardship of innocent people who suffer under a whip of slavery.

It is not necessary for a man to form himself a crowd of rebels who take to the streets and vandalize their living place, or threaten other people. His own definition of peaceable revolution wants to hurt no one, and it is more consequently effective. Every man is a tax payer, and as such he should responsibly decide what things will be paid from his part-work for society. “If a thousand men were not to pay their tax-bills this year, that would not be a violent and bloody measure, as it would be to pay them, and enable the state to commit violence and shed innocent blood.” (Thoreau 1988: 94)

Money plays a very important role in our society, because it represents the sweat and pains of every man who has earned it. Money separates a man from his nature, and that has a bad influence on his sense of justice. A man is then living out of his natural aspect, dissuading his good temper for such a futile reason as property constitutes. Man’s happiness is converted to money, and man as a unique being is thereby objectified. “Absolutely speaking, the more money, the less virtue; for money comes between a man and his objects, and obtain them for him; and it was certainly no great virtue to obtain it.” (Thoreau 1988: 95) There is no real happiness out of nature, so a man should follow the natural way and lodge his protest against the government with real action. “When the subject has refused allegiance, and the officer has resigned his office, then the revolution is accomplished.” (Thoreau 1988: 94)

### **5. 1. 9. The State, No Patron**

An inactive man apologizing for his passivity can be hiding before a fear of being without the support of his state, because he is convinced that this

power is needed in his life. Maybe he sees his government as a provider, security, a patron who stands behind him as a mother behind his child to be there when it needs to curl in her arms. "For my own part, I should not like to think that I ever rely on the protection of the State." (Thoreau 1988: 95) Naturally, any independent men should rely on himself and his self-reliance, but it is more complicated as Thoreau admits in his essay, because this leading institution has the power not to let its voters astray and revolt against its authority.

But, if I deny the authority of the State when it presents its taxbill, it will soon take and waste all my property, and so harass me and my children without end. This is hard. This makes it impossible for a man to live honestly, and at the same time comfortably, in outward respects. (...) You must hire or squat somewhere, and raise but a small crop, and eat that soon. You must live within yourself, and depend upon yourself always tucked up and ready for a start (...)." (Thoreau 1988: 95)

In other words, the state does not hesitate to say to a man how he should live and force him to go only its way, while holding man's property for its own benefit. Where the reason is for a just man to provide it for the state that gives a man the same choice as a bandit in woods: money or life? (Thoreau 1988)

#### **5. 1. 10. Injustice of Statesmen**

No one should be participating in this brute process where the main role is played by the government to produce brutality and injustice. No force should make a man do all the bad things that they do.

Thoreau admits his thoughts may differ from other men, but still he is looking for those who care about man's rights, his dignified life and nature of his spirit. His image of government and statesmen is not really positive. Thoreau sees politicians as men living out of nature, parading there pro-system living in the institution without the ability to create a subservient system that would function for people:

They may be men of a certain experience and discrimination, and have no doubt invented ingenious and even useful systems, for which we sincerely thank them; but all their wit and usefulness lie within certain not very wide limits. They are wont to forget that the world is not governed by policy and expediency. (Thoreau 1988: 102)

There is no appeal for those who call for reform. There is no real truth in the word of statesmen or politicians. Even “[t]he lawyer’s truth is not Truth, but consistency or a consistent expediency.” (Thoreau 1988: 102) Nature and dignified life for anyone is missing, because no one can really be free, while some one else is bound by the tyranny.

The reason why the world collides and the society is mired could be the blindness of men in leadership of the state who go against nature to make their personal profit that they call politics while ignoring the most basic domain of natural life like freedom. It seems that these men with their ignorance hold the world and people in it tightly exactly for their own profitable way, but they do not see that the world has got its own natural rules, and these rules of government need not to be obeyed.

Our legislators have not yet learned the comparative value of free-trade and of freedom, of union, and of rectitude, to a nation. They have no genius or talent for comparatively humble questions of taxation and finance, commerce and manufactures and agriculture. (Thoreau 1988: 103)



### **5. 1. 11. Respect the Individuals**

Thoreau believes that society needs to get real respect for individuals, because it is only on them that the state stands. Individuals are the moving power of each empire, and it is not possible to let it function when the rights of the simple man are left behind. “The progress from an absolute to a limited monarchy, from a limited monarchy to a democracy, is a progress toward a true respect for the individual,” (Thoreau 1988: 103) and democracy is the formation the modern society endeavours as for the ideal that provides the same rights for every man in life as for the other with no differences. In democracy freedom should govern, and where the people are free, there the state is free also. “There will never be a really free and enlightened State until the State comes to recognize the individual as a higher and independent power, from which all its own power and authority are derived, and treats him accordingly.” (Thoreau 1988: 104)

By these clever words Thoreau finishes his great essay in agreement with his mentor Emerson who also saw the power of the individuals trying to awaken their power and sense of self-reliance looking on good example of nature that is worth to follow. “If a plant cannot live according to its nature, it dies; and so a man.” (Thoreau 1988: 97)

### **5. 1. 12. Thoreau’s Influence**

Henry David Thoreau’s example was suitable to follow for many others who had a similar point of view of the world and a desire to change it in an active way. The essay on the resistance to the government described not only his troublesome experience with society and its system, but also a general situation in which American people were living and what they were facing.

Thoreau's attitude toward government ("That government is best which governs not at all.") merely reflected in more extreme form the traditional American distrust of government resulting from fear of an aristocratic ruling elite and evident not only in the early demise of Federalism, but also in the opposition to the New Deal, which itself tried to restore a greater measure of economic independence to the common (or natural) man. (Sanford 1958: 297)

Thoreau's personality has been amazing people all over the world until today. His revolutionary thinking influenced conviction for politic and inspired persons even hundred years after his death, namely Leo Tolstoy, Mohandas Gandhi and Martin Luther King.

Martin Luther King, pastor and activist, was another important man who put transcendentalism into practice. "In King's own writing, there are many echoes of the Transcendentalist. In his first book he wrote that religion 'seeks not only to integrate men with God but to integrate men with men and each man with himself.'" (Carter 1979: 322) Emerson's influence on King can be seen in a shared vision of self-reliant man: "Man's hope for creative living lay in the ability of men to 'reestablish the moral ends of our lives in personal character and social justice'." (Carter 1979: 322) Martin Luther King was active in the fight for equal human rights, inspired by one of Thoreau's essays "The Civil Disobedience", and a leader of the African-American Civil Rights Movement. In contrast to Thoreau, King preferred a non-violent way of fight against injustice.

If King had read more of Thoreau he would have discovered that he and Henry would have had fundamental differences. Even within *Civil Disobedience*, Thoreau said nothing about the need to accept willingly punishment for civil disobedience, a critical point with King. (...) Thoreau, like most other Transcendentalists, was primarily interested in reform of the individual while King was primarily interested in reform of society. (Carter 1979: 321)

This non-violent disobedience had a big effect on the American society and it made Martin Luther King a laureate of the Nobel Peace Prize for combating racial inequality through non-violence. On the other hand, “unearned suffering is redemptive” is a Christian notion, not a transcendental idea.

It can be said “that Thoreau was a great writer, and so his pages survive in spite of changes in metaphysical fashions.” (Sanford 1958: 297)

## **5. 2. Fuller, an Independent Woman**

Sarah Margaret Fuller Ossoli, known as Margaret Fuller, was a journalist, critic and another important figure who like Thoreau put transcendentalism into practice. She advocated equal human rights, fighting against unequal civil rights of women and legalized slavery in the United States.

Fuller was born on May 23, 1810 in Cambridge Massachusetts. After her studies (she was home educated as a majority of women in the nineteenth century), Fuller became the first female editor of the transcendental journal “The Dial” where she got the opportunity to work with Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thorough.

Margaret Fuller was a woman with vision of the self-reliant man, irrespective of gender and skin colour, in the way of transcendentalism. Her essay “Woman in the Nineteenth Century”, published in 1845 is considered the major work of feminist movement in the United States. She spoke for equal human rights, especially the women right for education and employment. Her behaviour was found “so disturbingly unwomanly” (Davis 1999: 37) and attracted a great deal of attention. “Although Edgar Allan Poe did not so intend it, we could read his infamous quip that there are three types of people, ‘men, women and Margaret Fuller,’ as a backhanded compliment (...).” (Sanford 1958: 297)

### **5. 2. 1. Woman in the Nineteenth Century**

Fuller's work "Woman in the Nineteenth Century" provides strong criticism of women's position in the society that lies in her own life experience and desire for being free and independent as any self-reliant man. "Despite its straightforward title, *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* is an allusive, digressive, and challenging argument on behalf of the quest for human perfection, especially for women's full intellectual and spiritual development," (Reynolds 1998: ix) and call "for the reform of sexual and racial relations." (Davis 1999: 38)

Based on transcendental philosophy, Fuller uses believe in Nature and self-reliant man (no matter of sex) as Emerson defined it in his essay "Nature." Unfortunately, she found this self-reliance in life of man. A man, compared to a woman, is taken by society as the only bearer of power relevant to the future.

Yet man, if not yet fully installed in his powers, has given much earnest of his claims. Frail he is indeed, how frail! how impure! Yet often has the vein of gold displayed itself amid the baser ores, and Man has appeared before us in princely promise worthy of his future. (...) He feels himself called to understand and aid nature, that she may, through his intelligence, be raised and interpreted; to be a student of, and servant to, the universe-spirit; and king of his planet, that as an angelic minister, he may bring it into conscious harmony with the law of that spirit. (Fuller 1998: 7)

This position of man, unequal with the position of woman, Fuller finds supported through the history and by, as Emerson called it in his essay "The American Scholar," the cult of fathers who predetermine man's journey in their life steps. It should be overcome, "the strains of prophecy, the following, by an earnest mind of a foreign land, written some thirty years ago, is not yet outgrown; and it has the merit of being a positive appeal from the heart, instead of a critical declaration what man should *not* do." (Fuller 1998: 10)

### **5. 2. 2. Facing the Ideal**

Just Emerson felt an unfree man when he lives estranged from Nature and dependent on society, and just Thoreau found a man bound by unjust laws and led astray by the government, so Fuller saw a man degraded by form of body and prejudice of their role in society.

She describes a man's and woman's role that is predestined to some kind of imaginary perfection, different for both of them that they should reach in a way of ancient heroes such as Hercules or Orpheus were. However, this kind of being Fuller finds unsatisfactory:

But he, the much experienced man, who wished to be experienced in all, and use all to the service of wisdom, desired to hear the song that he might understand its meaning. Yet, distrusting his own power to be firm in his better purpose, he caused himself to be bound to the mast, that he might be kept secure against his own weakness. (Fuller 1998: 12)

Fuller proclaims that now it is the woman's turn. "As men become aware that few men have had a fair chance, they are inclined to say that no women have had a fair chance." (Fuller 1998: 12) She condemns the cruelty and trickery in this world of injustice towards the black and the red man – "monstrous display of slave-dealing and slave-keeping" (Fuller 1998: 13) - this is the unspeakable deed that cannot be forgiven even by the most remorseful pray, for all men are equal.

Fuller oppose each other two visions of woman. Firstly, there is the true woman who is "spiritually exalted and physically attenuated" (Davis 1999: 38). The woman, who represents family union and a kitchen heart, is contented and happy enough with her life not to grieve for her husband. She wants to belong

into “the sphere of her sex.” (Fuller 1998: 15) Here is a woman defined as the heart of a man’s house where he is a head.

That the idea of Man, however imperfectly brought out, has been far more so than that of Woman, that she, the other half of the same thought, the other chamber of the heart of life, needs now to take her turn in the full pulsation, and that improvement in the daughters will best aid in the reformation of the sons of this age. (Fuller 1998: 12)

Secondly, the ideal woman “is not actually ‘woman,’ man’s binary opposite, but ‘soul,’ man’s essential equal.” (Davis 1999: 38) These definitions stand woman in a new light which rays glimmer all over the world, but as elsewhere they do not want to be seen as Fuller confirms in her work:

The numerous party, whose opinions are already labelled and adjusted too much to their mind to admit of any new light, strive, by lectures on some model-woman of bride-like beauty and gentleness, by writing and lending little treatises, intended to mark out with precision the limits of woman’s sphere, and woman’s mission, to prevent other than the rightful shepherd from climbing the wall, or the flock from using any chance to go astray. (Fuller 1998: 17)

Fuller sees advocacy of woman’s rights in an Anti-Slavery party, because she feels that women do not have equal rights of property as men, and in the while she faces her husband’s death without his will, she is in the same position as his child and not as an equal partner. She is dependant on her “master” enslaved in this bad situation. A woman is not equal in many situations that come from the presumption “that there exists in the minds of men a tone of feeling towards women as towards slaves” and their “infinite soul can only work through them in already ascertained limits,” as women would be

a lower form of human being who needs the protection of “those better able to think.” (Fuller 1998: 18)

### **5. 2. 3. Influence of Society**

The name of the Prince of Peace has been profaned by all kinds of injustice toward the Gentile whom he said he came to save. (Fuller 1998: 13)

According to Fuller, it is no use to blame men more than women who surround them, because every man is influenced by his mother, sister, and female friends – they create conditions for his upbringing. “Man is as generous toward her, as he knows how to be,” (Fuller 1998: 23) or wants to be, it could be added. When these women’s effecting on men would not work, the pen should be used for remedy. There is no reason for this inequality. “Women could take part in the processions, the songs, the dances of old religion; no one fancied their delicacy was impaired by appearing in public for such a cause.” (Fuller 1998: 19) The biblical myth that woman was made by God from man and for man needs to be overcome.

In contrast with Emerson who did not consider the Christian religion harmful, Fuller finds this religion as a detrimental tool which holds bound women by predestination by the society without resistance and questioning and as the one of possible causes of the unequal status of man and woman.

Religion was early awakened in my soul, a sense that what the soul is capable to ask it must attain, and that, though as might be aided and instructed by others, I must depend on myself as the only constant friend. This self dependence, which was honored in me, is deprecated as a fault in most women. They are taught to learn their rule from without, not to unfold it from within. (Fuller 1998: 22)

This way of thinking is questionable also for Fuller, when a man considers that there are many religions in the world that have lowering of woman's status in society and her abilities, or else there are even some religions that celebrate woman as the high one for her vocation to bear a child and assure the future by that. Fuller provides an example of Greek nations who, as she believed according to their mythology and realization of women in it, express dignity and respect to their female partner in life.

Nor, however imperfect may be the action, in our day, of the faith thus expressed, and though we can scarcely think it nearer this ideal, than that of India or Greece was near their ideal, is it in vain that the truth has been recognized, that woman is not only a part of man, bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh, born that men might not be lonely, but that women are in themselves possessors of and possessed by immortal souls. (Fuller 1998: 32)

The second cause could be man's desire for power, and having power over someone's life is the most satisfactory feeling in this area. "Each wishes to be lord in a little world, to be superior at least over one; and he does not feel strong enough to retain a life-long ascendancy over a strong nature." (Fuller 1998: 23) Only a boy can feel no woman, but a girl to share children's games with him – there is no hidden inducement in his acting. However, an adult man going through his life with his wife waits for the moment she loses her breath and is not able to keep the step with him, and without any encouragement he ridicules her: "Girls can't do that; girls can't play ball." (Fuller 1998: 24) Fuller found it even worse, a man supported by set conventions sees in his wife only as a partner in drudgery of life, whom he also harasses.

Fuller introduces the idea in the book that a man is raised through his environment to play his role created by society and supported by books - the medium that Emerson warns against its abuse in the education of a man for imitation of and praying for the "fathers cult." "For the truths, which visit the



minds of careless men only in fitful gleams, shine with radiant clearness into those of the poet, the priest, and the artist.” (Fuller 1998: 28)

#### **5. 2. 4. Strong Woman**

Regarding the history, even there are examples of strong and self-reliant woman. Fuller names for example Elizabeth of England, Isabella of Castile, or Mary Stuart. Their lives and strong desires to live their own life in a fulfilled way constitute a part of history. They were not weak housewives living under the protection of her husband.

These were strong characters and in harmony with the wants of their time. One showed that this strength did not unfit a woman for the duties of a wife and a mother, the other that is could enable her to live and die alone, a wide energetic life, a courageous death. (Fuller 1998: 37)

Famous women whom Fuller names in her essay were not only strong in their action, but also brave to show their own potential. Every woman is a heroine for she is strong inside. Women’s life stories in Fuller’s essay are full of poor souls bound by social conventions and habits, and these women suffer their sorrow resignedly – this is a sign of strength that should be redirected from tolerance to action. Women do not need someone’s permission.

#### **5. 2. 5. Ritual of Marriage**

Fuller also argues with the meaning of marriage that connects two individuals, although elsewhere in the world there can be polygamy, because

here is still the question whether it “must be a meeting of souls, or only supposes a contract of convenience and utility.” (Fuller 1998: 41) What does marriage actually mean for two individual souls and for people around them? There are as many definitions and points of view maybe as thinking people in the world, and Fuller provides some examples of the possible meaning of marriage, but no unambiguous answer. For woman it can also mean “nor, in societies where her choice is left free, would she be perverted, by the current of opinion that seizes her, into the belief that she must marry, if it be only to find a protector, and a home of her own.” (Fuller 1998: 41)

### **5. 2. 6. Relationship between Man and Woman**

An unequal status in marriage, according to Fuller, devastates not only a woman’s soul, but also has a bad influence on children. In an unequal partnership, there is a chance of raising children under caring influence of their mother, but she is not treated in this way. Fuller defines here the substitution of women for a nanny: “(...) the man looks upon his wife as an adopted child, and places her to the other children in the relation of nurse or governess, rather than of parent,” (Fuller 1998: 42) and without proper education she is not able to support her children in their upbringing.

Of course there are many notions about property holding a relationship in marriage. Fuller mentions two basic ways how the role in this special relation between two individuals can be played. The first, that man and woman lies in “mutual dependence” occurs when a man has a role of a “good provider” while a woman is “capital housekeeper” in means that each of them has his own part of a stage that is strictly defined and their work is completed into one unit. Their living is confident by “practical kindness.” The second, man and woman lives in “intellectual companionship” when a man feels his wife as an “unlovely syren,” and woman sees her husband as an “effeminate boy.” There is no congruence in their relationship, but instead they fight against each other. (Fuller 1998)

Fuller herself leans to an interpretation of partnership in marriage that should be based mainly on friendship. This is the most important component for a contented and equal relationship for both of them, which brings harmony into the house and lots of space for their individual souls as she found in this example of the relationship of Roland and his wife.

We might mention instances, nearer home, of minds, partners in work and in life, sharing together, on equal terms, public and private interests, and which wear not, on any side, the aspect of offence (...)" (Fuller 1998: 46)

### **5. 2. 7. New Vision of Woman**

Emerson believed in the self-reliant man who is a lord of his life, living it in harmony with nature, and likewise did Fuller. She encourages women to hold their lives by self-esteem and self-reliance. A woman should listen to her own nature even it goes against the set traditions and convention.

If any individual live too much in relations, so that he becomes a stranger to the resources of his own nature, he falls, after a while, into a distraction, or imbecility, from which he can only be cured by a time of isolation, which gives the renovating fountains time to rise up. With a society it is the same. Many minds, deprived of the traditionary or instinctive means of passing a cheerful existence, must find help in selfimpulse, or perish. (Fuller 1998: 70)

Fuller takes the same view of the bad influence of society on the individual as Thoreau. Woman should break out and live independently of the other. Moreover, she should revolt against her position and create the new, better one. When she treats herself with respect, the reaction on her action should be respected. Here is seen one of the great thoughts of

transcendentalism, when an individual can change the world by self-control and by strengthening of character.

In any tribe, we believe, a woman, who lived as if she was betrothed to the Sun, would be tolerated, and the rays which made her youth blossom sweetly, would crown her with a halo in age.

There is, on this subject, a nobler view than heretofore, if not the noblest, and improvement here must coincide with that in the view taken of marriage. We must have units before we can have union, says one of the ripe thinkers of the times. (Fuller 1998: 60)

History and conventions tell to woman what her place and role is. This way is predetermined by expectations of men and ideal rendering in thoughts of thinkers, authorized by society. The woman in Fuller's ideal society is not in such a bad situation as women all around the world, where she has some, otherwise low opportunities. However, she still should be glad about her place in the kitchen out of the real world. Why? When there is no reason for this kind of protection, when man and woman are equal. "Male and female represent the two sides of the great radical dualism. But, in fact, they are perpetually passing into one another. Fluid hardens it solid, solid rushes to fluid. There is no wholly masculine man, no purely feminine woman." (Fuller 1998: 68)

## **6. Conclusion**

Thoreau's and Fuller's essays and the interest that they arouse offer a set of perfect examples how brilliant and practical Emerson's thoughts were. Transcendentalism brought a new life conception that was concentrated on individual and his confident, independent thinking that is in congruence with his nature. Man should liberate himself and his soul from conventions, social predestination, or civil obedience, if it is contrary to the nature of just man. This kind of freedom, the absolute one man is totally self-reliant, is found in nature through which he can find himself, peace and harmony, because there is no bad

influence of society in nature, no imitation of one's fathers in nature instead, man is educated by lived experience.

According to transcendental philosophy and Emerson's image of the American scholar, education to ward self-reliance is very important for a complied and valuable life of an individual, because it brings more benefits for both, individual and society, for he brings his original genius, new thoughts, new ways. Imitation is just a degradation of this genius by some kind of unification or standardisation of human kind. This is not an advantage for society's development.

Independent man can bring much more, as can be seen in the exemplary work of Henry David Thoreau and Margaret Fuller who wrote of their genius and fight against the set conventions and prejudice of their society for reaching the option of life that is in harmony with nature and justice. Their belief deeply influenced the society in the nineteenth century in the United States of America and helped in the intellectual fight against legalized slavery and repressed women.

However, transcendentalism is not just for elite chosen ones, as Thoreau or Fuller, but for anyone. Everyone is a kind of this genius when he listens to his nature as Emerson proclaims in his famous essay. Everyone has the power to change his life in better way, and not only his own life, but also the being of entire society, because it is contented of these individuals.

Thoreau was the one who wanted to restore justice by means of civil disobedience, because there is no respectful law that breaks the basic human rights. A just man should take responsibility for his life, and according to his good nature, he should be active in his own conviction, show his disagreement and even revolt, if necessary. There is no freedom for a just man outside of prison when he lives against his nature in the society that allows tyranny.

Opposing injustice and oppression also connects Fuller with transcendental thinking. Emerson's conception of nature speaks through her defence of equal human rights. Even Fuller believed in self-reliant individual no matter of one's gender. A woman should be responsible for her life, because she is also a human being. She should stop playing the role that the society predestined for her because of her form, liberate her soul and listen to her own genius. She should destroy the convention of the weak, unthinking creature that

is set into position of “nanny” without much respect to her personality. She should behave in harmony with her nature and alter society to respect her.

Respect goes hand in hand with self-reliance as it is natural. This is the most important message that Emerson transmits by means of his essays; and Thoreau and Fuller prove its power and truthful applicability. However, the nineteenth century was not the only time when transcendental philosophy found its use. A century later Martin Luther King was the one who showed that it is valuable even in his days, and was very successful in another fight against racial injustice, as did Mahatma Gandhi in India.

These examples prove how accurately Emerson grasped man and how effective living in harmony with nature can be. There are nearly two centuries influenced by transcendental thinking in the better way, to the profit of the self-reliant individual, and no matter how far people are alienated from nature, this brilliant philosophy should influence also this century, because there are still many signs of injustice and tyranny.

## **7. Czech Summary**

Eseje a hlavně zájem vzbuzený autory Henrym Davidem Thoreauem a Margaret Fullerovou jsou dokonalým příkladem praktické realizace geniálního pojetí transcendentální filosofie Ralpha Walda Emersona. Transcendentalismus přinesl nové pojetí života obyčejných lidí, které se zaměřuje na vývoj jednotlivce a jeho sebejisté, nezávislé myšlení, které je v souladu s jeho přirozeností. Člověk by měl osvobodit sám sebe i svou duši od společenských zvyklostí, sociálního předurčení nebo také od občanské poslušnosti, pokud je to v rozporu s přirozenou povahou čestného člověka. Tento druh svobody, absolutní svobody soběstačného člověka, lze nalézt pouze v přírodě, díky které může také najít sám sebe, harmonii a vnitřní mír, protože v přírodě neexistuje nic takového jako negativní vliv společnosti. Příroda nevede člověka k imitaci a následování tzv. „kultu otců,“ od kterého Emerson ve svých esejích odrazuje. V přírodě je místo toho člověk veden k prožití a hlavně vlastní zkušenosti.

Vzhledem k filosofii transcendentalismu a Emersonově pojetí amerického školáka je výchova soběstačného jedince velmi důležitá. Člověk díky ní může prožít hodnotný a spokojený život i mnohem víc. Svým géniem tak přispěje i společnosti, a to například originálním myšlením, novými idejemi, novými možnostmi. Dalo by se říct, že imitace je pouhou iluzí, která degraduje tohoto jedinečného génia snahou o jednotnost či průměrnost lidského druhu, což není přínosné ani pro rozvoj společnosti, ani pro jedince samotného.

Soběstačný člověk přispívá mnohem více, jak je patrné z příkladné práce autorů H. D. Thoreaua a M. Fullerové, jejichž výrazný génius se velmi dobře uplatnil v boji proti ustáleným společenským zvyklostem a předsudkům, a rozšířil tak možnosti samotného bytí jedinců v souladu s přirozeností v rámci spravedlnosti. Jejich víra zásadně ovlivnila společnost Spojených států amerických devatenáctého století a pomohla v intelektuálním boji proti legalizovanému otrokářství a utlačování žen.

Víra v přírodu a přirozenost, jak je chápána transcendentalismem, není směr určený pouze pro elitu revolučního myšlení, jakou byl např. Thoreau nebo Fullerová, ale pro kohokoliv. Každý v sobě objeví ducha génia, jak ve své eseji uvádí Emerson, pokud bude naslouchat přírodě. Každý má tu moc změnit svůj život k lepšímu. Nejen svůj vlastní život, ale také samotné bytí svého nejbližšího okolí, neboť ani tato společnost nefunguje jako jedna hybná síla, nýbrž se pohybuje jako vlna složená z jednotlivců, v níž každý má moc nad vlastním životem.

Henry David Thoreau byl ten, kdo si přál napravit nespravedlnosti společnosti pomocí civilní neposlušnosti. Byl přesvědčen, že žádný zákon či právo nemůžou být respektovány, pokud porušuje základní lidská práva a dovoluje prosazovat útlak a tyranii. Čestný člověk, podle Thoreaua, by měl vzít do svých rukou zodpovědnost za vlastní život a v souladu s jeho dobrou náturou by měl být opravdu aktivní ve svém přesvědčení a ukázat svůj nesouhlas, nebo dokonce i revoltovat, pokud je to pro nápravu nespravedlností nezbytné. Pro čestného muže není žádné svobody mimo zdívo cely, když žije uvězněn ve společnosti, která jde proti jeho nátuře, přirozenosti. Není svobody ve společnosti, která schvaluje tyranii.

Boj proti nespravedlnosti a útlaku spojuje s transcendentální filosofií také Margaret Fullerovou, která ze svých obhajob na ochranu lidských práv nechává

promlouvat Emersonovu koncepci přirozenosti. Fullerová věří v samostatného jedince bez ohledu na jeho pohlaví. Také žena by měla být zodpovědná za svůj vlastní život, protože je stejně tak lidskou bytostí jako muž. Měla by se proto odpoutat od role, která jí je společností předurčena na základě její ženské formy těla. Fullerová nabádá osvobodit duši a naslouchat svému vlastnímu géniu, zbořit společností vžitý předpoklad slabého, nemyslícího stvoření, které je postaveno do role vrchní hospodyně či pouhé vychovatelky svých dětí bez valného respektu k její osobnosti. Žena by se měla chovat v souladu se svou náturou stejně jako muž a proměnit opovržlivý pohled společnosti v respekt.

Respekt jde totiž přirozeně ruku v ruce se soběstačností. Je tím nejdůležitějším poselstvím, které promlouvá v Emersonových esejích a jehož sílu a pravdivost úspěšně ověřili v běžném životě obhájci lidských práv, Henry David Thoreau a Margaret Fullerová. Devatenácté století ale nebylo jediné období, kdy se transcendentální filosofie uplatnila. O století později to byl Martin Luther King, kdo aplikoval tuto filosofii na nespravedlnosti a útrapy své doby a znovu dokázal její platnost. Ve svém boji proti rasové diskriminaci byl velmi úspěšný, stejně jako Mahatma Ghandi v Indii.

Tyto zdárné příklady dokazují, jak výstižně Emerson vystihl člověka a jak efektivní je pro člověka soužití s přírodou v dokonalé harmonii. Transcendentální filosofie změnila již dvě století ku prospěchu soběstačného jedince a bez ohledu na to, jak vzdálena je společnost lidí od přírody, měla by tato jedinečná filosofie zapůsobit na jedince i v tomto století, aby pomohla čestnému člověku napravit další známky nespravedlnosti či tyranie.



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