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TRABAJO DE FIN DE GRADO

Transcendental Rebellion in Thoreau's works

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## ABSTRACT

This paper examines the evolution of Henry David Thoreau through his writings from an initial pacifist position to a radical one. The author breaks with his fellows “The Transcendentalists” because of his ideas based on a mixed conception of material and spirit that they do not share. The rupture with Emerson supposed the first step that lead him to a partial isolation from the society. Besides, the laws promulgated by the government, the manipulation of the press and the disregard of the Church toward the slavery became his main preoccupations and concerns what finally caused his wrath and rebel attitude, encouraging him to write against all the insitutions that he considered corrupt or incompetent without fear to the imprisonment and therefore being classified as a new Rebel Transcendentalist.

Key words: Rebellion, Transcendentalism, Protest, Abolitionism, Resistant, Pacifist

## RESUMEN

Este trabajo analiza la evolución de Henry David Thoreau a través de sus escritos desde una posición inicial pacifista a una más radical. El autor rompe con sus compañeros “Los Transcendentalistas” debido a sus ideas basadas en la mezcla de lo material y espiritual lo cual ellos no comparten. La ruptura con Emerson supone el primer paso que le lleva a un aislamiento de la sociedad. Además, las leyes promulgadas por el gobierno, la manipulación de la prensa y la indiferencia de la iglesia hacia la esclavitud se convirtieron en sus principales preocupaciones lo que finalmente provocó his ira y actitud de rebeldía, llevándole a escribir contra todas las instituciones que el consideraba corruptas o incompetentes sin miedo al encarcelamiento y por tanto ser clasificado como un nuevo Rebelde Trancendentalista.

Palabras clave: Rebelión, Transcendentalismo, Protesta, Abolicionismo, Resistencia, Pacífica

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# INTRODUCTION

For this final paper I have selected one of my favourite authors whom I consider one of the greatest writers of all times because of his sincere prose when telling something that is usually related to so many important and relevant topics such as racism, lack of moral, lack of values and corruption. His works are not only useful in the daily life because of their relation to the present circumstances of crisis if not that they can be considered as a guide for a proper behaviour when we face problems. Henry David Thoreau is from my point of view the perfect writer for a period of crisis and universal deceit like the one we are going through, besides a reference from whom we can learn a lot of lessons such as how to be pacifist when necessary and also how to avoid unnecessary conflicts. He is not only related to the politics but to the nature and the way we can see it that is something which nowadays is very important because of the treatment to animals and our environment. The purpose of this work is going to be focused on the most relevant aspects of the rebellion that Thoreau performed against the main institutions in American between 1840 and 1860.

It is not easy to determine the state of the question since there are just a few works based on the rebellion that Thoreau expresses against the government in the state of Massachusetts and his possible classification within a new group of rebel writers. However, it has been analyzed the relationship between Thoreau and Emerson by Joel Porte (1967) which also deals with the rupture of Emerson and Thoreau, something that somehow supports my theory of a rupture that caused his rebel attitude in all senses. Another important essay is the one edited by William E. Cain (2000) that deeply analyzes to Thoreau and his relation with the Church, the family, Emerson and the issue of the slavery which helped me to create a background for this assignment. But I would say that the most important and relevant work is the one from Walter Harding (1967) in which the author deals with the Transcendentalism from the beginning of it until the formulation of the unanswered question: What is Transcendentalism? What is a Transcendentalist? And now I would also

like to formulate my question: Is it possible the existence of a new kind of Transcendentalist writer?

I am going to analyze the main works of H. D. Thoreau searching for connections between acts of rebellion and rupture with conventional currents such as the Transcendentalism and Romanticism through his most important quotes. For this purpose it is necessary to pay special attention to three of his writings: *Civil Disobedience*, *Slavery in Massachusetts* and *A Plea For Captain John Brown*. Others like *Walden*, *Diaries* and *Life Without Principle* are going to be used in order to complement the previous essays and data.

In short, I would like to shed light on the topic of the rebellion that Thoreau seemed during his period of writing when he did not follow the rules and that actually in my opinion could be considered as the transformation into a new type of Transcendentalist that it could be denominated as “Rebel Transcendentalist”. This term would vary a lot from the original one that seems not to have a clear definition according to other authors. To attain this purpose it would be necessary to show his differences with other literary trends represented mainly by Ralph Waldo Emerson and the New England Transcendentalists. The main theories that I would like to demonstrate in this paper are: his rupture with conventional writers including Emerson and the Transcendentalists, the effect of this rupture into a state of rebellion on the writer, his personal search of a practical philosophy which would teach the man how to experience the world through senses and nature and his capacity to protest pacifically without violence which would transformed him into a Rebel but without sharing similarities with bandits or criminals like Brown.

## 1. HENRY DAVID THOREAU

### 1.1 Thoreau’s early life

Henry David Thoreau was born on July 12<sup>th</sup>, 1817 in Concord (Massachusetts). He was raised in a poor and needy family without riches and resources whose father was deeply

affected in mind by his failed business ventures. He has always been linked to nature and cosmic awareness since his childhood, Walter Harding (1967) collects a very relevant scene of Henry's childhood in which his conspicuous intelligence can be noticed: "Why, Henry dear, don't you go to sleep?" "Mother, I have been looking through the stars to see if I could see God behind them" (Harding, 1967:12). This is a clear indication of the interest shown by the little genius toward the nature that surrounded him and his expectation to find something beyond the worldly elements in Concord.

Regarding the family and closest people to Thoreau's circle, there were three siblings in the family, Helen, John and Sophia. Unfortunately two of them died very young which affected Thoreau's mood and perception of life as a perishable experience. Walter Harding (1967) collects again information of Thoreau's family in *The Days of Henry David Thoreau* and tries to define it in a positive way:

Certainly, despite the interruptions of boarders and visitors, the Thoreaus were a closely knit family. There was warmth about it to give the young Henry and his brothers and sisters the feeling of security so essential to a happy childhood (Harding, 1967: 22)

Perhaps, these events shaped a lonely man whose only desire was to become a pure and upright writer. Thoreau attended Concord Academy where his grades were good but not excellent at all maybe because of his lack of interest in the courses taught in the Academy throughout the course. After that he changed his name from David Henry to Henry David, a first symbolic act of his unconventional personality, rebel spirit and self-reliance attitude.

In 1833 he is granted and entered in Harvard where he had his first encounter with philosophy although he could not pay the tuition his older brother helped him to pay it teaching in a nearby school but unluckily John Thoreau died later of lockjaw disease after cutting himself while shaving. Sadly, John's dead took place in Henry's arms which affected once again Thoreau's mental stability when he was only 25 year old, this is another event that would affect him and cause his isolation from society in the future. Thoreau was finally graduated in 1837 but he was not considered an outstanding student after all and had to face the problem of earning a wage, by this time Ralph Waldo Emerson had already

shifted to Concord and established a great friendship with Thoreau who was awed by Emerson character and intelligence.

Ralph Waldo Emerson became in the most important figure for the young Thoreau and all his ideas were initially took by him who became immediately in his protégé. A few years later, he could finally work with his father in a pencil maker company but in July 4, 1845 at the age of 28 he decided to quit his job and build a cabin on the woods on the land that Emerson had lend to him in return of his help at home in order to live a simply life. The figure of Emerson was also fundamental in Thoreau's diaries because it was Emerson who advised him to start writing a compilation of his experiences due to the innate talent for the literature and on October 22, 1837 he started to make entries: "What are you doing now? He asked. Do you keep a journal? So I make my first entry today" (Harding, 1967: 71).

While Thoreau stayed in the pond he wrote *Walden, or the life in the woods (1845)*., an essay aimed to find the necessary loneliness where he could be able to think and reflect about the important and unworldly things in life. After two years Thoreau considered this purpose attained and wrote:

I left the woods for as good a reason as I went there. Perhaps it seemed to me that I had several more lives to live, and could not spare any more time for that one. It is remarkable how easily and insensibly we fall into a particular route, and make a beaten track for ourselves (Bayn, 2003: 1976).

He thereby exposed his main intentions when moving to the pound, among them the isolation from society and rejection of conventional ways of life and the search of the necessary loneliness and rupture with society in order to have the time for the contemplation and experimentation of the essentials. Moreover, this isolation can be treated as an act of rebellion against the established ways in which a man lives and earns a living and as a disregard for the rules and taxes imposed by the local governments in Massachusetts who supported slavery.



## 1.2 Cultural aspects

In this period the nowadays United States of America were still a new united nation under construction and the slavery in the Southern States was in the focus of discussion for many writers until the 60s, among them were Thoreau, Emerson and all American Transcendentalists. From 1820 the abolitionism raised among the population of the Northern States and there were a lot of protests against the government carried out by some important figures like Captain John Brown, a respected and heroic figure for Thoreau because of his acts of rebellion and the reformer and politician Frederick Douglass, Afro-American writer and activist who escaped from his owners and became the leader of the abolitionist movement.

Otherwise the Southern States embraced slavery as a traditional way of life that should not be changed if not respected in order to keep the Union together which was a point of inflection in Thoreau's writings against this movement and his supporters. The embracements of slavery lead to the creation of some "compromises" by ministers that woke up riots and conflicts all over North America.

The compromise of Missouri in 1820 was a more or less fair law created to satisfy both parts the abolitionist and the pro-slavery. Later, in 1850 it would be incorporated the Fugitive Slave Act by Henry Clay and it was again a reason for the eager of Thoreau as an outrageous event which was sharply criticized in his writings. But not only Thoreau shown his refuse to this law since Emerson in his diaries claimed that he would never obey to a government whose peoples, who do not know by the way how to write and read, approved dirty laws like that one.

Another important event in the history of the American records is the annexation of Texas which was supported by the Southern States in an attempt of incorporating another proslavery area but the Northern States refused this annexation although eventually Texas was incorporated. This caused a conflict with Mexico from 1846 to 1848 and that finished after the military occupation of the United States and the arrest of Thoreau because of his refusal to pay taxes and therefore contribute to the war.

Finally the last reason for Thoreau's wrath found in the American background is the Kansas-Nebraska Act promulgated in 1854 by Stephen Douglas, American politician from Illinois, and whose law was intended to lay the responsibility of accepting or reject the slavery on the population's will through popular vote in order to calm and satisfy all States but violating the United States Declaration of Independence that says: "*All men are created equal*".

### 1.3 Main influences: Emerson and Transcendentalism

The most important figures in Thoreau's life were marginal and solitary men such as his Indian guide Joe Polis and the bandit John Brown. But one was significantly important in his early years because of his unconditional support and help; this figure was Ralph Waldo Emerson the father of the Transcendentalism and the writer of *Nature* who was deeply studied by scholars from England in that time.

Emerson, who is considered the father of transcendentalism, was looked upon a major discipline of Thoreau and his main influence although in many moments the former criticized his theories and lack of action and practice. It is pretty difficult to identify obvious similarities and differences between these two authors because of their complexity since they were Transcendentalists and opposites at the same time which might be the reason why they finally rejected to each other's ideas. Emerson was born in Boston on May 25, 1803 and was also affected by the death of his father as well as Thoreau. He published his first book *Nature* in 1836, a well considered document on American Romanticism and Transcendentalism but it did not establish him as an important writer because it was anonymous and was not related to Christian matters, it was only in relation to philosophy and importance of nature as an ancient way of thinking and perception of life. After the publication of the book, it was created a group of new Transcendentalists mainly composed by ministers and intellectuals who rejected John Locke's ideas that the mind acts like a passive receiver of impressions and otherwise agreed Coleridge's point of view of the mind as creative in perception. This group was since the beginning formed by abolitionists and

Unitarian ministers. *Nature* contributed to the creation of the Transcendentalist magazine *The Dial*, where Thoreau supported his friend Margaret Fuller with multiple editions (Bayn, 2003).

Regarding the relationship of them Joel Porte in his book *Emerson and Thoreau: Transcendentalists in conflict* (1966) analyzes Thoreau-Emerson friendship and thinking from a critic point of view trying to re-examine the affinity between these two important writers. Porte introduce his work as a paper whose aim can be considered as a initial critic to Mark Van Doren (1916) whose ideas lead to write an essay where Thoreau is considered as a specific and almost identical Emerson. These ideas can be found in other authors' works whose aim was the analysis of Thoreau from a philosophical point of view. He points out that both authors are Transcendentalist and individualist but they do not share the same points of view regarding nature and perception because Thoreau could be consider a transcendentalist, mystic and naturalist who mixes spirit and matter while Emerson is a poet, an impractical writer and an uncommitted writer with the world of protests.

Porte (1967) sets Transcendentalism as the initial point of discussion to unravel and analyze the relationship between them and writes briefly about the problem to deal with Transcendentalism and its controversial ideas such as action-reflection, art-life and the most important; the attitude toward the nature and whether it is mystical or scientific, naturalistic or idealist.

The Transcendentalism was not always an easy topic for discussion since Emerson and especially Thoreau were sharply criticized by others Transcendentalists. Porte (1967) collects a brief introduction to Transcendentalism and his possible first definition stressing the importance of this definition to investigate the different ideas between Thoreau and Emerson regarding this literary trend which could indicate important differences. The author comments how in a letter addressed to his wife Lidian, Emerson does not consider himself the father of such movement even though he was the only one who supported this idea of refusal as father of the movement. Besides, according to Lawrence Buell (2003) Emerson wrote in his diaries that there is no pure Transcendentalist and therefore it is not possible to define this term which makes more difficult to know what the starting point for

the debate is. He continues explaining how Emerson suggested indirectly the impossibility to classify an author under a category, he points out that it is even more difficult if they are Emerson and Thoreau. As an example of this impossibility, Buell mentions Emerson's lecture in which he partially defined the Transcendentalist writer as an idealist opposed to the materialist, i.e., the intuitionist of Kant opposed to the sensationalist of Locke, something that differs a lot from the Thoreau's ideals of a mixture of idealism and materialism.

Thus, because of the problem to define the term itself he consults other American writers on the same topic who also attempted to give it a meaning. For this purpose he compares the work of O.B Frothingham *Transcendentalism in New England* (1876) with H.C. Goddard *Studies in New England Transcendentalism* (1908) in order to classify Emerson and consider him the initial reference for the difficult classification of Thoreau as a writer. Both authors exclude Thoreau from the Transcendentalist trend but Goddard divided Transcendentalism in two parts instead; the one including Emerson, William Ellery Channing (previously included by Frothingham), Theodore Parker and Ripley (gospel preachers) and the other one formed uniquely by Thoreau who from now can be considered the exception of the Transcendentalists according to Goddard. The reason why Goddard's study excludes Thoreau as a transcendentalist is mainly his early age when this literary trend was being formed besides the fact of not being a preacher and his mystic attitude. Indeed, Thoreau rejected to be a preacher demonstrating by using of writings his rebellion against the movement of his mentor and not following him in this aspect. Therefore, concludes the author, Goddard does not consider him a true transcendentalist as Emerson (the reference when we refer to a Transcendentalist) with whom Thoreau is going to be in conflict because of their differences in terms of action and passivity.

## 1.4 Rupture with Emerson

It is well known that Emerson was the most important influence for the young Thoreau when he was about to finish his studies at the University of Harvard. Even though they had a very different life and custom, they could establish a close link between their writings and

ideas based mainly on Transcendentalist and Romanticist patterns. However, Thoreau broke with the thread of Transcendentalists in a radical way despite being the supposed successor of his literary father Emerson and had being supported financially by him when he was jailed because of evading taxes. In this way he was indirectly declaring the war to all the Emersonian followers and breaking with traditional perceptions of nature, mind and philosophy and feeling careless for the critics that this assertions might supposed. Besides, he could move away and isolate himself from intimate relationships with other writers who belonged to a high social class and became therefore in the lonely writer *par excellence* who avoided society and friendship which were in that time considered essential for Emerson. Only a writer like William Ellery Channing seemed to be his best friend although Thoreau could not find true friendship and complicity in his ideas despite being his best companion in his walks through the woods. Their different notions of experience were probably the reason why Thoreau did not consider Channing a true partner with whom sharing thoughts. Porte (1967) in his work concludes that the reason why Thoreau could not established a good friendship with Channing was that they had different habits and customs when dealing with nature besides their perception of experience as something essential for the former but not for the latter. The author also quotes Thoreau's *Walden* to explain his position: "*Channing is one who will not stoop to raise...He wants something for which he will not pay the going price*" (Porte, 1967: 108).

The rupture with Channing can be considered as the first act of rejection toward a friend or just an obvious antecedent of a rude writer whose character lead to the posterior rupture with Emerson, showing the cruelest side of the author whose loneliness was by the way essential for a good contemplation of nature.

In the last chapter of *Walden* we can find a quote that is with all probability addressed to his friend Emerson: "I sat at a table where were rich food and wine in abundance, and obsequious attendance, but sincerity and truth were not; and I went away hungry from the inhospitable board" (Baym, 2003:1980). This probably makes reference to the period when Thoreau stayed at Emerson's house being in charge of the household chores and some other

duties. He shows his disconformities with Emerson's way of life and habits that according to this statement are not others than appearances in means of richness and social compromises.

Therefore, it seems that Thoreau did not find in Emerson his friend in the spiritual and symbolic meanings, maybe because of their different perceptions of nature as the most essential means whereby the senses can contemplate and understand the world. Thoreau surprisingly attacked Emerson in a paragraph collected from his Journal by Harding:

Ah, I yearn toward thee, my friend, but I have not confidence in thee. We do not believe in the same God...Why are we related, yet thus unsatisfactorily? We almost are a sore to one another,. Ah, I am afraid because thy relations are not my relations. Because I have experienced that in some respects we are strange to one another, strange as some wild creature. Ever and anon there will come the consciousness to mar our love that, change the theme but a hair's breadth, and we are tragically strange to one another...when I consider what my friend's relations and acquaintances are, what his tastes and habits, then the difference between us gets named. I see that all these friend's self. In the first place, my friend is prouder than I am, - and I am very proud, perchance. (Harding, 1967: 96)

Thoreau writes in a dramatic way the sorrow that was being for his life to feel that Emerson and he were so different arguing the different belief in a God that probably, despite being a complicated matter in this writer, was the nature itself that surrounded them in the outskirts of Concord or even the contemplation of it through the senses. He regrets not being similar neither in thoughts nor in spirit, although the more likely reason for this writing is their philosophical differences which also lead them to be classified in different groups of writers within the current of Transcendentalism. In this excerpt Thoreau shows his sensitive character toward Emerson which differs a lot from the other critic writings against him and the rebellion essays addressed to the government in which it seems that he does not show pity for others except for John Brown.

In 1850 Emerson and Thoreau stopped seeing to each other and it meant the end of this rich literary encounter and that never would be reestablished again in the later years. For

Emerson, Thoreau was just an intimate friend in his life whose ideas were similar in theory but different in practice besides another brilliant young writer who disappointed him in terms of literature. Perhaps, Thoreau was more affected because of this rupture although he always remained apathetic toward the loss of Emerson's friendship for the rest of his life until his death.

## 1.5 Influence in historical figures

The figure of such a great revolutionary was not disregarded by the following historical characters that were part of the American history. His pacifist resistance to the unfair laws imposed by corrupted governments was taken by the next generation of revolutionaries that tried to change not only the unfair laws but the mentality of a nation that needed to keep growing their desire to be free and equal.

Thoreau encourages the readers to be real men through inspirational quotes such as the found in *Civil Disobedience*: "Oh for a man who is a man, and, as my neighbour says, has a bone in his back which you cannot pass your hand through!" (Baym, 2003: 1976).

He constantly tried to tease the audience with words of rebellion and fight against themselves in order to become better men, something that did not go unnoticed for figures such as Leo Tolstoy, Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr.

The most important in the history of North America was the creator of the phrase : "*I have a dream*" Martin Luther King Jr. an activist, humanitarian and leader of the Movement for the African-American Civil Rights. Powers (1995) stresses the importance of these two figures in the tradition of protest and how *Civil Disobedience* change the way people claimed for rights. The main idea that Luther King Jr. adopted was the non-violent resistance and the fight for the freedom of blacks through the powerful abolitionist writings against the laws imposed by a corrupt government and the segregation.

## 2. Transcendental Rebellion in Thoreau's works

### 2.1 STATE

#### 2.1.1 Rebellion against the State

When we consider Thoreau as a rebel against the state in the period from 1840 to 1860, we are making reference to his problems with justice, slavery, press or taxes payment and it is remarkable the manner he complains pacifically through his writings encouraging people to do the same in order to become exemplary citizens:

I think 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 (Baym, 2003: 1793).

Since the beginning Thoreau considered the only obligation his own moral beliefs and rejected openly the respect for corrupted laws as it happened in this period in America when the slaves were strongly pursued. He also expressed a pacifist rebellion against the State and all its institutions as well as against its members since his first work *Civil Disobedience* (1849) in which using a brief introduction he summarizes the topic of the essay: "I heartily accept the motto, - That the government is best which governs least and I should like to see it acted up to more rapidly and systematically" (Baym, 2003:1792).

This way Thoreau attacked directly the government without any reason or justification which encourages the readers to go through the whole text. Furthermore, he expressed his desire to see how this rebellion and non-government system is performed as long as it may be possible. This phrase might be considered as the introduction to a complex critical essay where he is going to charge against the state or whoever without fair purposes.



This rebellion experienced three different phases that gradually become more radical as we go from one to the other while reading their works which are created as a protest against the State, the Church and the Press. These essays are *Civil Disobedience* (1849), *Slavery in Massachusetts* (1854) and *A Plea for Captain John Brown* (1859), all of them written in order to express disagreement and fury against the laws that were approved in the United States.

He did in *Civil Disobedience* a first approach to the way he wanted to act regarding the government, wondering how should protest giving himself the answer that the only solution is not to associate us with the government nor being his accomplice. Thoreau asserts that he does not recognize American government as his because it is also the slave's government. This can be considered as the first statement in favor of a sublimation in opposition to the Higher institution; the State. His writing is quite clear and do not hesitate to express his discomfort with a government that supports the slavery.

With regard to his first acts of rebellion we find his large tax resistance chronology which goes from 1839; when his name is added to the Concord tax rolls, to 1840; when it was added his name in a list in order to pay church taxes to 1842 his first action refusing to pay taxes, finishing these acts in his imprisonment in 1846 by Sam Staples on July 24<sup>th</sup> (Cain, 2000).

Regarding the refusal to pay taxes Thoreau does not hide his reasons and argues why he refused to pay and the consequences:

A minority is powerless while it conforms to the majority; it is not even a minority then; but it is irresistible when it clogs by its whole weight. If the alternative is to keep all just men in prison, or give up war and slavery, the State will not hesitate which to choose. 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. This is, in fact, the definition of a peaceable revolution, if any such is possible (Baym, 2003: 1799-1800).

This is the first time that Thoreau mentions the idea of a pacifist revolution regardless of being imprisoned as long as they fight against the war, making reference to the conflict with Mexico and slavery which was in that time a problem for all the communities of Afro-

American living in the Southern States. He finally mentions that the refusal to pay taxes would avoid the shed of blood and the power of the State over the men who should carry out a revolution as long as it is possible since he did not trust in his neighbors because of his lack of moral and principles. But this is not the only writing for a revolution because he explains in the same work in what moment men should rebel against the State:

All men recognize the right of revolution, that is the right to refuse allegiance to and to resist the government, when its tyranny or its inefficiency are great and endurable [...] 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 (Baym,2003: 1794).

In this case Thoreau attempts to give a brief definition of revolution or when it must be performed in order to fight against not only the government but the corruption and the army if they are acting like conquerors. This can be a reference again to the war with Mexico that was the reason why Thoreau refused to pay taxes because he considered this war unnecessary and unfair which caused his imprisonment and posterior release.

Thoreau commented with irony and indignation how was this imprisonment and what he felt upon the government that carried it out:

I have paid no poll-tax for six years. 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 dorr 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. (Baym,2003:1801)

It can be noticed that Thoreau does not show regret or fear in the event that took place in July, 1846, and it seems that nobody had refused to pay this tax to Massachusetts before since the colonial period so he can be considered the precursor of resistance to pay unfair taxes in the United States of America.

Another important event in the life of Thoreau as a rebel against the state took place in May 1859, Thoreau met Captain John Brown who visited Ralph Waldo Emerson in order to talk

about politics and other issues, probably Thoreau could talk to Brown and thus they started to be acquaintances with a link related to abolitionist ideas and individual principles. Afterwards, Brown ran away across the North of America fighting against the slavery and freeing slaves from their owners. Thoreau considered Brown as a hero and almost a mystic figure within the greatest of all times but maybe he did not know about Brown's action in Kansas in May 1836, where five people were killed because of the riots due to the Kansas-Nebraska Act. Since then, Thoreau wrote on his Diary about the figure of the Captain John Brown, complaining on the treat he received before his dead (Coy, 2005). Little did Thoreau know about the acts of this bandit but in spite of that he wrote an essay in defense of him titled *A Plea for Captain John Brown* which is probably the most radical essay written by Thoreau on the resistance against the State, perhaps we can conclude that the bandit Brown was the rebel influence on Thoreau while Joe Polis and Walter White were the pacifist one.

Thoreau was in awe with Brown whom he considered "A man of rare common sense and directness of speech, as of action; a transcendentalist above all, a man of ideas and principles, - that was distinguished him" (Whiterell, 2001: 399).

But he felt a strong connection not with Brown himself but his principles and ideals that he will take as a reference when criticizing the press and the Republican Party. Regarding the press, he rejected the false news related to the actions of Captain Brown and says: "Prominent and influential editors, accustomed to deal with politicians, men of an infinitely lower grade, say, in their ignorance, that he acted" on the principle of revenge". They do not know the man" (Whiterell, 2001:406).

Some other statements from Thoreau indicates the defense of Captain John Brown as a worthy man to be hung because of his boldness, someone who is a hero unwilling to agree with tyrants and whose philanthropy is better than the one which neither shoots nor liberates him (Coy, 2005). This entire defense on behalf of Brown is a clear declaration of rebellion against the government and his structure although Thoreau never wanted to change nothing and said he is a busy man whose duty is not to govern rather than live.

## 2.1.2 Rebellion against the Press and The Republican Party

The press from 1840 to 1860 was usually under the control of the government and that was something that Thoreau always bears in mind when reading articles and magazines. In his writing *Slavery In Massachusetts* he mentioned and suggested an attack to the press because of the treatment that this gives to the problem of the slavery in Massachusetts:

Among measures to be adopted I would suggest to make an earnest and vigorous an assault on the Press as has already been made, and with effect, on the Church. The Church has much improved within a few years; but the Press is almost, without exception, corrupt. I believe that, in this country the press exerts a greater and a more pernicious influence than the Church did in its worst period. We are not a religious people, but we are a nation of politicians. We do not care for the Bible! [...] The newspaper is a Bible which we read every morning and every afternoon, standing and sitting, riding and walking (Baym, 2003:1987).

Thoreau compares the newspaper to a Bible that everybody reads in these cities and towns which is pretty dangerous for the population because of the influence of it in the critical thinking of men. He therefore declares an attack to the press because of his lack of moral and corruption hence it is obvious his position against these institutions after working for a magazine that dealt with other issues than propaganda for corrupts politicians. He continues his critic in the same paragraph but this time against the editors and members of the local newspaper with the exception of *El Liberator* and *Commonwealth* which were apparently against the *Fugitive Slave Law*. Thoreau explains again his disagreement with newspapers in the same essay because of his position in favor of slavery:

The Liberator and The commonwealth were the only papers in Boston as far as know, which made themselves heard in condemnation of the cowardice and meanness of the authorities of that city [...] The other journals, almost without exception, by their manner of referring to and speaking of the Fugitive Law, and the carrying back of the slave Simms,, insulted the common sense of the country at least (Baym, 2003: 1988)

However, Thoreau in this case proposes a solution that is again the resistance to do something although in this case is not a radical measure but it is still an act of rebellion against the habits of the citizens. He proposes not to buy the journals in order to avoid the reading of pro-slavery articles and participate in the enrichment of them. His solution can be found later in the same work:

But, thank fortune, this preacher can be even more easily reached by the weapons of the reformer than could the recreant priest. The free men of New England have only to refrain from purchasing and reading these sheets, have only to withhold their cents, to kill a score of them at once (Baym, 2003: 1988).

And again charges Thoreau against the press in the writing *A Plea For Captain John Brown* where he criticized the way the newspapers treated this figure in order to disgrace him. In this essay his defense to Brown is an allegory to the resistance against the government and absolute disagreement and confrontation with the press. His first reference to the press is because of the critics that Brown received without taking into account according to Thoreau his bold personality when fighting against slaves' owners:

The newspapers seem to ignore , or perhaps are really ignorant of the fact, that there are at least as many as two or three individuals to a town throughout the North, who think much as the present speaker does about him and his enterprise [...] Why do they still dodge the truth? They are so anxious because of a dim consciousness of the fact, which they do not distinctly face , that at least a million of the inhabitants in the United States would have rejoiced if it had succeeded (Baym, 2003: 401).

But even Thoreau considered dangerous and precipitate the attack of the Captain (sharing the Republican Party's opinion) although he did not admit that the attack was in name of the revenge as the press published instead of the freedom of the slaves in the North that were in the clutches of corrupted owners. He is constantly complaining about the lies and false statements published in the press about John Brown and his assaults. Thoreau

understands that Brown is the representative of the North fighting in favor of the slaves while Robert J. Walker, governor of Texas, is the villain of the South.

Although Thoreau never wrote about his political thoughts in favor of any party he sharply criticized the Republican Party which in theory was an abolitionist supporter of the freedom and the equal rights for African- American but again the event involving Captain Brown and the critics he received from the politics caused the rebellion of Thoreau against the only representative of the slaves in politics. These critics can be found again in his essay *A Plea For Captain John Brown*, which gathers all critics toward the Republicans that according to Coy (2005) emerged as a response to the Kansas Nebraska-Act and declared themselves as an abolitionist party and was intended to be against the Southern mentality.

Thoreau then charges against this party in defense of Brown:

The Republican party does not perceive how many his failure will make to vote more correctly than they would have them. They have counted the votes of Pennsylvania & Co., but they have not correctly counted Captain Brown's vote. He has taken the wind out of their sails, the little wind they had, and they may as well lie to repair (Whiterell, 2001: 406).

Finally in a last attempt to elevate the figure of Brown above all institutions Thoreau wrote once again with ironic tone disregarding the Press and the Republican Party whom he considers that do not deserve Brown's respect:

When a man stands up serenely against the condemnation and vengeance of mankind, rising above them literally by a whole body, -even though he were of late the vilest murderer, who has settled that matter wit himself. -the spectacle is sublime one. - didn't ye know it, ye Liberatos, ye Tribunes, ye Republicans?- and we become criminal in comparison. Do yourselves the honor to recognize him. He needs none of your respect (Whiterell, 2001: 407).

Therefore, Thoreau emerged through the defense of Brown's act as another rebel at the same level than the bandit was and declared openly his disagreement with almost all newspapers and the only Party which could be most likely Thoreau's political inclination.

## 2.2 Religion

### 2.2.1 Thoreau's beliefs

The complex issue of religion in Thoreau's works has been analyzed from many different points of view without a clear conclusion on his possible beliefs and rejections. It is clear his censure to the Church throughout his works without letting utterly manifest the position upon the religion in general. Bron Taylor (2005) in *Encyclopedia of Nature and Religion* defines Thoreau's orientation as a post-Christian and transcendentalist religion caused by the European and New England protestant heritage, pointing out that his beliefs were neither Christian nor secular at all, and considering Thoreau's concept of nature as something else than a God's creation which differed a lot from Christian traditional convictions. Indeed, he explains his view of nature as something full of beauty rather than only God, and whose tool to reach this beauty are the perceptions, ideas that were later sharply criticized in puritan writers' circles but that however are strongly linked to Emerson's beliefs. Thoreau despite of being known as a misanthropic persona, who disregarded all kinds of practices and social circles including the local church, intended to write for a wide group of readers, no matter if they are religious, non-religious, scientist or intellectual audiences. His influences in this field were Ralph Waldo Emerson, Frederic Hedge, Walt Whitman, Joe Polis, George Ripley and other New England Transcendentalists whose religion was the contemplation and awe of nature and whose principles were intended to cultivate the self and in particular the reason and imagination of the mind. Another important factor stressed were the newly acquired books from the India about religions like Hinduism and Buddhism which had especial influence in the author besides the usage of them as a support for his transcendental theories. Some principles of life he followed included simple life, vegetarian diet, and abstinence of alcohol, coffee and tea, besides frequent excursions into the wild and contemplation of the self. In spite of his own beliefs on religion, Thoreau embraced Christian and Protestant interpretations of nature as a huge book which must be read as something where all kind of people can find lessons for

an true life while he also rejected traditional Christian classification of things in groups and maintained a special stance toward nature, finding lessons for humanity in daily wildlife.

Otherwise, Heuermann (1990) explains that Thoreau's criticism was based on the belief that there is a reality behind human perception, and God can therefore be found on it, thus our duty is to seek this reality, something frequently found in transcendental essays. Heuermann also argues that Thoreau as other Transcendentalists shows rebellion when they consider evil as something that can be found in enlightenment which influenced ancient authors and declared human consciousness as the only reality and measurement of the true nature in things.

Ironically it is easy to notice that Thoreau is a complex, unpredictable and sometimes a bipolar writer in terms of religion because of his critics toward the Church on the one hand and his praises to Christ and the quotes from the Bible on the other. One example of this is his comparison of Brown with Christ, and taking into account that Brown was a hero or at least his thoughts and values for Thoreau it is possible then that Christ was a figure who Thoreau idolized:

I am here to plead his cause with you. I plead not for his life, but for his character-his immortal lif; and so it becomes your cause wholly, and it is not his in the least. Some eighteen hundred years ago Christ was crucified; this morning, perchance, Captain Brown was hung. These are the two ends of a chain which is not without its links. He is not Old Brown any longer; he is and Angel of Light (Whiterell, 2001: 416).

In other writings he uses Christ's quotes as examples to express his ideas of humility and honesty which again open the debate on his catholic belief:

The best thing a man can do for his culture when he is rich is to endeavour to carry out those schemes which he entertained when he was poor. Christ answered the Herodians according to their condition. "Show me the tribute-money" (Baym, 2003:1800)



In spite of these words of praise toward both Christ and Brown, it is not clear whether Thoreau is a follower of the Christian Church or not since he mentions this figure a lot of times but he also disregards him when he compares Christ and Nature: “A snow storm was more to him than Christ” (Taylor, 2005: 1635) Therefore, Thoreau could not be a rebel against Christ but he is against the local Churches of his area in Concord and Massachusetts.

## 2.2.2 Pacifist Rebellion and Critics

Regarding acts of rebellion against the Church and its members, Cain (2000) gathers first information on Thoreau’s acts in opposition to the Church, even though Thoreau never declared himself an atheist, in 1840 he refused to pay church taxes despite the possibility to be arrested, after this incident he requested to remove his name from the church tax rolls and afterwards his request was granted. All this may be considered as a pacific resistance considering the system a wrong structure which makes pay to schoolmasters and workers but not the priest. Thoreau explains his incident with the church in *Civil Disobedience*:

Some years ago, the State met me in behalf of the Church, and commanded me to pay a certain sum toward the support of a clergyman whose preaching my father attended, but never I myself. "Pay," it said, "or be locked up in the jail." I declined to pay. But, unfortunately, another man saw fit to pay it. I did not see why the schoolmaster should be taxed to support the priest, and not the priest the schoolmaster: for I was not the State's schoolmaster, but I supported myself by voluntary subscription (Whiterell, 2003:215-216)

To Thoreau paying taxes to the church did not make sense because these should be paid to schoolmasters and not to the priests. Afterwards, he refused to belong to any Church and therefore to be involved in paying any kind of taxes to the Parish Church writing the following: “Know all men by these presents that I, Henry Thoreau, do not wish to be regarded as a member of any incorporated society which I have not joined” (Baym, 2003: 1118). Thoreau declared his pacifist struggle against the State writing about the visit to important places after Roger Williams, puritan author of *The Church and the State* (1635)

in his diaries and whose idea was the division of State and Church. Again he takes a marginal figure and revolutionist as example and worships his acts, as happens with Brown. This tendency to stand up for figures whose attitude is critical toward the Church differs a lot from the one that Emerson had in terms of rebel acts.

It is easy to find critics to the Church in *Slavery in Massachusetts*, an essay mainly addressed to the government. Thoreau attacks both the press and the Bible. And he wants to express how harmful and pernicious it is for the American society. Later in a paragraph from this essay explains how we all worship the wrong figures such as the school, the state and again the Church: "Thus we steadily worship Mammon, both School, and State, and Church, and the Seventh Day curse God with a tintamar from one end of the Union to the other" (Whiterell, 2001: 343).

Coy (2005) stresses this excerpt from *Slavery in Massachusetts* as a hard critic to the religion in one of his footnotes, explaining that Thoreau usually attacks this institution when it is manipulated by others in order to obtain benefits, something very reasonable since Thoreau is constantly quoting the Bible and specifically the Gospel in some of his essays especially in *Walden* hence his supposed complete knowledge of the Bible.

### 2.2.3 Influence of Oriental religions and literature

It is well known that Thoreau did never show disregard for Oriental religions, in the chapter *Conclusion* of *Walden* he tells a story that might be invented and which enclosed the influence of this literatures in his writings:

There was an artist in the city of Kouroo who was disposed to strive after perfection. One day it came into his mind to make a staff. Having considered that in an imperfect work time is an ingredient, but into a perfect work time does not enter, he said to himself, It shall be perfect in all respects, though I should do nothing else in my life. He proceeded instantly to the forest for wood, being resolved that it should not be made of unsuitable material; and as he searched for and rejected stick after stick, his friends gradually deserted him, for they grew old in their works and died, but he grew not older by a

moment. His singleness of purpose and resolution, and his elevated piety, endowed him, without his knowledge, with perennial youth. [...]. Before he had given it the proper shape the dynasty of the Candahars was at an end, and with the point of the stick he wrote the name of the last of that race in the sand, and then resumed his work. By the time he had smoothed and polished the staff Kalpa was no longer the pole-star; and ere he had put on the ferule and the head adorned with precious stones, Brahma had awoke and slumbered many times. But why do I stay to mention these things? When the finishing stroke was put to his work, it suddenly expanded before the eyes of the astonished artist into the fairest of all the creations of Brahma. He had made a new system in making a staff, a world with full and fair proportions; in which, though the old cities and dynasties had passed away, fairer and more glorious ones had taken their places. And now he saw by the heap of shavings still fresh at his feet, that, for him and his work, the former lapse of time had been an illusion, and that no more time had elapsed than is required for a single scintillation from the brain of Brahma to fall on and inflame the tinder of a mortal brain. The material was pure, and his art was pure; how could the result be other than wonderful? (Baym, 2005:1979).

This story is probably linked to the gift that someone gave to Thoreau; a vast collection of Oriental books. In *Life without Principle* (1863) he quotes Confucius's Analects writing: "I should much rather be the last man, - though, as the Orientals say, "Greatness doth not approach him who is forever looking down; and all those who are looking high are growing poor" (Whiterell, 2001:352-353) and Coy (2005) points out in a footnote that it is well known the tendency of Thoreau to read Oriental literature and that Chinese and Hindu cultures strongly impressed him.

Moreover, Taylor (2005) explains briefly how nature substituted God in Thoreau's mind different from the belief of Christian that this space was reserved for God exclusively and the influence of Eastern philosophical and religious books that dealt with worldly things found in the physical world such as rivers, mountains and trees. This way Thoreau embraced the Vedas, the maxims of Buddha and the Confucius's analects and used this reading to support and complete the Transcendentalist affirmations.

## **2.3 SLAVERY**

### 2.3.1 Massachusetts

The resistance against the State carried out by Thoreau can be found through three of his writings increasing gradually the idea of a rebellion in two aspects: the pacifist and the violent, if necessary. Thoreau was invited to give a speech in 4<sup>th</sup> July, 1854 in Framingham and he then gave his famous speech: *Slavery in Massachusetts*, which is maybe the second essay on the resistance against the State, especially the Southern States, and his laws. It is about his disappointment with Concord's neighbors and inhabitants because he expected to discuss slavery in a meeting and the humiliating situation of the slaves in Massachusetts instead of the possible settlement in Nebraska, then he writes: "There is not one slave in Nebraska; there are perhaps a million slaves in Massachusetts" (Whiterell, 2001: 333).

The reasons why he wrote this essay are his anger and disagreement with the recent laws approved by the members of the committee. The Union of the states depended on the conformity of the Southern States with the slavery policies which should allow them to apply the right to own as many slaves in their fields as they wanted in order to force them to work. By this time there were eleven abolitionist states and eleven pro-slavery and it should remain this way just to keep the country together despite the disagreement of important abolitionist among them Thoreau and Emerson. Later, in 1850 Mexico suffered the siege of the Union who wanted to annex new states and areas. One important figure in this time was Henry Clay, American lawyer and politician, who introduced The *Fugitive Slave Act* for which all Afro-American refugees had to be returned to the owners. Even Emerson share Thoreau's rebel spirit and made a complaint in his diaries describing this act as a dirty law created by people who do not know to write and read and declare that he will not obey it because the dirty nature of these laws (Porte, 1820). This attitude of rebellion is unusual in Emerson whose formal style of writing and behavior is often criticized by Thoreau although in this case they behave in the same way. The press, the church, the preachers, the judges, the Republican Party and politicians are hardly criticized due to his obedience to the tyrants who promote these laws, then Thoreau shows in this essay his free thinking and direct attack without feeling fear to any institution or member of

the government. Another important fact that caused the exasperation of Thoreau was *The Kansas-Nebraska Act* promulgated by Stephen Douglas in 1854 and whose aim was to satisfy the Northern aspirations of favorable laws without offense Northern States, in this act the population could vote in favor of the slavery or against it. Indeed it might be considered a fair act of democracy but Thoreau did not accept it as an act of freedom so far. This is an important point related to Thoreau's rebellion against all form of state since Northern states could also hypothetically vote in favor of the slavery and this is something that should be a good reason to declare ourselves anti-democratic citizens if necessary because it would mean to oppose slavery. Finally the event in 24<sup>th</sup> May, 1854 in which Anthony Burns was arrested in returned to his owners was the last straw for Thoreau (Coy, 2005).

Thoreau charges in his writing against Massachusetts because of protecting slave owners describing it as racist and unfair place, and concluding that the only place for a good and fair man in this country is the jail, something that he experienced himself when was imprisoned as happened with Brown:

Under a government which imprisons any unjustly, the true place for a just man is also a prison. The proper place to-day, the only place which Massachusetts has provided for her freer and less desponding spirits, is in her prisons, to be put out and locked out of the State by her own act, as they have already put themselves out by their principles. It is there a fugitive slave, and the Mexican prisoner on parole, and the Indian come to plead the wrongs of his race, should find them; on that separate, but more free and honorable ground, where the State places those who are not with her but against her,-the only house in a slave State in which free can abide with honor (Baym, 2003:1799).

The idea of imprisonment is a matter of honor and fairness for Thoreau who never refused to be locked up in prison or at least the possibility of it. This becomes him not only in a rebel in contact with the prisons of the State but a fearless hero and mystic figure since nobody in his right mind wanted to be arrested even though this was fair and correct.

## 2.3.2 The Kansas Nebraska Act, The Slave Fugitive Law and Thoreau's protests

Thoreau explains in *Civil Disobedience* his concern about how to act against this government and uses this to answer that question with a rebel declaration against the American government saying that he will not recognize this political organization because they are also the government of the slaves:

How does it become a man to behave toward his American government to-day? I answer that he cannot without disgrace be associated with it. I cannot for an instant recognize that political organization as my government which is the slave's government also (Baym, 2003:1794).

He openly shows his disagreement with the *Fugitive Slave Act* writing: "Therefore... the Fugitive Slave Law must be repealed" (Whiterell, 2001:333).

This statement is directly addressed to all his readers and neighbors of Concord, he uses neither insinuations nor indirect statements, showing his position regarding the conditions of the slaves in Massachusetts and the necessity to abolish this law charging against Edward G. Loring, delegate of the Federal Government in Massachusetts, who approved it and was the target of Thoreau's anger who had reprimanded Loring previously because of the tragedy of Sims in April, 1851 when another slave died and he did not show any kind of preoccupation or responsibility, then he does not consider Loring as his governor. This part not only shows an untamed Thoreau who rebels against the governor if not the one who feels free and unchained for telling his thoughts as long as these are fair under the shade of justice.

Afterwards, he also criticizes to the military force, at the service of Mr. Shuttle, to whom he blames to be trained just to rob to Mexico and return slaves to their owners what besides of being a critic is an act of rebellion against the army of the United States besides the war with Mexico and the cooperation of the army with the owners in order to return them the fugitives because of the Fugitive Slave Law:

The whole military force of the State is at the service of Mr. Suttle, a slaveholder from Virginia, to enable him to catch a man whom he calls his property; but not a soldieries offered to save a citizen of Massachusetts from being kidnapped! Is this what all these soldiers, all this training has been for these seventy-nine years past? Have they been trained merely to rob Mexico, and carry back fugitives slaves to their Masters? (Baym, 2003:1985).

Thoreau considers then useless an army whose aim is not to protect and serve the citizen and the human whatever the color of the skin. After that he addresses his critics against the countrymen and Massachusetts because of allowing Loring to take this decision and insists on the need for a rebellion, explaining that rejecting and stepping on this law, the citizens are acting with freedom destroying the law and his promoter A. Webster. He again charges against the courts, the press and the church, feeling sorry for the population who has to obey the laws established by judges letting to the courts the responsibility to decide whether three million humans are free or not and he does not conceive why they only act according to the Constitution, the highest and legitimate authority. He disregards judges considering them as mere instruments of the government who do not know what his true responsibility is and claims for men from the little towns as the true law makers because people from cities do not tend to think enough in order to achieve fair decisions. In this case Boxboro is the example of a town hosting fair countrymen since there all troubles are dealt through farmers meetings and democratic actions. In fact Thoreau (1854) considers these special town meetings as “the True Congress and the most respectable one that is ever assembled in the United States” (Whiterell, 2001:339).

So, this leads us to ask ourselves: Is Thoreau disregarding the population coming from the cities? The answer is yes and the reason is because of their rejection to these laws. This quote is a clear statement in favor of farms and humble locals with whom he probably feels identified because of his origins and his penchant for the rural work and labors. A new act of rebellion against the society that grew up in the big cities far away from Concord and that Thoreau rejected as seen in his shift to the cabin on the Walden Pond where he expresses his desire to earn a living with his hands and commented briefly his return to what he calls “civilized life”:

When I wrote the following pages, or rather the bulk of them, I lived alone, in the woods, a mile from any neighbor, in a house which I had built myself, on the shore of Walden Pond, in Concord, Massachusetts, and earned my living by the labor of my hands only. I lived there two years and two months. At present I am a sojourner in civilized life again (Baym, 2005: 1807-1808).

## CONCLUSIONS

After a thorough analysis of the writings of Thoreau and what other authors have written on this topic we can therefore conclude that the matter of Thoreau is not as simple as it seems because of his premature classification within the group of Transcendentalist that occupied the writings of North American during a long period from 1820 to 1860. The distinction between Thoreau and other authors is so huge that it would be necessary a further study in order to open a path toward the proper classification of this according to his ideas and values.

Regarding the possible aspects that lead Thoreau to be an individualist out of the conventional and a man without close friends it is possible to stress that the rupture with Emerson was the most significant fact in his life as a writer. The differences between their ideas was gradually increasing while Thoreau became a most aggressive and critical writer unlike Emerson who considered this friendship another experience in his older years. Perhaps, the evolution of the ideas that Thoreau carried out was too radical for the other writers and difficult to understand because of his complexity and lack of explanation of Thoreau. Therefore, the incompatibility with Emerson and the subsequent isolation were probably the causes for his first rebellion against the writers with whom one day shared opinions.

Maybe the figure of Brown was the substitute for the empty space that Emerson left in his life and from this figure took the courage to charge in his writings against the government without feeling fear for the reprimands. His complaints against the way the government acts regarding the slavery and the treatment to honest men are very well addressed to the readers that will probably feel the angry of Thoreau when holding the quill and prepared to protest. This pacifist protest against the State evolved through his writings becoming more radical at the point of his defense of John Brown. Thoreau never hide his desire to not belong to



the State although he declares that his duty is not to perform changes rather than protest and claim for them.

It is very difficult to classify Thoreau within a religion but it would be correct to identify him according to his tendency to be post-Christian and maybe a bit of traditional Catholic and a bit of Transcendentalist as well. However, he charges against the Unitarian Church in many times because of the passivity of regarding the slavery. In this aspect Thoreau respects also oriental religions and custom which makes him in a rebel against his neighbour's religion.

Regarding the slavery it is quite clear his position concerning this matter, he deeply hates the slaves' owners and those who protect their laws and he is also careless about the institutions or figures that support slavery. He shows his rebellion against the government but also against other institutions such as the Church, the Republican Party which was initially declared abolitionist and the military army of the United States. His worship to Brown and his acts is the proof a writer that want to follow the path of rebellion instead of the compliance with the government and their measures such as the taxes payment. So, his acts of rebellion were not only his writings but his refusal to pay and his desire to remove his name from the poll-tax list what makes him a practical rebel.

Therefore, we can conclude that Thoreau is still a Transcendentalist but in a renewed way that allows me to say that he belongs to a new current of writers who would declare themselves rebels against the established rules of the time. This new current would break with the traditional Transcendentalist ideas despite keeping a bit of them what means essentially to break with the Emersonian thoughts and trends as Thoreau did. The protest in a pacific way could approach Thoreau to a different kind of rebel that differs from Brown, whose acts claimed the life of innocents and other citizens. So, to conclude it is possible to affirm that the new rebel transcendentalism was borned in the pond of Concord and has on its top to one of the greatest American writers the individual and Rebel *par excellence* Henry David Thoreau, the first Rebel Transcendentalist .

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