

REVUE INTERNATIONALE D'ETUDES SOCIALES, DE PHILOSOPHIE, D'EDUCATION ET D'ETHIQUE

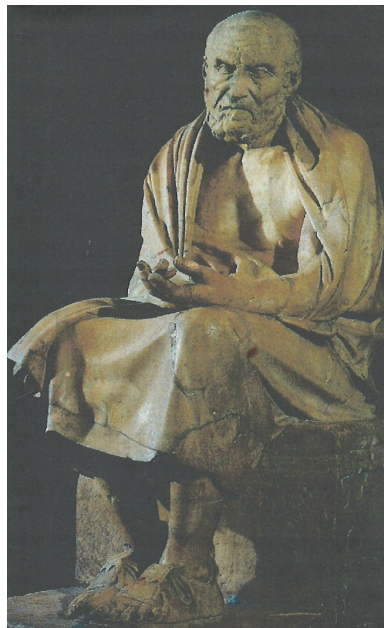
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APPREHENDING THE SIMULTANEOUS DEVELOPMENT OF BOTH SLAVERY AND FREEDOM IN AMERICA

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Abstract :

No institution in the history of the United States of America is more contradictory to the founding principles of the American republic than the institution of slavery. After the New world was discovered and flooded with peoples coming from diverse horizons, only interest-guided activities were undertaken, developed and promoted. The seeming inconsistencies or the far-fetched hypocrisy of slaveholders devoting themselves to freedom and equality is the central paradox of America. Providing an explanation of how people could have developed the dedication to human liberty and dignity exhibited by the leaders of the American Revolution and at the same time have developed and maintained a system of labor and bondage that denied human and dignity is the object of this research work. With a special focus on Virginia, it has set out to look into two centuries and more, of ambiguities and arduous struggle to make the American dream become a reality.

Keywords : slaver, negro slavery, freedom, principle, practice, inconsistency.

Résumé :

Dans l'histoire des Etats Unis d'Amérique, aucune institution n'est plus éloignée des principes fondateurs de la nation Américaine que l'esclavage des Noirs. Après que le 'Nouveau Monde' soit découvert et inondé de gens venant de divers horizons, seules des activités orientées vers l'intérêt étaient entreprises, développées et promues. L'incohérence apparente ou l'épineuse hypocrisie de maître d'esclaves qui consacrent leur vie à défendre la liberté et l'égalité est le point focal du paradoxe Américain. L'objectif visé par le présent article est de pouvoir donner une explication au fait que les leaders de la révolution Américaine se sont battus pour la liberté et la dignité humaines et ont pu au même moment développer et maintenir un système de servitude à l'antipode des mêmes valeurs. Cette analyse qui s'est donné pour objet d'analyser deux siècles de contradictions pour enfin maintenir et faire respecter les principes de la déclaration d'indépendance, focalise à cette fin une attention particulière sur la Virginie.

Mots-clés : esclavage, esclavage des noirs, liberté, principe, pratique, inconsistance.

INTRODUCTION

...the principles upon which American greatness is founded (are)- reverent for individual liberties and for tolerance , unswerving belief in government by

consent of the governed ,concern with equal opportunity for all, and advocacy of moral and humane aspirations and objectives in our dealings with other nations.

Richard B. Morris

Basic Documents in American History (1956)

America is home to people of almost every race, religion, and nationality. Some, like the Native Americans and Inuit, have been here for thousands of years. Others, who arrived later, came in the hope of finding riches, adventure, and a new life. And some, fleeing war, famine, and persecution, sought only safety and a chance to survive. Africans alone were brought here unwillingly, stolen from their homes and forced to live as slaves.

Susan Altman

Extraordinary African-Americans: From Colonial to Contemporary Times (2001)

Ruling on the cardinal values addressed in the Declaration of Independence, these two visibly contradictory quotations are the very epitome of the paradox in the history of the United States of America - a land of the Free and the Unfree, a land of freedom and serfdom. Indeed, the United States of America is generally described as a free and socially, economically, and politically stable country. This is mostly thanks to its rich history - from discovery to the founding of the Republic, reinforced by a solid constitution. That federal republic exuded high hopes with regard to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. In line with this, President Abraham Lincoln, while reaffirming faith in the Almighty God as creator of humankind, reminded the nation of the great premises contained in the Declaration of Independence when he said, “We hold these truths to be self-evident: that they are endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness”¹. One may state that these highly expressed values should have their natural virtues saved, followed and strictly promoted for the well-being of humankind, not only in the United States of America, but also in the entire world.

¹*An Outline of American History, United States Information Agency, Introducing Paragraph of the American Declaration of Independence, 4th July, 1776.*

Instead, the American inner character of serfdom reached its peak with the practices of the institution of slavery at the very moment of the fight for freedom from Great Britain. Deeply rooted in the American civilization, it was accepted as a source of wealth production, and even development. Not only were the greatest American figures, including some presidents, slaveholders but also these people endeavored to justify that particular context of both slaveholders and freedom fighters: a nonpareil contradiction and a grotesque paradox!

The issue of liberty and equality in America had always been accompanied by the use of slavery, set up as a whole institution. That two such seeming contradictory developments had taken place simultaneously in that land of great democracy over a long period of time. Within the framework of this research work, this poses a serious challenge in view to explaining how people could have so steadily developed the dedication to human liberty and dignity exhibited by the leaders of the American Revolution and at the same time have developed and maintained a system of labor that definitely denied human liberty and dignity every single hour of a day.

1- **VIRGINIA: Charnel house and soil of the first American freedom charters.**

At the very beginning and due to the fact that it held both masters and indentured servants together, Virginia had originally been thought of as a receptacle for different interests, behaviors and complaints. It was a special case of two men living in two separate worlds. Owing to the value of a man's labor in Virginia, there was a boom era (1618-1630) when it is not hard to see why the demand for servants was high, even in the face of a food scarcity. At the time, the London Company rooted at Jamestown, the first successful English settlement had just begun to ship tobacco in quantity to the English market. During that period of time, the profits from tobacco were enough to keep almost all the colonists growing as much of it as they could in spite of every effort to turn them to other products. Taking the place of gold in Virginia, tobacco production differs in figures, perhaps because some of the producers may be boasting, because some men worked harder than others, and because tobacco harvest varied sharply from year to year for reasons beyond human control². Accordingly, prices vary with no negative impact on people's lives, giving opportunities to planters to enjoy great

² Elisabeth B. Schumpeter. *English Overseas Trade Statistics*, (Oxford, 1960), pp. 52-55

satisfaction with regard to their different tobacco production. According to John Rolfe, the one who introduced tobacco cultivation in Virginia; William Capps, an old Virginia planter and William Spencer another famous tobacco planter, the boom time in Virginia was enriching as a profit making one, a wealthy period of time that excited the greed for gain despite price instabilities. The following statements sheds light on that fact:

In the colony in 1619, the best grade sold for export at three shillings a pound. In 1623 what reach England was worth no more than half that, and in bartering within the colony (where it had already become the principal medium of exchange) it was said to be valued at less than a shilling a pound. In a lawsuit recorded in 1624 it was reckoned at two shillings a pound, and in 1625 at three shillings again. The boom lasted until 1629 or 1630.....Because of the chances for such profits, Virginia in the last years of the company, while a charnel house was also the first American boom country. There was no gold or silver. A man could not make a fortune by himself. But if he could stay alive and somehow get control of a few servants and keep them alive, he could make more in a year than he was likely to make in several years in England. And if he could get a number of servants, he might indeed make a fortune³.

At the same time that it is a land of servitude, the value of a man's labor represents a potential stake of interest. Virginia differed from any latter American boom areas and that success depended not only on acquiring the right piece of land, but on acquiring men. Men rushed to stake out claims to men, literally stole them, lured them, fought over them- and bought and sold them at will, bidding up the prices to four, five, and six times the initial cost. The company's programs obligingly poured men into Virginia for the scramble⁴. Interests topped the rank to any other concern in that field of the American first boom where liberty coupled with oppression and labor with servitude. The concept is clearly expressed in the following terms:

It seems evident that while the Virginia Company was failing in London, a number of its officers in the colony were growing rich. In order to do so, they not only rendered less than faithful service to their employers; they also reduced other Virginians to a condition which, while short of slavery, was also some distance from the freedom that Englishmen liked to consider as their birthright. The company in 1618 had inaugurated a popularly elected representative assembly, but the effective power remained in the governor and his council. By no

³ Edmund Morgan, *American Freedom, American Slavery*, (London, 1975), pp296-297

⁴ Ibid, pp114-115

*coincidence, the council consisted almost entirely of the men holding large numbers of servants.*⁵

In view to the above, councilors not only guarded jealously their authority, and perhaps unconstitutionally, but not infrequently did they wield it on their own behalf, participating in decisions that favored their interests. Virginians dealt in servants the way Englishmen dealt in land or chattels so long as extreme demand of labor induced undoubtedly service with high human transportation. When a man had more apprentices than he needed, he might with permission of his guild sell an apprentice to another master of the guild.⁶ The boom time in Virginia produced fortunes for the few and misery for the many.

Originally, all the eastern portion of North America became the thirteen states and known as Virginia where lie great opportunities as many individuals were interested in western planting. In no longer time, the great success of diverse commercial companies in the East India company in 1600 enabled similar enterprises of the western world in the purpose of trading with distant countries. In few years later were sown the seeds of the pans of colonial extension thanks to the corporation, which as a form of local subordinate government, had long been familiar to English merchants. From then started the early American democratic initiatives known as charters, surely coupled with interest-guided decisions still in the drain of the connection: freedom and the institution of slavery. Virginia welcomed many governors who in one way or the other built up the history of the colony which could help apprehend all the eastern portion of the North America (Virginia) as the birth-place of the foundation of the America paradox.

Under the first charter in 1606, a government had been placed in the hands of a colonial council. Some years later and mainly in 1609, a new charter was granted in 1609. A charter by which the council in England, originally distinct from the company the, became a part of it while the local council was abolished, being superseded by a governor. By the second charter, the bounds of the settlement were enlarged, giving much power than granted by the one of 1606. Under governor Sir Thomas Dale, a third charter was granted to Virginia in 1912, adding another Island (Bermuda Island) to

⁵ Ibid, pp123-124

⁶ O.G. Dunlop, *English Apprenticeship and Child Labour* (London,1912)pp57-58 as quoted by Edmund Morgan,op.citp128

Virginia and, empowering the company to raise money. This charter was far more liberal than either of its predecessors in clearly granting governmental powers. It then becomes obvious by the means of colonial Virginia, the first steps toward democratic government in America as showed by the rapidly succeeding charters of Virginia. There already lies the idea of change, freeing out of bondage and self-government setting⁷. From the first charter to the third one, Virginias slightly moved from a local council, subject to a superior council resident in England, a company with the character of a body politic to a company of governmental power: self-government.

However, the liberal endeavor gained control of the company, and to attract new settlers as well as to curb the power of a profligate or tyrannical governor, the company instructed its governor to call an assembly of settlers and give them a share in the government. This became the House of Burgesses: the first representative body in America⁸. Upon attractions and hardships as well, Virginians started living under the laws of their own making, and a “government of the people, for the people, and by the people” gained its first foothold on American soil. This freedom-led spirit prevailing over the colony didn’t prevent slavery from taking place, where lies once again the strange marriage of freedom and slavery. It is then hard to grasp a fuller comprehension of the American paradox without referring to Virginia where the rise of liberty and equality had been close accompanied by the rise of slavery.

2-Virginians: Power usurpators, liberty fighters but founders of the American Republic

Before the founding of the American Republic in 1776, all questions related to the issues of land, man’s labor, equality, liberty and prosperity for all, found their answers with Virginians. Rebellions to denounce any injustice in the American soil, freedom fight to triumph the inhuman bondage, compromise to sink differences and view some common goodness, educating people in order to sharpen their mind toward a Republic, drafting articles which can suit tastes of the people thirsty of everlasting liberation, were limited to Virginians. The political, administrative and socio-economic

⁷ D. Morey, *Genesis of a Written Constitution, Annals of American Academy*, vol.I p529

⁸ Ibid

activities were mainly carried out by the mother country in tight connection with Virginian activists: governors, traders, planters, clergymen, intellectuals...

Virginians built the Republic out of the union between lower class people and big men, difference of opinions and greatly on the contempt of the poor where lies a certain ambiguity likely to promote both freedom and slavery. Yet, Virginians have had a special appreciation of the freedom dear to republicans because they saw every day what life without it could be like, in an atmosphere where either in property or in virtue were they equal⁹. They were allowed to compose the documents that founded the republic, and the way Virginians chartered for the United States proved the undoing of slavery¹⁰. They provided a certain range of variety of ideas that were greatly inspired toward the implementation of people's highest ambition but which still furnished sufficient elements good to make believe in protecting slavery and fight for freedom. For example, even though education counts among the fundamental keys in the pursuit of getting out of monarchy claws, in Jefferson's own view on the question, education of young Virginians was unlikely to make anything but tyrants of them, especially those who spent their early years, as he did, on one of the great plantations. The children of planters mingled freely with the children of slaves, and the result in Jefferson's opinion was to train them in tyranny.

The whole commerce between master and slave as he mentioned in a famous passage, is "a perpetual exercise of the most boisterous passions, the most unremitting despotism on the one part, and degrading on the other. Our children see this, and learn to imitate it...the storms, the child looks on, catches the lineaments of wrath, puts on the same airs in the circle of smaller slave, gives a loose to his worst of passions, and thus nursed, educated, and daily exercised in tyranny, cannot but be stamped by it with odious peculiarities"¹¹. Virginia not only had too few schools, but her great plantations were thus themselves schools of vice and tyranny. Though Jefferson himself was one of the greatest champions of liberty his land of Virginia has ever had, whatever his shortcomings may be, he proved by the means of this passage, his pessimism about a prosperous republic led by a grown-up in Virginia.

⁹ *The American Ideal of 1776: The Twelve Basic American Principles.*

¹⁰ Edmund Morgan, op.p387

¹¹ Edmund Morgan, op.p375

Qualifying the institution as an abominable crime, the author of the Declaration of Independence clearly said in 1814 the following:

My opinion has ever been that, until more can be done for them, we should endeavor, with those whom fortune has thrown on our hands, to feed and clothe them well, protect them from ill usage, require such reasonable labor only as is performed voluntarily by freedom, and be led by no repugnancy to abdicate them, and our duties to them¹².

It is right to confirm that Virginians had been working their plantations primarily with slave labor since the beginning of the very settlement of the London company. Under such considerations, there is no way denying that Jefferson's fortune exclusively comes from slavery which was qualified as an abominable but cherished at the same time by the same person.

As for George Madison who was to perform the most original contributions to republican political thinking of any of the American revolutionists, was unfortunately at the same time a kind of politician of contradictory initiatives. He organized the first opposition party in the new nation. Such an accomplishment could scarcely accord either with ungoverned passions or a predilection for despotism, which can be justified in such a context by the support to slave labor. Seeing that republicanism had always been associated with men who worked in the ground and with regard to the fact that land cultivation held a special place in Virginia, the controversial character of potential leaders grown under power usurpation and liberty fight in that land of great opportunities, the simultaneous development of freedom and slavery was a great evidence in Virginians' daily life. In such a perspective, Aristotle had laid down the axiom stipulating that "the best material of democracy is an agricultural population, and people engaged in other occupations had no room for the virtues that were necessary to a Republic"¹³. Virginians showed ardent advocate of equality and at the same time proved perplex and confusing. Virginia's labor force was essentially composed of slaves. Undoubtedly, the most ardent American republicans were Virginians. But, their determination was not unrelated to their power over men and women they held in bondage.

¹² Thomas Jefferson :*An Outline of American History*,1770

¹³ Aristotle,*Politics*,Book VI as quoted by Edmund Morgan,p389

There is on the part of Virginian leaders, so much a hypocrisy and non-will for freedom of the poor. The latter ones upon whom rested the whole economic life of Virginia. Landon Carter, another Virginian historian wrote few days after the Declaration of Independence, “If you free the slaves, you must send them out of the country or they must steal for their support”¹⁴. The strange connection between slavery and freedom naturally witnessed both tyranny and democracy in a context of hard liberty fight on the soil of interest-oriented endeavors. This because slavery was a mode of compulsion that often prevailed where land was abundant and furthermore, once established in Virginia, it offered incomparable advantages in keeping labor docile. Which labor was the backbone of Virginians’ life. It was then in such a drive that Virginians drafted not only the Declaration, but the Constitution in its first ten amendments as well. As slave owners and, they were elected to the presidency of the United States under that Constitution for thirty-two of the first thirty-six years of its existence.¹⁵

3- In the pursuit of the American paradox: the future of slavery after Independence.

There is no need to recall that after independence, the great and interest-yielding issue related to slavery continued its way on till the adoption of the thirteenth amendment. It suffered no handicap on its being carried on for so many centuries again, neither from the framers of the constitution nor the institutions put in place by the later ones. Were it a subject of discussion that it couldn’t easily be thrashed out since it served all the American society as a whole in so many ways be not worth mentioning here again. The great American figures who constituted the bodywork, the genuinely made skeleton of the Declaration drafting and constitution writing didn’t mind it in the least, kicking out the plague out of the American society as they felt quite indifferent in their vast majority.

Let us get hold of the future of slavery after the American Revolution with a strict focus on Abraham Lincoln, a forty-four year-old lawyer in Springfield who, with some of his contemporaries deified the men who had participated in the Revolution sharing the deep feeling as the number of the living veterans of the Revolution

¹⁴ Landon Carter, *Diary, II-1055* as quoted by Edmund Morgan

¹⁵ Edmund Morgan, op.p183

gradually dried up. They were for them and most particularly for Abraham Lincoln “a forest of giants oaks”, “pillars of the temple of liberty” and “fortress of strength”. However, in 1838, he openly expressed fear that, as the “silent artillery of time” removed them and the “living history” they embodied from the world, memories of the Revolution would necessarily fade, and with them the passion that had done so much to maintain the institutions and the freedom they established.¹⁶

But in his opinion, Lincoln frequently recalled with full regret each of those denunciations of the Declaration. With a masterful eloquence, he made the argument of those defended the Declaration his own, much as Thomas Jefferson had formerly done, making his voice heard both about the content of the document and some specific points which met or not his adherence. Denying principles stipulated in the document, putting forward personal interpretations, working on outstanding logic became a common manifest among intellectuals of all ranks. Replying to Senator Stephen Douglas at Chicago on his stand about “personal rights” as put in the Declaration document, Lincoln would later on say that “*Never had a feeling politically that did not spring from the sentiments embodied in the Declaration of Independence*”¹⁷. Such a standpoint waged much opposition against him. Nevertheless, his understanding of the document became in time that of the whole nation.

Lincoln’s personal position came to light most fully and exponentially during his debates with the Illinois senator Stephen Douglas, a democrat who was quite well in favor of the Kansas-Nebraska Act. As matter of fact, the most striking differences between the two contenders, however, lay in the strong positions they took on the issue that most caught their attention, the future of slavery. In fact, Lincoln’s open attacks on Douglas took up in 1854, the very year after Douglas had piloted the Kansas-Nebraska Act through congress, and concluded four years later with the formal Lincoln-Douglas hectic debates, won national attention coupled with a special consideration from his fellow citizens. This favored him so well as he was indirectly put on the road to the presidency. Throughout those debates, the contenders based their different arguments on

¹⁶ Lincoln’s Address to the Young’s Lyceum of Springfield, Illinois, January 27,1838, and His Reply to Stephen Douglas at Chicago, July 10,1858, in Roy P. Baster, ed, The collected Works of Abraham Lincoln (new Brunswick,NJ,1953)

¹⁷ Lincoln speech at Peoria, Illinois,October,16,1854 :reply to Douglas at Chicago, July to H.L Pierce and others, April6,1859, and address at Independence Hall in Philadelphia,february22

the authority of the Revolution and the Declaration of Independence, which they explained in quite conflicting ways.

For, Douglas confidently defended the Kansas-Nebraska Act, which gave rights to the people of the two states to decide whether to allow within their borders as perfectly consistent with the principles and practices of the Revolution while instructing their congressional delegates to vote for Independence in 1776, he faithfully recalled one state after another, how they had explicitly retained the exclusive right of defining its domestic institutions, and the Kansas-Nebraska act only confirmed that right. For him the Declaration of Independence substantially carried no implication whatsoever with regard to slavery since signers referred to white men, only to “men of *European descent*”, when they declared the equality of all men. In the same breath, he expressively asserted, the kind of equality they asserted was between American colonists and British subjects in Great Britain, both of whom had equal rights and neither to the others. In his eyes, the signers were not thinking of “The *Negro or...savage Indian, or the Feejee or degraded race*”. If we really take care to view it, had they meant to include Blacks, signers would have been motivated to join their homelands and free their slaves, which not even Thomas Jefferson did in light to all his eagle-vision prescriptions and masterful guidance in drafting the document. Defending that those men who signed the Declaration of Independence declared the Negroes their equals “was therefore to call the signers, hypocrites”. The Declaration had only one purpose: to explain and justify American Independence from the British Crown.¹⁸

Like many others of his time such as Benjamin Wade, Lincoln understood that it was quite impossible to separate the Declaration condemnation of monarchy from a condemnation of slavery. A vehement deny of the fact that a king can justify rule by right of birth was to deny that anyone could rule another, any race or creed or national origin without his or her consent. In their understanding, the promise of equality for all men was a normal sentiment that linked up newly arrived Americans with the founding generation, an ‘electric cord’. “I had thought the Declaration contemplated the progressive improvement in the condition of all men everywhere”, declared Lincoln while adding that in the other way run, the document was

¹⁸ Speech in Senate, March 3, 1854, in appendix to the congressional Globe, 1st Session, XXXI : p.337

“of no practical use - mere rubbish - old wadding left to rot on the battle-field after the victory is won”, noting more than “an interesting memorial of the dead past....shorn of its vitality, and practical value”, without “the germ, or even the suggestion of the individual right in it”.¹⁹

He constantly denied that signers of the Declaration meant that men were equal in all respects. They did not mean to say all men were equal in color, size, intellect, moral development or social capacity. They distinctively interpreted the considerations in which they did consider all men created equal. In a convincing way did he hammer that while the signers said “men were created equal in having certain inalienable rights...this they said and this meant”, they had no intention of affirming the “obvious untruths, but all were then enjoying that same equality” nor to strictly confer it on them on the spot.²⁰ Agreeing on or setting up a constitution inevitably demanded that slavery be allowed to continue within the range of those original states that consciously chose to keep it docile. This was set for their own good or their own survival. Paradoxically as Stephen Douglas says, the states that made up the union in 1776 reserved power over their domestic institutions that did not mean slavery had to be allowed in states not yet organized in 1776, such as those in the Northern territory, or Kansas and Nebraska.²¹

In light of the above, one could therefore share the viewpoint of Calhoun stipulating that the assertions of human equality and inalienable rights were unnecessary in the Declaration of Independence: the Americans could have declared their Independence without them. Lincoln did recognize the truth about it while acknowledging the inclusion it could have made. Honor should be granted to Thomas Jefferson who, despite his double-standard character has masterfully written in a letter of 1859:

“To the men who, in a concrete pressure of a struggle for national independence by a single people, had the coolness, forecast, and capacity to introduce into a merely revolutionary document, an abstract truth, applicable to all men and all times, and so to embalm it there, that today, and in all coming days, it shall be rebuke and a stumbling block to the very harbingers of reappearing tyranny and oppression”.²²

¹⁹ See collected works of Lincoln, II :266,405-07 ;499-500

²⁰ Abraham Lincoln At Springfield, June 26,1857,Ibid,405-06

²¹ Abraham Lincoln at Chicago, July 10, 1858, to J.N Brown. October 18,1858 and at Peonia October,16,1854, ibd 12501,266-67

²² *Fragment on the Constitution and the Union*, ca January, 1861, and Lincoln to HL. Pierre and others, April 6 1859, in Baster, Ed, collected works of Abraham Lincoln, IV: 168-69, III378.

The Declaration of Independence didn't show any firm conviction in getting rid of slavery and may be likewise granted the same rights both to Whites and Blacks. They meaningfully expressed it by the means of that same document mainly written by Virginians, grown up under power usurpation and liberty fight and highly living on land cultivation assured by man's labor practice.

CONCLUSION

The issue of freedom and slavery represents in the history of America, a confusing subject to be fully apprehended in all its different but manifest facets. Deep analysis out of a careful research on the topic reveals a simple ambiguity about that simultaneous development of freedom and slavery in America before and even after independence, mainly with regard to the respect that should be granted to the principles of a democratic republic. While Virginia represented the largest and most influential of the thirteen colonies, it stood at the same time as the land where great American leaders became the first defaulters of the laws of their own making. This opened wide doors to many other questions related to the strange marriage of slavery and freedom in that "Promised Land".

Viewing that human emotions and reactions aren't specific to anyone historical event and considering it as an exploration of conditions that will persist just as long as violence and inequality will continue to flourish in any given society, Charles Dickens' novel entitled "A Tale of Two Cities", written in 1859, caught my attention, met the challenge I set to thrash out in connection with my research work. This novel by Charles Dickens, set in London and Paris before and during the French Revolution, depicts the plight of the French peasantry demoralized by the French aristocracy in the years leading up to the revolution. It pointed out the corresponding brutality demonstrated by the revolutionaries toward the former aristocrats in the early years of the revolution added to many unflattering social parallels with life in London during the same time. Talking of such a deplorable situation, Dickens writes:

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of light, it was season of darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we

*had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way*²³

Considered as a city on a hill that eyes of all people are upon, it came out as a terrible shock to discover America through its ordeal: freedom and slavery. The so-called assigned divine mission of the “Promised *Land*” revealed itself as just a fleeting and vain illusion to be pursued. The American connection of freedom and slavery stands as a paradox where the rise of liberty and equality was accompanied by the rise of slavery, the two such contradictory developments going on simultaneously from the seventeenth century to the nineteenth.

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²³ Charles Dickens (1859), *A Tale of Two Cities*.

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