

# Introduction

To understand today's capitalistic and individualistic society, it is important to know, the works and lives of B. Franklin and R.W Emerson. In the world's history, especially in that of literature, few writers have marked their time with regard to the intellectual and philosophical creation than Franklin and Emerson. Together, they marked the basic intellectual life of the United States of America: they are at the center of the American socio-political life, since American capitalism was initiated from the development of their ideas. In addition, their Influences do not stop in the United States of America, but they run through Europe and the western world in general, through the endless number of philosophers and writers they have influenced and inspired.

Benjamin Franklin was the first example of the American Dream: through his success, out of the poor and modest root of which he came from. He proves to the young Americans that through hard working and by remaining faithful to the principles of honesty and sincerity one can succeed. In addition, he is the first great scientist and inventor in the history of America. He is the first to show to Europe and the world that an American can do many things. The context is that of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, few years after American independence, and few years before the war of secession. He is really among the founding fathers the most prominent, in the construction of the young nation. The latter needs figures, especially inspirational ones that can give confidence to the future nation who will make it great and powerful. So, the first personage of this work is this highly wonderful man, Franklin, a man that symbolizes today's America in its creativity and inventiveness.

Benjamin Franklin was born by a day of January 17, 1706, of a father Josiah and a mother Abiah Folger, and surround by eleven siblings. Franklin came from a modest family: his father was a soap maker, who sold candle to supports his great family. Josiah had religious ambition for his son: he saw him doing a religious profession, and it was with this ambition that he sent the young Franklin to grammar school. He was eight. A little bit later, the father changed his mind and moved his son to George Brownwell English School between the academic years 1715 and 1716. Benjamin was 10 when he left school to assist his father in his soap's business. Two years latter Benjamin entered in his brother's printing business. There he got the opportunity to complete his education. While in his brother's business he gave himself time to read many books on literature, philosophy, and then summarized them in his own words. That was how Franklin's passion for writing started and soon he published his first satirical essays named *Silence Do good* at 16, in 1722, in his brother's newspaper.

The following year, he left his brother, after a dispute and then moved from Boston to New York, before landing in Pennsylvania, which he would call home. There on 1728, he created a printing house with his friend, Hugh Meredith. Few years later, Meredith left the business. With determination and hard working Franklin reached success with this printing house, by re-publishing many works such as books of Plato, Cicero, and Samuel Richardson. In 1729, he created a newspaper, named *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, which became famous in the colonies. This newspaper gave to Franklin the means for his later political ambition. At 41 he retired from the printing house business, after having enough money for his life, and then devoted his time for science. In science he made many inventions as the stove, the lightening rod, harmonica etc. Few years later he entered politics where he achieved many major successes. He

became, for instance, representative of Pennsylvania in the second Continental Congress, in 1775. He died on April 17, 1790 in Pennsylvania.

The second figure of this work is Ralph Waldo Emerson. He is highly important as Franklin in the building of the new nation. For he is really the architect of the American values, which he theorized with his philosophy of self reliance and non conformism. It is important to notice that at his time, just as today, these concepts have all their importance, regarding that the young nation freshly gains its independence after a long and painful independence war. The young nation was then trying to get its self-confidence after the breaking of the link with the British colonizer.

As the new nation needs to make its independence effective, intellectually and politically, his concept of self-reliance becomes important. That philosophy can be summed up as follows: we, Americans, need to emancipate ourselves from UK and Europe in all the socio-political, scientific and literary fields. We Americans, need to rely on our own strengths. Of course he does not say it in these ways in his work, but that can clearly be understood after reading it.

Ralph Waldo Emerson was born in Concord in 1803, from a father of a Unitarian pastor. Emerson had four brothers. He studied in Boston Public Latin School and received a degree from Harvard College in 1821. He attended also Harvard Divinity College where he received a MA. In 1829 Ralph Waldo Emerson married Ellen Tucker, who died few years later of tuberculosis. The death of his wife and his resignation of the position of pastor influence greatly the life of Emerson, since these events touched him emotionally. It was then that he made a long journey in Europe, from France, to Italy and England where he met many writers.

It is important to notice that his philosophical and intense intellectual life began with this crisis and travel. Once back in the US in 1834, he began a long career of lecturer, and married Lydia Johnson in 1802 with whom he would get five children. In 1834 he started his militant life with the defense of the Indian Cherokee who had been removed from their lands. He continued the same humanitarian engagement with his struggle against slavery in the US. Emerson, in the history of the US, is considered as one of the greatest philosophers and writers, if he is not the greatest of all. He is the leader of the transcendentalist movement, a philosophical and spiritual movement that changed forever the face of the American society.

Emerson brought to the US philosophical and intellectual ideas that were the origin of the power and the greatness of the US today. A nation where every single citizen believes strongly that with hard working one can achieve his Dream, one can reach success, no matter how poor one is. Truly, he made of the US today, a nation where every single citizen and individual is strong. Consequently, the union of strong persons made the nation more powerful and strong ever. The core of his philosophical thought is that if every member of society believes in their capacity to change and give meaning to their life, through work and sacrifice, they would be more and more powerful economically and politically. Emerson died in Concord in 1892.

“The Faces of the American Dream in Franklin’s *Autobiography* and Emerson’s *Essay ‘Self Reliance’* ” is about these two thinkers’ contribution to the American Dream. The concept of American Dream is not fixed. It changes with each generation of American along with the core concepts as defined by Franklin and Emerson. So to understand this Dream one needs to understand their works.

But, they did not have the same conception of this Dream. Franklin was conservative and conformist. Emerson was the champion of self-reliance and non conformism which is in many aspects a liberal thought. So in this work I will compare and contrast the two conceptions of the American Dream according to Franklin's and Emerson's vision of the society.

The work is divided in two chapters. Chapter one studies the theme of American Dream as relevant to Franklin's *Autobiography* and Emerson's *Essay 'Self Reliance'*. Chapter two contrasts the Faces of the American Dream in Franklin's *Autobiography* to Emerson's *Essay 'Self Reliance'*. It will appear clearly in this part that Franklin's conception of the American Dream is more materially oriented while Emerson has a spiritual conception of this Dream. Moreover, as the initiator of the self-reliance philosophy, Emerson has an individualistic approach to the way society must be developed while Franklin backs a collective approach.

## Literature review

On the life of Benjamin Franklin lot have been said, some to praise and honor his genius others to criticize him. Nevertheless, Ralph Waldo Emerson is undoubtedly the one he has influenced the most, either in following his ideas, or in condemning them, especially in his anthological work, the *Essay*. In this literature review, we analyze literary works that talk about the two authors at the center of our work, and see how they relate to the theme of our thesis: The Faces of the American Dream in Franklin's *Autobiography* and Emerson's *Essay 'Self-Reliance'*.

Emerson is a philosopher and a writer who influences the American society, with his philosophy of self reliance and non conformity that comes out to be a critic of Franklin conformism in his *Autobiography*. And when compared to many writers and thinkers, Emerson philosophy is unique by its tenets, and its bright genius, for he drawn the principles of the individualistic society that is why David Cohen in his work "*All true in their fashion*" *Contrasting notion of religion in Emerson and Durkheim*, made a comparison and a contrast between Emerson and Durkheim conception of sociology. Emerson called the individual to the pure and wise soul that stands by itself. Nonetheless, Cohen by contrasting Emerson's Self-reliance and the philosophy of non conformity to Durkheim remarked that they have two radically different visions in its entirety. Whereas for Emerson change comes from the individual whom with the theory of self-reliance impulse change in it.

Steven Forde in *Benjamin Franklin's Autobiography and the Education of America*, portrayed Franklin under a new light by depicting him as a religious

libertine by citing many authors as Abigail Adam, John Adam In *Benjamin Franklin and the American Character*, and DH Lawrence. They accused Franklin of lacking real substance, and for being morally debased, materialistic, and calculating. Nonetheless, according to Lawrence in his book *Benjamin Franklin. In Critical Essays on Benjamin Franklin*, Franklin responds to the description of a self-reliant man as described by Emerson in his *Essay*. All along the way, Forde in his work showed Franklin as a social reformer, though his reformation is criticized by many as Alistair MacIntyre in *After Virtue: A study in Moral Theory*, who accused him of trying to resuscitate a moral, which is based on virtue, though he criticized Franklin's utilitarian mind and approach. Moreover, Forde in his work also depicted Franklin, as value provider to America through his percepts of virtues that he used to be wealthy.

Nevertheless, those authors did not make the direct link between Franklin tendency to bring change, and influence his society to Emerson's self-reliance and non-conformity philosophy. Thus it is obvious that bringing change according to one's conception and vision is self-reliance and being non conformist are different. For instance, Ford noticed an anecdote in Franklin's *Autobiography* that shows his will and desire to work on his society in the moral sense of the term. He said, that Franklin responded to the invitation, of his first employer while in Philadelphia, Samuel Keimer, a man of unconventional (not to say ludicrous) belief, who asked Franklin to help him create a religious sect. Franklin argued that he accepted entering Keimer's sect on the condition of making vegetarianism as its tenet. Therefore, it is important to mention that Franklin, endless reference on moral virtues, comes from the fact that as Dawson Hugh J. stated it in his *Franklin's Memoirs in 1787: The Design of the Autobiography*, that Franklin while writing his work did it as a memoire to his

son. That is why, he insisted on moral and virtue by having in mind the idea of advising his son.

Moreover, it is important to notice that Franklin's insistence and obsession on virtue has everything to do also with his desire to be successful in life as Marx Weber said it in his memorable work *The Protestant ethic*. In this book Weber showed that Franklin through virtues had the tool which allowed him to fulfill his American Dream. For instance Weber supported that the value of honesty of Franklin's virtue, allowed him to be credible in business because paying on time his debt pushed the others to trust and lend him more money, things that were good for his business. Hence in real life, Franklin was not so morally conservator as he said it in his *Autobiography*. We must not forget the fact that at the beginning if he started writing the *Autobiography* for the public, rather to only his son, he would have not put the emphasis on moral virtue.

Regarding Franklin's materialism and utilitarianism that Lawrence criticized utterly in his work, Forde defended him because he wrote his career's history to show that it is possible to succeed by using and keeping virtues rather than abandoning them. For Franklin the surest path to wealth is through virtue that is why he insisted on them and showed that one can have both. Just as Alexis Tocqueville argued 50 years before in his book: *Democracy in America* that effective moral teaching in new democracy must be reconciled to some degree to the material preoccupation of the majority. So, as Emerson defended it, Franklin criticized the tendency of common people, who for being rich surrender to their virtues and values. That is why in his work *Poor Richard's Almanac*, he gave some virtues that he said to be important for being wealthy. Weber in his central work to our study used this almanac writing by Franklin to support the utilitarian orientation and finalities of Franklin's virtues. Regarding



Franklin's utilitarianism and materialism that he displayed so pompously in his *Autobiography* he defended doing it, for showing to common people that it is easy to be rich, by working hard, and remaining faithful to one's virtue. Franklin's utilitarianism and materialism is in opposition to Emerson's vision of sober and ascetic's man, who is transcendental to every little worldly material need. For Emerson, in his *Essay* asked man to detach himself from the quest of worldly material things.

Obama who in his speech at the Democratic convention (*Obamaspeeches.com*), who along with Franklin defended how united Americans are in their quest of personal success and collective ones. It must be said that this idea derived from the evolution of Franklin's ideas of doing good to the others as the ultimate mean of adoring God, and fulfilling the American Dream. Franklin attainment of the American Dream goes with contributing in the development of his society. That is why all along his life, he established humanitarian actions, as building libraries, militating for the creation of auto defense militia for securing Pennsylvania. These deeds aimed to school people, about fulfilling their American Dream.

Nevertheless, Franklin's understanding of the American Dream, and Emerson's, is totally different in their soul and means of fulfillment. For Emerson as he stated in his *Essay*, fulfilling the American Dream goes with an individualistic approach: empowering individual with the self reliance's philosophy whom when sum up together give a powerful and rich nation that the US is today. When Franklin, envisioned this Dream with a collective approach, gathering people in fulfilling their personal Dreams as well as the collective ones. As a matter of fact he united with his friends for developing his country. Whereas Emerson, preached for the arrival of great personages who

through their spirits, and their sense of sacrifice, will struggle to develop their country, kind of Hannibal of Cartage, Julius Caesar of Rome, George Washington and even Franklin of the US. He cited them in his *Essay* as example of self reliant men who gave sense to their lives as well as to their country. Then Emerson's philosophy is different of Obama's vision in his speech through the vision he has of America, when Emerson preferred it as a country of few powerful men with powerful Dream for their country. Franklin wanted it including everybody around the issue of developing the society. The difference is in the procedure; and the similarity in the finality which is they all wanted to develop the individuals and the nation.

On his side, Peter Mueller in *Star Trek* did a historic genesis of the American Dream, in which he detailed the religious origin of the American Dream, and of today's capitalism just as Weber did an analogue study. Though, the difference between these two studies relies in the fact that Mueller made religious explanation of the American Dream, when Weber made a religious (protestant) explanation of the capitalism. With both studies, Franklin served as perfect example being the first example of success of the American Dream, and then one of the first man, if not the first man to embody the spirit of capitalism with his values as order, honesty in being wealthy etc.

Among all the persons that influenced Franklin and Emerson there was Cotton Mather. He was one of the early American humanitarian, who wrote a pamphlet naming *Do Good* in which he called the American to do good. This famous work played an important work in the rising of their philosophical minds. As Franklin by himself acknowledged it in a letter he wrote to Mather's son. Nonetheless, the then American cultural ground was not receptive to Mather's ideas of doing good to others. Due mainly, to the Protestant belief

that everything that happened to a person is God's will and it is going against this will than trying to help the needed. It was on this ground that Franklin at the beginning criticized Mather's philosophy before changing his mind with his son's death. Whereas, with Emerson beside this Protestant (Puritan) view of predestination, there was his own philosophical self reliance concept. With this self reliance principle he wanted human beings to be responsible of their fortune in failure or success. Despite all that, Emerson espoused Mather's view especially with his collective approach of helping the others, with the creation of humanitarian organizations.

Fisher with his work *True about Franklin*, analysis his life and career and found him as the first self made man in American history among all the endless number of figures of all genres that America has produced. According to Fisher's insight, his primacy comes in his mastering of the art of writing as well as in his existential longevity, comparing to all the other figures as George Washington another great American in history. He did not have a longer life and an endless various postures that Franklin had. For Franklin was a polymath, a philosopher, a scientist, a writer, a politician, a diplomat.

Many writers have been influenced and inspired by Emerson and his self reliance philosophy, but the most well known one, and whose degree of inspiration was of common measure is Friederich Nietzsche. The father of today's individualistic society. This self reliance philosophy calls the individuals to journey their pain either physical or mental for fulfilling themselves in a wolfish-Darwinian society. In this kind of society only the strongest have all the rights and the weakest all the duties. Along with Emerson, Nietzsche thought as lightening that man's greatest moment is to come, especially in his masterpiece *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. In other words the super human that he coined to call

this new man to come: powerful as God and free of all the social prejudices. A man who does not embarrass himself with moral and religious precepts that they saw as shackles to his emancipation.

Emerson more than all the American writers has an avant-gardist patriotic way of conceiving the American society in general and art in particular. That is why as *The UK Essay* claimed it, Emerson with his self reliance philosophy asked the American artists to inspire themselves from their environment in all the cultural spheres from sculpture to painting. Emerson came to flatter the American ego for providing it with the psychological energy that enabled it to have confident in itself, after the moment of hesitation and doubt of the independence obtain in pain from the UK. As every separation it went with pain and hesitation. Furthermore, there are also many authors who think that even Franklin doubted about the usefulness of the American independence. To prove their theory they give the fact that he did not talk about his imminent and decisive role in the American independence in his *Autobiography*. For instance nowhere, one can catch him making reference to his participation in the writing of the American constitution in the *Autobiography*.

This work will highlight the faces of the success of the American Dream in Franklin's *Autobiography* and Emerson's *Essay 'self-reliance'*. Contrary, to all the other writers and critics who talk about them, we will contrast their conceptions of the American Dream. This thesis will be a remarkable example of how, writers influence each other, and bring change in the society.

# Chapter 1

## 1.1. *Franklin: the moral perfectionist or the moral face of the American Dream*

For Benjamin Franklin, moral perfectionism led to economic success or to the fulfillment of the American Dream. He imagined that it is only through the cultivation of virtue that one can fulfill this Dream. For vices are the obstacles that debar one from reaching it. He identified 13 virtues that are important in the walk to economic success. The 13 virtues are as follow, temperance, silence, order, resolution, frugality, industry, sincerity, justice, moderation, cleanliness, tranquility, chastity, and humility. Among all these virtues, the one on which he insisted too much as necessary in the quest of wealth is order. In Franklin's mind, on the long way to wealth, every single second must not be wasted. Consequently, he divided the day's hours methodically and assigned to each a specific work to be performed. He argued: "The precept of Order requiring that every part of my business should have its allotted time, one page in my little book contain'd the following scheme of employment for the twenty four hours of a natural day" (Franklin 1998:81). Then it is for being methodical in his quest of the American Dream that he noted in a little book all the specific tasks to be performed. Moreover, for instance, between 8 to 11 am, he worked on his business, whereas, between 6 to 9 pm, he put his things in their places, diversion, music, conversation etc. That is how, in a book he published, entitled *Poor Richard's Almanac* (Franklin 1999), under the name of Richard Sanders, Franklin gave in detail his vision of time and how it is important in living well and being successful in business. In this work, he said of time: "If you have time

don't wait for time" (Franklin 1999:19), or "Time is an herb that cures all Diseases. (Franklin 1999:21). In the second quote he said that with time one can heal most of his vices that prevent one from being virtuous, and he saw virtue as the ultimate weapon that allowed him to be wealthy.

In fact, in *Poor Richard's Almanac*, Franklin gave in details in form of maxims and proverbs, the values he thought necessary in being wealthy. He said of this book in his *Autobiography*:

In 1732 I first publish'd my Almanack, under the name of Richard Saunders; it was by me about twenty-five years, commonly call'd *Poor Richard's Almanac*. I endeavor'd to make it both entertaining and useful... I therefore filled all the little spaces that occur'd between the remarkable days in the calendar with proverbial sentences... These proverbs, which contained the wisdom of many ages and nations, I assembled and form'd into a connected discourse prefix'd to the Almanack of 1757, as the harangue of a wise old man to the people attending an auction (Franklin 1998:88-9).

So Franklin has given some proverbs to educate people about the values to rise up for being rich. Among the endless number of proverbs he gave there are lots about virtue, which was the angular stone of Franklin's philosophy as far as being successful in life and business is concern. For if there is a value or word that sums up alone all Franklin's philosophy it is surely that of virtue. Due to him, today, fulfilling one's American Dream goes with working hard, by remaining honest and sincere. In fact, Franklin was one of the first intellectuals of the young America: he was among the founding fathers, and even among this group of privileges he was surely one of the most influential, as he was among the writers of the American constitution. But, the new nation that was born needed values, and philosophical and inspirational figures as well as

models that the Americans can copy for developing the nation. It is then that before even the independence obtained in blood and pain from the British, Franklin lived to give model and set moral's and material's rules for the country. His actions and involvement go far even before the independence. Though it must be noted that in his *Autobiography* he did not explain his actions and active involvement in the American Revolution that led to its independence. Of Franklin as a determinant figure of moral values provider to America, Steven Ford opined:

Education (including moral education) was a matter Franklin took seriously all his life, as many of his writings and projects attest. The *Autobiography*, as it stands, is the final and most comprehensive monument of that concern, undertaking, as it does, to help shape the emerging American character. Despite its casual and almost random appearance, the work contains a mature and consistent outlook on morality and the well-lived life and even a distinctive strategy for persuading its readers of the merits of that outlook. (Ford 2010:25).

To understand Franklin's *Autobiography* and the importance of virtue and moral values in it, one must not lose of sight the fact that at the beginning, he wrote it to the intention of his son, William. Consequently, it is normal that he put the stress all along the work on virtue. Seen from this angle, it is logic to conclude that the mere fact that the *Autobiography* was written to teach his son made him wants his son as well as Americans to know the importance of these values in succeeding in life and in the achievement of the American Dream. Moreover, the second part of the *Autobiography*, which Franklin started writing in 1784, was addressed to the public in general and the American public in particular whom he wanted to teach virtues. Thus, he started it, with a letter of Benjamin Vaughan, who asked him to resume the writing of his *Autobiography*.

His life is an example of how one can succeed in life, through the cultivation of the art of virtue. Vaughan supported:

All that has happened to you is also connected with then detail of the manners and situation of a rising people; and in this respect I do not think that the writings of Caesar and Tacitus can be more interesting to a true judge of human nature and society. But these, sir, are small reasons, in my opinion, compared with the chance which your life will give for the forming of future great men; and in conjunction with your *Art of Virtue* (which you design to publish) of improving the features of private character, and consequently of aiding all happiness, both public and domestic. (Franklin 1998:68).

In Vaughan's perspective, as an American who lived to understand the art of virtue, and who achieved his American Dream through it, Franklin's life is connected to that of Americans coming from a modest family, and who self educated themselves. Accordingly, Franklin had the duty to teach them those values so that they can use them to have the same success as him.

When one talks about moral values, especially in connection with virtue, one is talking undoubtedly about good and evil. But, it is important to notice that Franklin had a purely and totally rational approach to them, and did not consider them dogmatically. That is why he argued: "... vicious actions are not hurtful because they are forbidden, but forbidden because they are hurtful..." (Franklin 1998:85) and "Sin is not hurtful because it is forbidden but it is forbidden because it's hurtful. Nor is a Duty beneficial because it is commanded, but it is commanded, because it's beneficial." (Franklin 1999:24). In the light of these quotes it is obvious that Franklin's conception of good and evil are rooted in a pure rational conception of life. He supported the moral and virtue percepts for he found them in conformity with his conscience. As a



matter of fact, he understood that a thing is forbidden for its harmfulness. So here beside the rational dimension, appears the pragmatic conception. That goes well with his pragmatic and utilitarian vision because Franklin was totally pragmatic before being rational because for him what mattered is the result not the intrinsic rationality of the percept.

Then, he accepted this kind of conception of virtue because it allowed him to have concrete earnings. For Franklin, as a materialist and a capitalist, what matters for him is the material, and he saw the cultivation of virtues as a way to obtain this material gain. Since virtue and its percepts are ready concepts that can transform him in a way that can allow him to reach the material success that he pursued. Virtue disciplines the body so that it can only be dedicated to the production of wealth. As a result on the ground, all Franklin's moral values that go with his virtue have utilitarian finality. For instance, the percept of order as said in the above paragraph, allowed him to be productive through the well management of his day's time. For how can you be productive by being idle and wasting your time on useless things? That is why he decided also to sleep early: "Early to bed and early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise "(Franklin 1999:13). For doing good work goes with having fresh brain. In this same way, he ate small quantity of food so it can make his body fit for working: "They that study much, ought not to eat so much as those that work hard, their digestion being not so good." or "Eat and drink such an exact Quantity as the Constitution of thy Body allows of, in reference to the Services of the Mind" (Franklin 1999:33). That is how for the moral utilitarian sake, he asked one to eat so that one must not fall sick: "Eat few Suppers, and you'll need few Medicines. (Franklin 1999:32).

So, if you understand well Franklin you will see that reason leads all his gestures and thoughts which go with his virtue. For instance, he became a

vegetarian after reading a book “written by one Tryon, recommending a vegetable diet. I determined to go into it.”(Franklin 1998:16) That is how he became a convinced and highly determined vegetarian, who is even ready to set it as a rule of a sect he created with Keimer. If you want the rational reason that guided this affiliation to vegetarian diet, he had a ready answer: he found wrong to kill animal that do you no wrong, just for the desire to eat their flesh. It is important to notice that Franklin, as a materialist thinker, did not think wrong and right by this way. But, he did it by the way because it went with his idea and conception of virtue that supported his entire life. Because in the principles of his virtue there is notion as justice that required him to do no gratis harm. So, one needs to understand that with Franklin, virtue leads to wealthiness and live in conformity with one’s mind. For Franklin saw that the final purpose of wealth was to feed his virtue; that is why he said proudly: “Money and good Manners make the Gentleman” (Franklin 1999: 32). So, the final purpose of money and even good manners are also the virtue, in other words, being a gentleman. Being a gentleman goes with being happy, everything that strengthens one’s virtue, for he argued: “Virtue and Happiness are Mother and Daughter.” (Franklin 1999:44).

So, despite Franklin’s blind attachments to virtue, he is so attached to reason that fastened him to virtue, and the same logic is applicable to religion. When it comes also to religion Franklin was not also dogmatic since his understanding of God is rooted in his reason. That is why he argued:

I had been religiously educated as a Presbyterian; and tho’ some of the dogmas of that persuasion, such as the eternal decrees of God, election, reprobation, etc., appeared to me unintelligible, others doubtful, and I early absented myself from the public assemblies of the sect, Sunday

being my studying day, I never was without some religious principles.  
(Franklin 1998:75).

Franklin, as a rational thinker, allowed himself to doubt of certain percepts of religion that he found dogmatic and failed to understand with his reason. Consequently, he doubted about the eternal decrees of God, election, reprobation, etc. Moreover, as he was deeply utilitarian, he did not see the importance of attending the sect Sunday's service, this day dedicated for his study, with which there is no comparison with going to the assembly. Seeing that study gave him knowledge that was useful for his business. Franklin defined himself as a believer, who believed in the Deity (any supernatural being that control life). Nonetheless, his way of praying and serving his Divinity came also from his reason. His understanding of God made him understand that the best way to serve Him is by doing good to the other people. But, when it came down to going to the church's offices every Sunday, Franklin did not have time for it. However, as a materialist, he compensated that by paying his yearly contribution to the church. Somehow, it is from this moment, especially with intellectuals as Franklin that people started to emancipate themselves physically from the church, by defending themselves as being part of the community of believers, though not attending the church's meetings. The real reason of all that is, as Franklin said, in a materialistic and capitalistic society, time is everything that missed, one never has it enough to afford by attending to the church's office. That is really what makes the American Dream as the valorization of time, which with time is synonym of money. One needs to achieve oneself in time. For that one needed to occupy smartly one's time for fulfilling one's Dream of success. It is also with time that money, when saved in bank, increases at the rate of its timely interest. It is with time that a hard

worker multiplies his capital. So, time is highly valuable to be wasted at the church's offices in a capitalistic society.

In the prism of Franklin's moral body, knowledge needs to be stressed as it is highly important in the American Dream. For knowledge becomes the ultimate instrument, with which this Dream of success is achieved. America, since Franklin's period, started its total industrial and capitalistic transformation that will lead to the empowerment of the individual and the weakness of the social bond or better say social structure, which before relied on family and community. Before the rising of capitalism that started mainly in Europe and especially in the UK, with the beginning of the industrialization; there was feudalism everywhere. For instance, the lords were linked to the King or the monarch who by himself was usually seen as God's deputy on earth, the common people were linked to the lords, the family members were linked to the fathers ( usually the western societies are patriarchal); and families were linked to each other in clans and lineages. All this endless groups were linked by the sacred link of interests, which is namely the fundamental principle of feudalism. The lower in the social rank gave respect and goods for the upper, who in return protected them and their interests. So, with this kind of social organization, the children could attend school for they were at the care of their parents, who felt themselves responsible for that task. Whereas capitalism weakened this link in two ways: the first one is the division of the society and the breaking of the social link in favor of individualism, and the poverty that characterizes the early capitalistic societies. So, with that, young were obliged to leave school early to cover their life train, the parents were either poor, or did not feel themselves responsible for their children at their majority. But, in the case of Franklin it was the poverty of his family that obliged him to quit school, at the age of 10. So, he left school early with the basics of instruction:

reading, writing and calculation; not to even talk about having a great knowledge in a specific field that would allow him to make his way in life. Consequently, all the way he had to learn all he had missed, and great they were: from literature to philosophy more specifically, from mathematics and physics, etc. He had to learn all by his own, and continue working at the same time. That is why all along the *Autobiography*; Franklin explained how he learned disciplines from philosophy to mathematics, without forgetting physics. His enthusiasm and confidence made him succeed in all these learnings. What is remarkable with Franklin's learning procedure is this natural inclination he had to combine his learning's strength with his friends' for learning. For instance he asserted:

My chief acquaintances at this time were Charles Osborne, Joseph Watson, and James Ralph, all lovers of reading.....Both of them great admirers of poetry, and began to try their hands in little pieces. Many pleasant walks we four had together on Sundays into the woods, near Schuylkill, where we read to one another, and conferr'd on what we read. (Franklin 1998:36).

Then, it is always by collaborating with the others that Franklin learnt. He had this innate capacity to unite people for learning from each other, as he did it with his two friends: Charles Osborne and Joseph Watson with whom the deep root of their friendship was their common love for literature, especially poetry. That was how, by interacting with each other, he succeeded continually in developing his writing skill as well as his understanding of poetry. Franklin's collaborative strategy in learning and building did not stop here, he also created with some friends, a club of mutual improvement called Junto: "...I had form'd most of my ingenious acquaintance into a club of mutual improvement, which

we called the *Junto*; we met on Friday evenings.”(Franklin 1998:56). With this club he created undoubtedly a wonderful tool for mutual improvement as he said it; since it allowed them to learn together, by socializing. Moreover, today the principle characteristic of capitalism and of the American Dream is that individuals, most of the time, combined their strength for realizing a project, either learning or building project as creating a corporation or an enterprise.

With the Junto they met every Friday for debating a particular point in group. Beside that, once a month, every member of the club produced an *Essay* which he was bound to present to the clubs' member, and defended his ideas. The Junto allowed Franklin to develop his writing and debate skill, and that profited him later when he entered politics. Moreover, Franklin's restless and endless effort for learning and helping the other American doing so, did not stop with the Junto, it went also with the creation of a library in Pennsylvania which was also the first subscription library of North America. All that participated in his life's project of doing good to the other that he saw as the ultimate means of adoring God, everything that entered also in his vision of the American Dream. In other words, America as a country where every citizen felt himself responsible of the happiness of his fellow citizen came also from Franklin's life struggle. That was why Obama supported in his Keynote address at the 2004 Democratic convention:

A belief that we are connected as one people. If there's a child on the south side of Chicago who can't read, that matters to me, even if it's not my child. If there's a senior citizen somewhere who can't pay for her prescription and has to choose between medicine and the rent, that makes my life poorer, even if it's not my grandmother. If there's an Arab American family being rounded up without benefit of an attorney or due process, that threatens my civil liberties. It's that fundamental belief? I

am my brother's keeper; I am my sister's keeper? that makes this country work. It's what allows us to pursue our individual Dreams, yet still come together as a single American family. "E pluribus unum." Out of many, one. (<http://obamaspeeches.com>)

Nonetheless, with time this idealistic vision has been corrupted by the heartless capitalism with its mad individualism that is why Obama reaffirmed the American Dream to bring it back life.

Franklin's subscribe library started with an observation that he made, after remarking the lack of interesting book in the region, apart from some almanacs that was observable in New York or in other states. He said that the book lads are obliged to order their books from UK, at an extent that the literacy rate in the US by this time was low. You must not also lose sight of that by Franklin's time, the 18th century is as said above, the starting of the deep and profound capitalism which pushed the young to work instead of studying. This movement was so great that many adults found themselves with few instructions, and were obliged to re-enter schools and universities for completing their instructions, or were forced to make their self education as Franklin did it, and that requires tools as books. It is then that he used the Junto's books to create a subscription library in Pennsylvania. Quickly, this idea became a success, as many people helped the library by donating their books, and with the money of the books' lending, they order new books to enrich it.

Moreover, Franklin's principles of virtue are rooted in the Puritan tradition: he was brought up in Presbyterian (Puritan) family. Peter Mueller argued: "Puritanism was a Protestant reform movement within the Anglican Church, which wanted to purify it from Catholic remnants, and was based on the doctrines of Calvinism." (Peter Mueller 2003:31). It is made of two trends: the Presbyterian and the Separatism. The former is seen as a middle position

between the aristocracy and democracy, whereas the latter is considered usually as highly democratic. In fact they are seen on the political scale as the left (the Democrats). Furthermore, even Puritanism had political motivation as the root of this movement incarnated all the forces that in England were unhappy of the King's politics. This tension reached its climax when James I came on power in 1603. Remarking the danger from this movement for his regime, he condemned the Puritans and the Catholics that led to the emigration of many of them to flee from the persecution of which they were victims. That is how also many of them crossed the Atlantic sea to find themselves in America, where they dreamed of finding the "City upon the Hill". They had a divine conception of themselves. Mueller supported:

America was the Promised Land and God guided their way to build "*a citty upon a hill*." Winthrop and his men had a sense of mission. They were "the light of the world" and the world was not only watching their plantation, the world was going to be refashioned according to their "Model of Christian Charitie". To the Puritans their emigration was part of God's Wonder-Working Providence: "Know this is the place where the Lord will create a new heaven and a new earth ...." If the first ingredient to the American Dream was a mythic vision of America as paradise on earth, the second was the religious concept of America as a "*Citty upon a Hill*". (ibid 43-4).

In addition Winthrop and his men thought that 'the eyes of the world are upon them'. In their vision, America the young and newly found world, was the place which the providence gave them to fulfill this salvation mission. Moreover, this 'Citty Upon a Hill' showed that the deep root of the American Dream was theological. It was later that the arrival of the enlighteners changed this divine conception of the American Dream. They were a vague of



immigrants coming from different countries of Europe and for many reasons. The enlighteners were political activists, scientists, fortunes seekers, and those who fled the poverty and unemployment of the Old continent. It was with them that the American Dream took a material connotation.

This religious root of the American Dream came from the predestination of man as seen and conceived by Puritans, who saw that individuals were either chosen for salvation, or eternal damnation. But, as God had done well His scheme man cannot know, if he was chosen for salvation or not. Nonetheless, according to the puritans those who have been chosen for salvation were those who succeeded in life. Then, material success for Puritans was a means to be near to God, and the proof of being blessed by Him. That was why the Puritans dedicated all their energy in being successful. It was later that success as proof of being Godly blessed had been changed to an end, for people are struggling to become rich for material prosperity but not for finding themselves blessed. Winthrop defended:

Discipline, industriousness and frugality were Puritan virtues indeed and derived of their theological content they proved helpful in the propagation of a new way of production that thrived on strict self control. To the early Puritans these virtues had been an end in itself whereas to the new generation they were only means to an end, and that end was not idealistic in nature but materialistic. The Puritan theocracy tried to stem the tide of profanation until the very last and it was only through the process of secularization that these virtues became the means to achieve "worldly success". The prototype of this new generation of rationalists was Benjamin Franklin: "*While paying lip service to God and virtue, Franklin clearly had his eye on material success: nothing is so likely to make a man's fortune as virtue. Virtue is a means, worldly fortune the end.*" (ibid 54).

Then the above quote shows, Franklin's virtues, especially that of frugality and industriousness, had less religious meaning: not cultivating virtues for its own sake, but for material success.

## 1.2. Emerson: the ideologue of the American Dream

Emerson was among the first philosophers of America, if not the first philosopher at all. As such he contributed much in the building of the American Dream. His philosophy is of the greatest importance for the US as by the time he wrote his works, especially his famous *Essay*, America was a young nation, trying to find its way after its independence. It's through this particular time for the country that Emerson wrote his famous *Essay*. Thomas Carlyle, the British inspirational writer and mentor of Emerson, told of him:

I love Emerson's book, not for its detach opinion, not even for scheme of the general world, he has framed for himself, or any eminence of talent he has expressed that with, but simply because it is his own book; because there is tone of veracity, a mistakable air of being his, and a real utterance of human soul, not a mere echo of such. I consider it, in that sense, highly remarkable, rare, very rare, in these days of ours. Ach got! It is very frightful to live among echoes. The few that I read the book, I imagine, will get benefit of it. To America, I say sometimes that Emerson, such as he is, seems to me as new kind of era. (Emerson 1907-2).

Carlyle was right: since the first days of the *Essay's* publication, it led to a new era in America's history through the strengthening of the American Dream. For that's the tremendous contribution of Emerson in America's history: giving confidence to Americans after the first tough days of its independence which,

as the first steps of a child, are tough. Moreover, as said by Carlyle, Emerson's greatest contribution to the raising of America and the defining of the values of the new nation has been with 'he Self-reliance' part of the *Essay*. Emerson went back, down in his inner self to find the originality and the ideas of this self-reliance which also called the American to be self-reliant and find the power to build themselves and their nation from their inner self. Emerson insisted:

Our age yields no great and perfect person. We want men and women who will renovate life and our social state, but we see most nature are insolvent, cannot satisfy their own wants, have an ambition out of all proportion to their practical force and do lean and beg day and night continually. Our housekeeping is mendicant, our arts, our occupation, and marriages we have not chosen, but society has chosen us. We are parlor soldier. We shun the rug battle of fate, where strength is born. (Emerson 2001: 42).

Emerson after noticed the mark of great men in the temperament of Caesar, George Washington, Franklin etc. Men to renovate and build the new nation, men who had the power of their ambitions. For he supported that there were lot of people with lungs full of Dreams and mouthless to express concretely their dreams. Building America for Emerson went with renovating the American way of thinking in general, in arts, occupations, marriages etc. For he had the impression that they didn't choose must of their lives, their thinkings. They were imposed on them by the British as the former colonizer. In his view they had to part with all of that, for renovating and building a new America. The practical procedure for this new beginning was self-reliance. In other words, liberating themselves from the influence of the others giving voice to America and Americans.

So, Emerson's self-reliance is the concrete and practical procedure which he gave to Americans as a way of building their lives and nation. In other words, self-reliance is the *modus operandi* through which the realization of the American Dream was possible. That relied in man's belief in his natural capacity, namely the instinct that Emerson saw as the only fundamental thought. For this instinct is never tamed, but always free. It did not care about the society and its subjective rules that so often hampered progress as well as the discovery of truth. That's why he opined:

“Man is his own star; and the soul that can  
Render an honest and a perfect man,  
Commands all light, all influence, all fate;  
Nothing to him falls early or too late.  
Our acts our angels are, or good or ill,  
Our fatal shadows that walk by us still.” (Emerson 2001: 26).

He insisted, through this citation, on man's natural potential to be free from the invisible shackle of the British and others' grip. At the personal level, it also called for self affirmation, and the empowering of the individual before even the group. As a matter of fact Emerson's key concept in developing the society relies on the individual rather than on the group. Seen from this angle, his vision is that of a society of free and self-reliant persons, who can give meaning to their lives, socially and economically more specifically. That's why up today, Emerson is considered as the spiritual father of the America's and the western society's individualism in general. As a matter of fact, all the other writers and scholars who were inspired by him have this deep sense of individual empowerment and this preference of the individual on the group. The first example in this great group is Frederich Nietzsche, especially through

his masterpiece *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, which is a manifest for individualism. That appears through Nietzsche's nihilism (the negation of all societal values that he saw as shackles that hampered individual progress and success) on one hand. On the other, he saw society and its rules as creation and imposition of the strongest on the weakest. Nietzsche affirmed: "A table of excellencies hangeth over every people. Lo! It is the table of their triumphs; lo! it is the voice of their Will to Power." (Nietzsche 1999:61). So, both Nietzsche and his mentor called men to free themselves from societal rules and values and reinvented themselves, free of the others' grip. Then Emerson saw salvation for America in the return to the essential belief which is the empowerment of individuals to believe in themselves. That led according to Emerson, to the society's development by empowering individuals in a country of powerful and self-reliant individuals.

Emerson, with this philosophy, called and acted for the venue of new men disconnected from the past and its pre conceived ideas as a means to develop America by fueling the American Dream. These men, according to him, should belong to the present, the only moment worth of living. That's why he gave the example of historical figures as Caesar who, through exploits, had destiny which was confounded to that of their nations. Just as Caesar's destiny of greatness went with that of Rome for which he did his conquests that gave him fame and glory. Emerson supported:

Every true man is a cause, a country, and an age; requires infinite spaces and numbers and time fully to accomplish his design;—and posterity seem to follow his steps as a train of clients. A man Caesar is born, and for ages after we have a Roman Empire. Christ is born, and millions of minds so grow and cleave to his genius that he is confounded with virtue and the possible of man. An institution is the lengthened shadow of one

man; as, Monachism, of the Hermit Antony; the Reformation, of Luther; Quakerism, of Fox; Methodism, of Wesley; Abolition, of Clarkson. Scipio, Milton called “the height of Rome”; and all history Resolves itself very easily into the biography of a few stout and earnest persons. (Emerson 2001:35).

Emerson did not stop to the example of Caesar, he also cited Jesus and how with his ideas and the new faith he brought, he saved the lives of millions of persons. Then it is from them that came his confidence in the capacity of individuals to change their lives and that of their nations, just as he called the American to do the same for their lives and their nation. Then Emerson saw in man almost a divine power in commanding his life and his society: “The picture waits for my verdict; it is not to command me, but I am to settle its claims to praise. “ (Emerson 2001:35). He was asking the Americans to believe in themselves and in their divine capacities for mastering their own lives as well as their country. Even in the world of art, he calls the Americans for the same élans of self-reliance as he called the American artist to be creative instead of imitating the others. That is why in *UK Essay* it is said:

According to Emerson, architects, painters or sculptors from America are always imitating and taking inspiration from people of foreign countries. Therefore, they travel the world. Emerson is of course contrary to that as well. His remedy would be to create individual art without copying from others. (UK Essays 2003-2013).

In Emerson's point of view, the Americans either in the field of art or in politics must inspire themselves with their environment, their climate, their soil. So, Emerson's vision of the American Dream is effective as it relies on all the fields of life. And always the point of departure is the individual and the

American society, and the finality is a future of greatness as he imagined it, and as we are seeing it today with America's greatness and supremacy.

More interestingly, he equipped his theory with methods of improving and building America (American Dream), with technical and concrete procedure, and on road advice. Hence he called Americans to have entrepreneurial mind, which is the love of taking risk for succeeding in life or in fulfilling the objectives they set for themselves. Because the current greatness of America and its entrepreneurs would not have been possible without the culture of entrepreneurial risk taking that is rooted in the American society with Emerson's self-reliance. For in America, contrary to the remaining part of the world, it's not trying and failing that is condemned, but not trying. That made Emerson states:

If our young men miscarry in their first enterprises they lose all heart. If the young merchant fails, men say he is ruined. If the finest genius studies at one of our colleges and is not installed in an office within one year afterwards in the cities or suburbs of Boston or New York, it seems to his friends and to himself that he is right in being disheartened and in complaining the rest of his life. (Emerson 2001:42-3).

Before the development of Emerson's philosophy, the culture of risk taking and enterprising was not spread in the society as Emerson condemned the criticism of those who took risk and didn't succeed in their business. His philosophy led to the tremendous success of American companies as Facebook, Google, Microsoft etc. Then the dream of success of one individual changes the lives of millions of persons as each of these corporations employs millions of persons and their products are used by billions of persons. They put everything they have: money, energy and time for making their dreams come true. For

they believe in themselves and in the projects they realized, even when everything is against them. That is the genius and the kind of cultural thinking which lead to the philosophy of self-reliance: concrete thinking with concrete results on the ground. Because, one must not forget that fulfilling American Dream means fulfilling a dream of economic success. Consequently, individuals give themselves the intellectual, psychological and material means to build their own business and become rich by relying on themselves rather than on any one else. Sometimes, to have the means of fulfilling their American Dream (building their businesses), they can do small jobs to gather money. As a matter of fact, for fulfilling this Dream they don't postpone their lives. They live it fully. Emerson argued:

A sturdy lad from New Hampshire or Vermont, who in turn tries all the professions, who teams it, farms it, peddles, keeps a school, preaches, edits a newspaper, goes to Congress, buys a township, and so forth, in successive years, and always like a cat falls on his feet, is worth a hundred of these city dolls. He walks abreast with his days and feels no shame in not 'studying a profession,' for he does not postpone his life, but lives already. He has not one chance, but a hundred chances. (Emerson 2001:42-3).

Furthermore, Emerson supported perseverance in a person who learns everything by himself. This person, for Emerson, has more than hundred chances to succeed.

Emerson, in his work, had also criticized the materialistic turn that the American Dream had taken already at his time. For Emerson, as philosopher and a spiritual figure, had intellectual conception of this Dream of success. He criticized the fact that: "They measure their esteem of each other by what each



has, and not by what each is.” (Emerson 2001:49). In other words according to Emerson the society has come to a point where the value of each man is measured according to his owning, wealth, and title. That goes against the fundamental Emersonian belief of man as god like who is beyond every material things that he commands by creating it, just as he commands everything that surrounds him. The real wealth of a man, according to Emerson, is his self reliance and his capacity to build wealth. For though he has it and loses it, he has the knowledge and the hard working virtue of rebuilding it. That's why for him, the real wealth and the real valor of a man, and according to which he must be valued, is one's self-reliance. He affirmed:

But a cultivated man becomes ashamed of his property, out of new respect for his nature. Especially he hates what he has if he sees that it is accidental,— came to him by inheritance, or gift, or crime; then he feels that it is not having..... But that which a man is, does always by necessity acquire, and what the man acquires is living property, which does not wait the beck of rulers, or mobs, or revolutions, or fire, or storm, or bankruptcies, but perpetually renews itself wherever the man breathes. (Emerson 2001:49)

Consequently, individuals should give themselves the intellectual, psychological and material means to build their own business and become rich by relying on themselves rather than on any one else. Man owns what comes from his work and intelligence, not what he gets by inheritance, or what he steals because this wealth does not come from his labor. That wealth is renewable, you can build it up. Since you built it once, then you have the knowledge to build it again.

While defending individualism in his non-materialistic approach to the American Dream it, it must be said that Emerson had a totally different vision of the individual and his responsibility in front of the society and those who didn't fulfill this Dream of success. Especially regarding themes such as charity, which is the only aspect in which he didn't have an individualistic approach, through the way of helping those in need. Of course he had some apprehensions on the principle of helping others; for Emerson thought that every person is responsible for his life, either in success or in failure. As a self-reliance philosopher, he called man to greatness, and to accept the eventuality of the failure of an individual to change his life, if he is really self-reliant and non conformist. Then if it happened that this person didn't succeed in his Dream, Emerson had no pity for him, for he found him responsible for his bad destiny. On this principle, he wondered why he must feel responsible for the poverty and misery of others. As he wondered, if the poor are his poor, for him to help them: "Then again, do not tell me, as a good man did to-day, of my obligation to put all poor men in good situations. Are they my poor?" (Emerson 2001:31). Nonetheless, he agreed not to help individual, but rather a group of persons. He saw the uselessness of his gesture if it helped an individual, without attacking the root of the problem. Which is namely the society's organization? Since helping an individual without solving the reasons that led to this person's poverty will leave many others suffer from it. That's how, for the first time in the middle of his individualistic theory (self-reliance) he had a collective approach to the society; with the creation of humanitarian organizations, schools etc to help as many people as possible. As a matter of fact, creating schools attacks the root of poverty as it helped educate the poor and their sons by giving them the power to find their ways in life, and be self-reliant.

Unfortunately, his theory led not only to a mad success of the American Dream, but to the development of the aspect most hated by him which is the material side. For the rich and powerful don't feel themselves invested of a social mission. They have wealth, but only for themselves; and they have influence but only for their selfish interests. That is how the *Washington Post* (in an article named 'The deal with rich people' in its publication of 11/27/2013), discussing the issue of the American Dream, shows how individuals who became rich create social inequality in the US; and how they are loved when creating humanitarian organizations because there are few who created them. It argued: "Social mobility has become more stunted in the United States than in Europe. And Americans see themselves falling further behind: A Washington Post-ABC News Poll last year found that 57 percent of registered voters believed that the gap between the rich and the rest was larger than it had been historically; only 5% thought it was smaller." ([www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/the-deal-with-rich-people/2013/11/27](http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/the-deal-with-rich-people/2013/11/27)). That constitutes a serious threat for the American democracy so often cited as the best in the world. That's how today in the US, the basic principle of the American Dream is becoming less and less true.

Then we come to how Emerson arrived to change the American society and instill his self-reliance philosophy in it. This had been possible because he understood the society. The genius of Emerson was that through prophetic writings, he made every individual who read his work, an agent of change in the society. He sowed the seed of change in the American society through his philosophy of self-reliance and non conformity. Since respecting and not flouting social convention become as Biblical precept that no one wants to touch. Emerson supported that one should be a non conformist, not be afraid of contradicting oneself and making oneself misunderstood. In fact, in

Emerson's perspective being misunderstood isn't something wrong, for he affirms that all the great and wise spirit were misunderstood, among many he cited Jesus, Galileo, Shakespeare. For him:

A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds, adored by little statesmen and philosophers and divines. With consistency a great soul has simply nothing to do....Pythagoras was misunderstood, and Socrates, and Jesus, and Luther, and Copernicus, and Galileo, and Newton, and every pure and wise spirit that ever took flesh. (Emerson 2001:36).

The importance of this freedom of thinking is it's freeing the creative spirit since the person has not to care about being consistent and not contradicting himself. There is no country in the world with lots of creativity in all the fields than in America; because of this Emersonian principle of the right to contradiction that frees man's imagination by freeing it of the societal barrier which consistency is.

Furthermore, it is important to notice that Emerson's Self-reliance led to today's concept of American exceptionalism. It is a belief that consists of seeing America as superior to all nations on earth. America is seen as the nation which has divine right and beauty, just as Winthrop and Emerson foresaw it, and acted towards its concretization. The key concept of this ideology is the greatness of America due to the implementation and the success of self-reliant concepts as freedom, individualism, and the superiority of American democratic system. That's why Claud Fisher argued:

Valuing liberty means valuing the individual's interest, purpose, and conscience over the demands of groups, authorities, and custom – over feudal lords, churches, states, bosses, even household patriarchs ...

Emerson gave voice to these values in “Self-Reliance” (1841).” (The Berkley Blog 2013).

This philosophy of American exceptionalism came from Emerson's Self-reliance and non-conformity concepts.

## Chapter 2

### 2.1. Franklin's and Emerson's conceptions of the American Dream and the Ways to Achieve it

Franklin and Emerson have two different approaches regarding their conceptions of the American Dream and how it must be achieved. The first point of contention is regarding the role of the individual and society in achieving it. For Emerson everything starts with the individual before reaching all, in the sense that a successful person will help his society develop with his wealth and ideas. Whereas, for Franklin every thing starts with individuals who gather themselves to create a society. Emerson's concept has two finalities in its modus operandi: 1) the self-reliance empowering individuals who in turn empower the entire community; 2) the self-reliance relying of the individual who uses it to influence the others and change the life of all the community due to his success. Regarding the first point, it is all about the self-reliance philosophy which individuals use separately for developing their lives. The usage of this self-reliance concept by a large number of persons leads to the development of the country as seen with the current super greatness of the US. That is the immediate result of the empowerment of the individuals by self reliance that makes the American society competitive. Originality is very important in a competitive society where everyone is trying to succeed and is displaying genius and talent. As a matter of fact, originality becomes the distinctive feature that grants success. Originality has made the US great in the world because their citizens, through their creativity, talent and ingenuity, are

far above all the nations. Consequently, the US manages to sell its products in other countries.

Contrary to Emerson whose vision of the American Dream relies on the individual; Franklin's vision of development of the society (American Dream) relies on the group, and the community who works together for achieving this goal. In other words for Franklin, it is the community that creates the condition for the fulfillment of the American Dream with the creation of schools and clubs that empower the people. In opposite, Emerson sees each individual responsible in finding ways of fulfilling his Dream of success. Franklin relied on the community, throughout his life, and leagued with others to create projects that developed the society by creating the conditions for the members of the society to achieve their American Dream. An example is the creation of the Junto clubs with his friends with the purpose of rising their intellectual levels, mainly rising their debating and literary skills. It is also the same logic that pushed him to spread this idea of club, by implementing Junto sub-clubs in other states. Moreover, Franklin created also a subscription library with some of his Junto club's members. For he remarked there was lack of many important books in the region, which could only be obtained by ordering them from the UK. Even after the creation of this library he continued collaborating with others to develop it. The library was strengthened by books donations coming from the book lads of the region. He defended that the people of that region could fulfill their American Dream of success by having ideas to develop themselves and their society. Franklin supported:

And now I set on foot my first project of a public nature, that for a subscription library. I drew up the proposals, got them put into form by our great scrivener, Brockden, and, by the help of my friends in the Junto, procured fifty subscribers of forty shillings each to begin with, and

ten shillings a year for fifty years, the term our company was to continue. We afterwards obtain'd a charter, the company being increased to one hundred: this was the mother of all the North American subscription libraries, now so numerous. It is become a great thing itself, and continually increasing. These libraries have improved the general conversation of the Americans, made the common tradesmen and farmers as intelligent as most gentlemen from other countries, and perhaps have contributed in some degree to the stand so generally made throughout the colonies in defense of their privileges. (Franklin 1998:66).

Franklin had also individual sense of self-reliance in developing the society because the idea of the subscribe library came from him; just as he has shown the same leadership with the project of paper money. Upon the discussed matter of the lack of paper currency in sufficient number in the Junto, Franklin wrote a Pamphlet entitled:

“The Nature and Necessity of a Paper Currency.” It was well receiv'd by the common people in general; but the rich men dislik'd it, for it increas'd and strengthen'd the clamor for more money, and they happening to have no writers among them that were able to answer it, their opposition slacken'd, and the point was carried by a majority in the House. (Franklin 1998:61-2).

The pamphlet that Franklin wrote developed the society as it created the debate in the region and was carried to the House. There it was decided to create more paper currency. All that has been possible due to Franklin's will manifested through the publication of the pamphlet. At the personal level Franklin has also used his collective approach of fulfilling his project for



implementing his printing business by entering in partnership with his friend Hugh Meredith. Later he bought Meredith's share and became the unique owner of the printing business. This collaboration in fulfilling the American Dream as seen today came from Franklin. What is remarkable is that Franklin and Meredith succeeded in fulfilling their American Dream by displaying a great sense of struggle and determination as Emerson stressed it in the last part of this work. Then all along his life Franklin has united his strength to develop his society, the American society, by acting rather than theorizing as Emerson did. For that is the fundamental second difference between the two. That's contrary to Emerson's vision of the American Dream which, though relying on individuals, intends rather to develop and empower them separately for developing the American society globally. In other words, have all Americans individually realizing their American Dream, so the collective American Dream of developed country would be also realized. Emerson is a philosopher and a theoretician, and Franklin is a daily man with an incomparable desire of learning about life and how to develop himself and his country. Emerson's stature as a theoretician and value setter is a shared opinion among many scholars who saw this period as that of the American Renaissance. Hence Multbur insisted:

American Transcendentalism entitles in many senses a flourishing movement for the United States of America between 1830 and 1860. That is why this influential period is also known as e.g. the "American Renaissance" or "The Golden Day". The term describes an intellectual current which unifies ideas and thoughts about literature, philosophy, religion and sociology. Within this particular period, a vast number of important philosophical and literary opuses were created, as e.g. *Moby-Dick* (1851) by Herman Melville, *The Scarlet Letter* (1850) by Nathaniel Hawthorne or *Walden* (1854) by Henry David Thoreau. The 1830's and

1840's are considered as the heyday of this movement due to the publication of Ralph Waldo Emerson's essay *Nature* (1836) which can be seen as the "bible" of this movement (Muller 2003:10-11).

For contributing in setting the values of the American Dream through providing examples, is fundamental in the American societal project structure. For all the scholars of the period have been directly or indirectly influenced by Franklin who was the first example of success of the American Dream. He was the first to start the self-identity discovery journey after the independence, and to become a self-made. That is why Sydney George Fisher supports in *True about Franklin* that:

Self-made men of eminence have been quite numerous in America for a hundred years. Franklin was our first hero of this kind, and I am inclined to think our greatest. The others have achieved wealth or political importance; sometimes both. But Franklin achieved not only wealth and the reputation of a diplomatist and a statesman, but made himself a most accomplished scholar, a man of letters of world-wide fame, a philosopher of no small importance, and as an investigator and discoverer in science he certainly enlarged the domain of human knowledge. (Fisher 2010:17).

For Emerson what matters is the achievement of the Dream by all means. In the introductory lines of his *Self-Reliance*, Emerson summarized his philosophy as follows: "Man is his own star; and the soul that can/ Render an honest and a perfect man,/ Commands all light, all influence, all fate;/ Our fatal shadows that walk by us still." (Emerson 2001:26). In other words, the person who relies on his own strength finds also the power and the way to command and influence all fates and lights. For him, collaborating with the others goes

also with relying on oneself. He cited Franklin as an example of great man. Emerson wrote:

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. That which each can do best, none but his Maker can teach him. No man yet knows what it is, nor can, till that person has exhibited it. Where is the master who could have taught Shakspeare? Where is the master who could have instructed Franklin, or Washington, or Bacon, or Newton? Every great man is unique. The Scipionism of Scipio is precisely that part he could not borrow. Shakspeare will never be made by the study of Shakspeare. (Emerson 2001: 43-7).

Note that Emerson starts with Franklin as he is the first name in his list of great men. That is not a mere coincidence: Emerson has been mainly inspired by Franklin as the first example of self-made person in the elaboration of his self-reliance theory.

## **2.2. Franklin's and Emerson's vision of philanthropy and the American Dream**

After the issue of development, we come now to that of philanthropy; another important issue in the two authors' work. On this point it is important to specify that both of them have been influenced by an American early writer and philanthropist of the name of Cotton Mather. The latter wrote a pamphlet named *Do Good* on the issue. Franklin recognized directly being influenced by Mather in his life (Franklin 1998:15-6). Moreover, in the letter, he wrote to

Mather's son, he acknowledged his father's influence on him. Dobkin Hall argued:

Much as he prided himself on being "self-made," Benjamin Franklin freely acknowledged his debt to Cotton Mather. "When I was a boy," he wrote Mather's son later in life, "I met with a book, entitled *Essays to Do Good*, which I think was written by your father. It had been so little regarded by a former possessor, that several leaves of it were torn out; but the remainder gave me such a turn of thinking, as to have an influence on my conduct through life; for I have always set a greater value on the character of a doer of good, than on any other kind of reputation; and if I have been, as you seem to think, a useful citizen, the public owes the advantage of it to that book"(Franklin 1961:197-8).

This notion of doing good has been the leitmotiv of all Franklin's life action as we will see it later. Furthermore, Emerson has been influenced by Mather, though he did not say it directly, but it appeared indirectly in his *Self-reliance*, when we saw traces of Mather's *Do Good* Pamphlet on him. For instance in the *Essay*, Emerson asserts defiantly:

Say to them, O father, O mother, O wife, O brother, O friend, I have lived with you after appearances hitherto. Henceforward I am the truth's. Be it known unto you that henceforward I obey no law less than the eternal law. I will have no covenants but proximities. I shall endeavour to nourish my parents, to support my family, to be the chaste husband of one wife... (Emerson 41). Mather discussed the same issue of social reformism in the matter of help with the same defiant ardor as Emerson (Dobkin 11-15).

The closeness of the two authors' defiant way of expressing this issue is important as when Mather was criticized especially on the matter of inoculating

a vaccine against Small Pox. Among those who criticized him bitterly was Franklin who then did not support him. Franklin rallied Mather's cause of humanitarian action after refusing inoculating the vaccine against the Small Pox to his son who died of it. That was the turning point of their relation. To understand the reasons of the bitter criticism against Mather who was even asking something noble and self-evident which is helping needed person, one needs to understand the Protestant vision of life and specifically predestination. For them if a person is poor that is God's will, and one must not interfere in that by helping the poor person. That was the reason why they criticized mainly Mather, for helping poor, as helping them goes with going against God's will.

For Mather the poor are so due to the social corruption that created the disorder that makes them poor. He thinks it is not God's will which made them what they are. So, helping them means putting order that God wants, and he sees that as man's reason of living:

Who Desire to Answer the Great END of Life, and to DO GOOD While they Live. (1710)." and a way of having God's forgiveness for our sins: " A sense of seeking forgiveness from God in helping the others The most Useful Men in the World, have gone out of it, crying to God, Lord, Let my Sins of Omission be Forgiven to me! Men that have made more than ordinary Conscience about well-Spending of their Time, have had their Death-bed made uneasy by this Reflection; The Loss of Time now Sits heavy upon me. (Dobkin 6-7).

Earlier on, I explained Emerson's vision on philanthropy and especially how he did not feel himself responsible for the others' poverty and for that hesitated in helping them because he is self-reliant. As a Puritan, Emerson

thinks if a person is poor it's God's will (predestination). Marx Weber, in his highly praised *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, notes that:

Mediæval ethics not only tolerated begging but actually glorified it in the mendicant orders. Even secular beggars, since they gave the person of means opportunity for good works through giving alms, were sometimes, considered an estate and treated as such. Even the Anglican social ethic of the Stuarts was very close to this attitude. It remained for Puritan Asceticism to take part in the severe English Poor Relief Legislation which fundamentally changed the situation. And it could do that, because the Protestant sects and the strict Puritan communities actually did not know any begging in their own midst. (Weber 104).

Moreover, beside this Puritan conception, Emerson thinks as a self-reliant that every person is responsible of his fortune, and fails to be successful for not being self-reliant. Whereas Franklin made "doing good to the others" principle and reason of his life. It is for the same purpose all along his life that he lived to help the others, from the club of mutual improvement (Junto), to the security militia he created in Philadelphia, or even with the creation of the subscribe library, just as the different inventions he made and refused to take money for them. Their different visions of the responsibility towards the others is therefore rooted in Franklin's collective and Emerson's individualistic approaches. That makes the first feels himself invested to the extent of making it the reason of his life, while the second did not feel himself invested as a self-reliance oriented.

Both Franklin and Emerson were influenced in their humanitarian thought by Mather Cotton on their different conceptions of the society. They all adopted the collective solution advocated by Mather: "He advocated the creation of temperance, missionary, and Bible societies, the establishment of

libraries for working men, associations for the establishment of morality and public order, and the education of the Negro." ( Dobkin 3). Franklin saw education as the best way of saving much lives, increasing literacy rate and giving these persons the chance to take themselves in charge. Whereas Emerson, as a puritan, before even being a self-reliant saw in education the mean to put order in the society, disorganized by men's corruption. In other words, they all applied the same philosophy for different conceptions of the American Dream.

### **2.3. Franklin's and Emerson's vision of religion and the American Dream**

Upon seeing the visions of the two authors regarding philanthropy, it's interesting to outlook their standings regarding religions. That will enable us to understand the deep meaning of their philosophies for so often, if not even always, religious motif has been the ultimate reasons of individual realization as well as a nation's rising. It cannot be denied that the deep essence of the beauty and the creative effervescence that characterize the Egyptians, the Greeks, and the Romans were religious. God's and divinities' worshiping led to the building of many pyramids, the inventions of endless things, or the discoveries of many hidden secrets, or the understanding of many enigmas.

At the scale of individuals all their existential dramas are rooted in religious philosophy as the American Dream discussed earlier is based on the Protestant system of belief, especially the matter of salvation. Marx Weber argued that Franklin exhibited, with 'almost classic purity' the ethos of rational acquisition." (Colin 14). In fact, Weber sees Franklin as the typical example of the capitalistic person. Moreover, that shows how religious thought and

practice led to the total change of the economic thought in the Western world, and later in the entire world. In this work, Weber uses the example of Franklin's life as the basis of his explanation of the relation between protestant thought and capitalism:

One has only to re-read the passage from Franklin, quoted at the beginning of this essay, in order to see that the essential elements of the attitude which was there called the spirit of capitalism are the same as what we have just shown to be the content of the Puritan worldly asceticism, only without the religious basis, which by Franklin's time had died away. (Weber 166).

All that brings us to Franklin's and Emerson's religious thought and their relationship. Contrary to Emerson who rose from the religious circle to the literary and philosophical ones by relying on the protestant thought, Franklin said of himself that he grew to see in Deity a kind of plurality of divinities.

The paradox of this spirit of capitalism, as Weber coined it, is that the flesh that made it comes from religion (protestant ethic); but the finality is the endless accumulation of wealth, which is its soul. But, those who have this protestant ethic are not most of the time protestant as Weber defended it, by using the example of Franklin who was a deist, not a Protestant. That makes Weber say: "Any relationship between religious beliefs and conduct is generally absent, and where any exists, at least in Germany, it tends to be of the negative sort. The people filled with the spirit of capitalism to-day tend to be indifferent, if not hostile, to the Church." (75). In other words because they behave as they did for economic purpose not for religious one for it's good for their business. To show you the importance of economic success in the protestant ethic, Weber quotes, The President of the Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland, G. White, who supported: "The best men on the roll of our Puritan Churches



were men of affairs, who believed that religion should permeate the whole of life." (Weber 283-4).

Emerson's philosophy materializes the American Dream and re-centers it to a more religious-philosophical conception. In that vein, he looks more as a reformer of the American Protestant church in the skin of Luther or Calvin, but in more anti socio-conservative mind. Imagine Emerson preferring the empty church before the service begins: "I like the silent church before the service begins, better than any preaching. How far off, how cool, how chaste the persons look, begirt each one with a precinct or sanctuary!" (Emerson 40). So, in Emerson's perspective the others are the corrupters of the church as they bring their traditions and customs colored by external influences.

Emerson's contribution in the structure of the American Dream is bringing to it a liberating élan from the external influence, especially from the British. For him, philosophic-transcendental Protestantism is different from the British classical protestant church and all the different forms of transcendentalism that existed in the world.

Emerson refused the assertion according to which there is compensation after life with which the loser will have a catch up. According to him, the sinner who succeeds is the virtuous, though called sinner by the losers. For him calling the virtuous sinners is a way the losers find to explain their incapacity to be self-reliant and successful. Emerson defended:

The preacher, a man esteemed for his orthodoxy, unfolded in the ordinary manner the doctrine of the Last Judgment. He assumed that judgment is not executed in this world; that the wicked are successful; that the good are miserable; and then urged from reason and from Scripture a compensation to be made to both parties in the next life....Yet what was the import of this teaching? What did the preacher mean by saying that the good are miserable in the present life? Was it

that houses and lands, offices, wine, horses, dress, luxury, are had by unprincipled men, whilst the saints are poor and despised; and that a compensation is to be made to these last hereafter, by giving them the like gratifications another day,—bank-stock and doubloons, venison and champagne? (Emerson 2001:52)

Emerson's Self Reliance is the real source of inspiration for Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* with its notion of superman above good and evil as the all that matter is the self-realization of the person no matter the means used (Note how, Nietzsche's Superman is confounded easily to Emerson's Self-reliance from which it comes). Here is the final bang that rung ending totally the few that remains of the capitalistic ethos as relating to classical Protestantism. As it is the custom today the capitalistic system used the Protestant values for economic purpose to develop itself and detached itself from it in the motif. That started with the case example of Franklin that shows the tremendous importance of the primacy of Emerson's Self-reliance in the freeing of the American ethos and the Dream that comes from it, from all popular religious prejudice that hampered its concretion.

Regarding the conception of good and evil, punishment of sins and reward of virtue, Franklin's vision is different from that of Emerson. The latter does not believe at all in this system of values as said in the previous paragraph while Franklin is a more earthly man compared to the transcendental Emerson. In his *Autobiography*, Franklin supports:

Deity; that he made the world, and govern'd it by his Providence; that the most acceptable service of God was the doing good to man; that our souls are immortal; and that all crime will be punished, and virtue

rewarded, either here or hereafter. These I esteem'd the essentials of every religion.... " (Franklin 1998:75).

That reveals also the minimalism of Franklin's religious belief limited to the simple recognition of the Deity as supreme God, and the principle of reward and punishment. You can remark well that even this simplistic religious thought on the existence of Deity and the reward of virtues and punishment of sin are rooted in reason because he had a totally rational vision of religion rather than a mystic or philosophical one. For one can say: it is logic that every action will lead to a reaction. Then by the same way any virtue or sin, will lead to a consequence good or bad depending if it's a virtuous or evil action. That leads us to another point of contention between the two authors, which is Franklin's rational and Emerson's spirituous-philosophico-instinctic approach to religion. For it's obvious that Emerson's refusal of the principle of rewarding of virtues and punishment of sin is purely instinctive before even being philosophical. All along his *Essay* and especially with the *Self-reliance* section he defends and places the instinct above the reason. In the way that instinct should lead all the aspects, of our lives because we are instinctive beings. So, it's evident when an individual uses his instinct for being self-reliance and fulfill his American Dream, this is in the natural order of things. Just as it's in the instinct of lion to hunt the antelope, and no one should blame him for doing so. Because that is the way it is and that's an attribute the Providence equips it with. Consequently, the mere fact of using his instinct is the true and real way of worshiping God, for it applies its will, of seeing it behaves as He likes.

All that philosophical meaning of Emerson's notion of sin and its punishment or virtue and its reward relies on the fact that as in *Nature*, he defends the uniqueness of man, God and the Nature, to separate them by rationalizing instinctive notion. That's how he saw man as praying in every deed

he does in his life for God's will of seeing him living, and interacting with the nature becomes a reality. The deed by itself is qualified good or evil by the society with its rules, customs. Emerson was against the latter as he defended non-conformity in situ of conformism. In his approach all that matter is the self-reliance affirmation of the individual: God creates us to shine. He insisted: "He will then see prayer in all action. The prayer of the farmer kneeling in his field to weed it, the prayer of the rower kneeling with the stroke of his oar, are true prayers heard throughout nature, though for cheap ends." Moreover, before even giving this vision of praying, Emerson gave dualistic vision of God, which as said in few lines above, is his refusal to see unity between nature and conscience. Thus we must not give humanly rationalistic meaning to the nature, which is transcendental to reason but in harmony with the instinct. He argues: "It supposes dualism and not unity in nature and consciousness. As soon as the man is at one with God, he will not beg." (Emerson 43). But, he sees the uniqueness between man and God, for the instinct is God made inner in us. So, why begging God, when we have Him in us, and we can achieve everything we want? Since we have the power and virtue of the instinct, we can achieve everything. He saw dualism between nature and conscience. For the nature is pure and in man's thought, and the conscience is the domestication of this so called wild nature. Seeing men bring customs, morals, traditions to tame the conscience and give it, the meaning they want it to have, but not its real meaning which is understanding it with the instinct.

## Conclusion

"The Faces of the American Dream in Franklin's *Autobiography* and Emerson's *Essay 'Self-reliance'* " contrasts those two authors' conceptions of the American Dream.

The work is divided in two chapters. In the first chapter, we discuss separately the two authors' conceptions of the American Dream. We have seen how Franklin uses moral virtues as a means to attain his American Dream. He does not use moral virtues for its own sake or religious one, but because they give him the discipline necessary to become wealthy. That is how he identifies in his *Autobiography* 13 virtues among which there are order, temperament, justice, etc. For instance, we have seen that he cultivates the virtue of order because it allows him to organize his working time efficiently.

It appears clearly in our work that Franklin is result-oriented; he had a highly pragmatic mind. With Franklin, the idea that one can become wealthy with hard working and good virtues as honesty becomes a reality. As said in the work he declares writing the *Autobiography* to instruct his son about how he moves from poverty to richness with the virtues' cultivation. Vaughn affirms his *Autobiography* is an instructive work which teaches young generation about how to become successful in life.

In fact Franklin wrote even a pamphlet names *Poor Richard Almanack* to instruct young Americans about how to be successful. In that pamphlet, he gives maxims, proverbs, and wise thoughts as rules and principles to follow for becoming wealthy.

To reach his American Dream Franklin, self educated himself with all the necessary needed for achieving it. Franklin was out of school early in his life at 10 due to his father's poverty. It was from his time that the social

transformation of living and studying all along started. That transformation was the result of the rising of capitalism and individualism.

We have seen also that Benjamin had the same rationalistic vision of religion that he understood with the reason than with the heart. Hence, he saw good or evil as forbidden or allowed because they are respectively good or harmful for one. He adopted everything when it entered in his pragmatic and utilitarian conceptions of life. Working to become successful was a recommendation of Puritanism, which sees being rich as the proof of God's salvation. Thus, puritans dedicate their lives to being successful by seeing themselves as salvaged by God. However, for Franklin the ultimate goal was becoming wealthy and a gentlemen.

Emerson is considered as the first major philosopher of America. He was an ideologue and as such. He defined the values and set rules of the American Dream. He empowered the Americans in going above themselves with his philosophy of self-reliance. That philosophy was the motor of the American Dream. That philosophy teaches individuals how to succeed by relying on themselves instead of imitating and copying the others. Emerson called on Americans not to imitate in all the fields of life, but to rely on themselves and their environment to develop themselves.

Nonetheless, Emerson had an individualistic conception of the American society and of capitalism. The individual was the fundamental center of capitalism with the individual's endless quest for interest. Many saw Emerson and Nietzsche who is inspired by the first as the definer of today's capitalism. Especially with Nietzsche's *Thus spoke Zarathustra*. Along with Nietzsche, Emerson called for the death of old values, which he saw as the strongest invention. In this sense, Nietzsche's nihilism is the developed version of

Emerson's non-conformism, just as his self-reliant man is the precursor of Nietzsche's superhuman.

Emerson saw the society and its rules as chains that hampered man's emancipation. Actually, he saw salvation in individualistic redefinition of rules and principles. Live the way you feel it! However, not live, as the others want you to do. He had a strong impression that whenever man believes in his self, great is his capacity and beautiful his creation. Emerson came in the first years of the American independence to give values and comfort to the young nation. Moreover, his epoch was one of great intellectual and philosophical effervescence in American history. That time is named American Renaissance. It is marked by the rising and apogee of the transcendental movement, which gathered many great American writers as Emily Dickenson, David Thoreau etc. Emerson was the leader of that movement. We saw also in that chapter that it was his self-reliance that originated the American exceptionalism. A politico-philosophical concept, Emerson's conception of the American Dream sees America as the greatest nation on earth that has the divine right to rule the world.

In the last chapter, we have compare and contrast Franklin's and Emerson's conceptions of the American Dream. Franklin backed a collective approach in fulfilling and developing the American Dream. Whereas Emerson defended an individual approach. Franklin shows it with his life example with his numerous collaborations in fulfilling his projects as with the creation of his printing business. He thought that individuals should unite in order to develop their country. Emerson as a self-reliant philosopher had an individualistic vision of empowering individuals until developing the entire society. However, he supported specifically the rising of an individual through the cultivation of this self-reliance to become successful and then develop his own society. In fact,

Emerson believed in the rising of individuals as Caesar or Jesus who changed and saved the lives of millions of persons. Of course, these powerful and successful persons came but in selfish version because they did not see themselves as invested of any social mission. They have wealth and power for themselves. Beside all those aspects, Franklin is a daily man with an incomparable desire for economic success, while Emerson is a transcendental philosopher who had neither eyes, nor heart for the material acquisition. Franklin participated in the American Dream in living to show concretely how to achieve it, while Emerson defined it, in terms of rules and principles.

We have also seen in this work that the two authors have the same approach to philanthropy because another early American writer and humanitarian named Cotton Mather inspired them all. Their common approach on helping the others is creating humanitarian association for killing the roots of the others' poverty rather than treating its manifestations.

Finally, we have contrasted the two authors' visions of the American Dream with regard totally to religion. The two had totally different approaches to religion. Franklin as a materialist and pragmatic man had such visions of religion. First of all, Franklin believed in a kind of universal god, though he was brought up a puritan. We supported that he had a pragmatic approach to religion for he did not have time for going regularly to church. Remember for a materialist time is precious. Once again as a materialist, he thought that money could do everything even compensating his nonattendance to the church offices by giving regular donation to the church. Whereas Emerson as a philosopher has a transcendental vision of religion. He sees God in Nature and finds then useless to pray in church.



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