# Destiny and conditionality: the ameliorative pragmatisms of Ralph Waldo Emerson and Fukuzawa Yukichi

*Destino e condicionalidade: os pragmatismos melhorativos de Ralph Waldo Emerson e Fukuzawa Yukichi*

**David Dilworth***

**Abstract**: The article develops a comparative hermeneutic of the "life worlds" of continental North America and of Pacific rim Meiji Japan by way of interfacing the proto-pragmatistic articulations of Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882) and Fukuzawa Yukichi (1835-1901). Still relevant in today's marketplace of ideas, Emerson's *The Young American* (1844) and Fukuzawa's *Outline of a Theory of Civilization* (1875) pioneered ameliorative possibilities of meritocratic modernity in post-patriarchic and post-feudal civilization.

**Keywords:** Amelioration. American Pragmatism. Civilization. Emerson. Free Citizenry. Fukuzawa. Modernization of Japan.

**Resumo**: *O artigo desenvolve uma hermenêutica comparativa dos "mundos da vida" da América do Norte continental e do círculo Pacífico do Japão Meiji através de uma interface das articulações protopragmáticas de Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882) e Fukuzawa Yukichi (1835-1901). Ainda relevante no mercado de ideias atuais,* The Young American *(1844), de Emerson, e* Outline of a Theory of Civilization *(1875), de Fukuzawa, foram possibilidades melhorativas pioneiras da modernidade meritocrática na civilização pós-patriarcal e pós-feudal.*

**Palavras-chave**: *Civilização. Emerson. Cidadania livre. Fukuzawa. Melhoria. Modernização do Japão. Pragmatismo americano.*

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## 1 Emerson and the concept of free market free citizenry

In this article I articulate a concept of "free market free citizenry" as a *philosophic* concept, considering it as no less than a foundational *normative* concept, indeed the *gold standard* normative concept, in the progressive history of *civilization*—and, as

* Professor of Philosophy of the Philosophy Department, at Stony Brook University, New York, EUA. Email: dd9414@aol.com.

well, not by happenstance—the foundational life world concept underlying classical American Pragmatism. This is of course a tall order—an inexhaustibly ramifying subject—but a properly philosophic one.

To give it a specific focus here, I first pay deference to Ralph Waldo Emerson's proto-pragmatistic essay, *The Young American* (1844), which I argue ranks among the first full-fledged expressions of the concept of "free market free citizenry" in the world-history of philosophy. I refer to Emerson's idealization of a democratic "life world" of self-reliant individuals, families, and communities pursuing the "American Dream" reflective of and ministrant to their status *as the first free and equal citizenry in world history*. While the relatable phrase the "American Dream" is of a later coinage, Emerson's declaration that "Work is victory!" keynoted in a nutshell the unprecedented human potential of this new historical outcome. In current world perspective, it still rings with a fresh, cogent resonance.

In tandem with a cascade of early lectures, essays, and poetry, Emerson explicitly raised the stakes on such a momentous, and properly philosophic, theme, in his essay *The Young American* (1844). Entered competitively into the free marketplace of ideas in his day, Emerson's articulation was not chauvinistic or "nationalistic". A new global *Zeitgeist* was forming in the 19th-century. A likeminded sensibility appeared in the timely writings of Fukuzawa Yukichi (1835-1901), the premier advocate of Japan's modernization ("westernization") in the early years of the Meiji period (1868-1912). While deep-rooted historical traditions separated the two authors, both can instructively be reprised now as converging on the arguably most significant moral, political, and intellectual ensemble of pragmatic-pragmatistic concepts of *their* times and of *ours*—namely, articulation of the concept of a "free market free citizenry" that in principle and generality transcended the older institutional foundations of patriarchism and feudalism in world-history.

Let me repeat that this is a bottom-line philosophic consideration, one that transcends the usual guild-identity, factional intramurals in the contemporary academy.

On his end, Fukuzawa's signature motto of "independence and self-respect" (*dokuritsu jison*) pioneered a veritable paradigm transformation in Japanese history. Writing in the first sentence of his best-selling work, *An Encouragement of Learning* (*Gakumom no susume, 1872-76*) that "God has made all men equal", he challenged centuries of Japanese institutional culture; and he followed that up in 1875 with a substantial theoretical work, an "outline" of the comparative progressions (and retardations) of civilization, East and West, in his finest speculative work, *Outline of a Theory of Civilization* (*Bunmeiron no gairyaku*, 1875). The Emerson-resonating Fukuzawa, too, was more than just a patriotic author; he was the first advocate of such a radical philosophic concept of independence and self-respect in the history of East Asia.

The historical stakes were indeed high. First Emerson, and then three decades later, Fukuzawa can be credited with having elevated the philosophic theme of "free market free citizenry" into modern civilization's "adventure of ideas", where "ideas" are to be conceived as purposeful entelechies—ultimately in pursuit of the beautiful, the good, and the true—with respect to ideal norms of humanity that are ministrant to our suicultural (personal), civicultural (political), and speciecultural (intellectual)

instincts. Each author, in his own context, caught the world-historical significance of the concept of "free market free citizenry" at a highest level of *generality* and in broadly *prospective* terms.

I shall focus on Emerson first. For his part, among his many celebrated writings, Emerson's *The Young American* (1844) inscribed such a "representative" configuration of history-making ideas in the context of the United States of America's post-Revolutionary War trajectories of sovereign territorial expansion. His essay underwrote the *prospects* of a new "*work ethic*" of a historically unprecedented free citizenry facing the still untapped resources (and its daunting challenges) of the vast North American continent. At the same time Emerson was no stranger to the fatalities of individual life and the bloody struggles between winners and losers in the public arena.

To be sure, the learned Emerson traced this new work ethic of continental exploration (and daunting struggles and setbacks) to its theoretical provenance in a British philosophic heritage of "social contract theory" associated with principles of "mutual transference of rights" in Hobbes' *Leviathan* and of private property rights inscribed in John Locke's *Second Treatise of Government* and Adam Smith's *The Wealth of Nations*. This progressive tradition of British liberalism was carried over into the Utilitarian philosophies of Bentham and J. S. Mill in the 19th-century, and, together with political ideas of the three branches of government contributed by the French theorist Montesquieu, directly impacted the writers of the American Constitution. But the European philosophers rang abstract theoretical sources on "freedom" in the context of their still stratified aristocratic societies. Emerson's writings, following the suit of constitutional policy intentions of Washington, Jefferson, Madison, et al., articulated this intellectual heritage in respect of North America's *concrete situation* of historically unprecedented prospects of moral, political, and economic development.

Another provenance of emerging modernity's concept of *human freedom* came out the writings of Immanuel Kant and the waves of idealist and post-idealist thinkers of Germany.[1] In the *Jena-zeit* years during and after Kant's time, Fichte contributed a key transitional concept of intellectual and moral freedom in the phases of his *Wissenschaftlehre*. Of the subsequent array of articulations of freedom of the major post-Kantian authors, Schelling's *Investigation into the Essence of Human Freedom* (1809/2006) arguably contributed the premier speculative trajectory. Schelling's *Freiheitschrift* and later-phase writings, mediated by Coleridge, Carlyle, and other British authors, soon impacted Emerson and the generation of early American Transcendentalists in the pre-Civil War years, and then came to have a major impact on C. S. Peirce, the founder of American Pragmatism. But

1 See Pinkard (2002): "'Germany' during that period must be put in quotation marks, since for all practical purposes there simply was no such thing as 'Germany' at the time. 'Germany' became Germany only in hindsight. Yet, starting in 1781 [the year of Kant's publication of the first edition of his *Critique of Pure Reason*] 'German' philosophy came for a while to dominate European philosophy and to change the shape of how not only Europeans but practically the whole world conceived of itself, of nature, of religion, of human history, of the nature of knowledge, of politics, and the structure of the human mind in general" (PINKARD, 2002, p. 2).

again, the German Idealists and post-Idealists, notwithstanding the potential social dynamite of their variations on human freedom, still philosophized in the context of "Old World" feudal principalities.[2] It was the "younger" generation of 19th-century American thinkers who "cashed in" the percolating idea of freedom of their European forebears in pragmatically concrete terms.

On, then, to Emerson. Though the transformational generality of this veritable paradigm change in human history evades any specific form of predication—and certainly transcends Emerson's personal contribution as well—a few biographical facts may serve to focus this narrative. Emerson was born in 1803 in the first generation after the Revolution War. His grandfather had served as a chaplain in that eight-year conflict that was destined to be the historical watershed dividing the Old and the New England. He grew up in his grandfather's house, the Old Manse, that overlooked the bridge over which the British army first marched against the Revolutionary forces. At the age of 33 he immortalized this momentous encounter of old and emerging new world in the now celebrated lines of his commissioned "Hymn: Sung at the Completion of the Concord Monument, April 19, 1836":

> By the rude bridge that arched the flood,
> Their flag to April's breeze unfurled,
> Here once the embattled farmers stood,
> And fired the shot heard round the world.[3]

Emerson's "shot heard round the world" symbolically presaged the prospects of continental North America's dawning experiment in free citizenry. He personally shared in this forward-trending experiment in world history, contributing to its formative stages in arduous travels to over 1400 cities in mid-19th century North America, Canada, and England, during which he eye-witnessed the possibilities of the United States of America enjoying "a new relation to the universe" [the electric theme he sounded in his first philosophic writing, *Nature* (1836)].[4] In less than

2 In *On Liberty* (1859), J. S. Mill's refers to "[…] the intellectual fermentation of Germany during the Goethean and Fichtean period […]"—the "impulses" of which, however, "[…] are well-nigh spent; and we can expect no fresh start until we again assert our mental freedom" (MILL, 1859, p. 42). Unrecognized by Mill, the intellectual fermentation of the *Jena-zeit* German Enlightenment had already crossed the Atlantic and been absorbed by Emerson and his Transcendentalist colleagues Frederic Hedge, Margaret Fuller, and others. It was subsequently absorbed by Peirce, as per his biographical note beginning *The Law of Mind* (EP 1:312-313, 1892).

3 EMERSON, 1994, p. 125.

4 After leaving the ministry, Emerson joined the lyceum circuit of public lectures; between 1883 and 1881 he gave nearly 1,500 lectures, traveling to hundreds of towns and cities in more than 20 states and Canada. In 1846, he gave more than 50 lectures, and kept up that pace throughout the 1850s, some years delivering as many as 80 lectures, while arduously covering, by the newly forming railroad systems, an immense geographical expanse, outward from New England, throughout the Midwest and New York, and as far west as California and as far north as Canada. On his second tour of England and Scotland he gave 67 lectures, to crowds of as many as 500 to 700 people.

a decade thereafter, in a torrent of celebrated, though for his times antinomian, early lectures, essays, and over 100 first in a career collection of 500 poems, he propounded his spanking new, post-Puritan, Transcendentalist worldview which pointed like a weather-vane to real possibilities of change, to a new epoch of a constitutionally grounded, free and equal, working class citizenry.

Again, it was in this forward-facing experimental perspective that Emerson contrasted the expanding *moral marketplace* of post-Revolutionary War "continental" North America with the still aristocratic and feudalistic institutions of England and of the more checker-boarded national territories of the European continent. Pointedly to that effect, in his *English Traits* (1855), which was the remarkably erudite fruit of his second lecture tour of England, Emerson estimated that "imperial" England was far ahead in political and economical "modernization" than the other nations of the European continent, not to speak of the still slumbering, comparatively more undeveloped, cultures of Asia, the Middle East, and South America. But he ventured to divine in *English Traits* that "young America" was in a sovereign process of transcending Victorian England's leading status in the 19th century.

Though it is a quick reminder here—to be developed below—Fukuzawa Yukichi's advocacy of Meiji Japan's transition from feudalism to a "free market" moral and political citizenry—a spectacular story in itself—is a comparable counterpoint to that of 19th-century North America's progression beyond Victorian England.

Emerson's *English Traits* was not a historiographical, but a philosophic work. And, to be sure, my own narrative must remain speculatively broad-gauge. Any such philosophic speculation concerning the degrees in the progressive patterns of "modernization" ramifies exponentially along the entire gamut of transformational developments comprising 19th through 21st centuries world history. What is philosophical bedrock here is that *there have been* such extraordinary historical transformations, West and East, North and South, and *there still are*. My limited suggestion is that Emerson's and Fukuzawa's advocacy of free market free citizenry can and ought to be estimated for their vanguard pragmatistic subscriptions to the history of civilization, while taking into account that the social advances in 19th-century North America and Japan are to be understood as *inter-generational* processes marked by both conservatively reactive as well as progressively active dynamics of their respective cultures ("life worlds")—as well as to be set on the larger world-stage where the great majority of nations and cultures have remained predominantly "retardant" in realization of free market citizenry.

## 2 Brief interlude: the free market vs. free stuff in today's intellectual marketplace

But first, allow me to indulge in a brief interlude in a familiar contemporary parlance. "Free market". *Two words!* Two words whose significance is enormous when translated to spell *democratic freedom of a constitutionally empowered nation's moral ideas and productive purposes*. A quick contrast with the prosperity-striving concept of "free market" would be the rival two words, "free stuff".

The applications are legion. Whether in the U. S. Open ("open" tennis) or in a "public" fish market—to say nothing of the entire gamut of the competitive front edges of academic, scientific, medical, technological, and entrepreneurial

innovation—the two words predicate an *open and fair meritocracy of effort and exponential production of common value* pertaining to the gamut of human life's private and public domains. As Emerson proclaimed in "Wealth" (which appeared in the same collection of essays as "The Young American" in 1844): "[…] a dollar goes on increasing in value with all the genius, and all the virtue in the world". Not an economic, but a bottom line *moral,* statement!

The rival two words are loaded with moral implications of another sort. These days low information voters are conditioned to want "free stuff". These days low information voters are being promised "free stuff" by socialistic-minded ideologues whose control-policies of "wealth redistribution" point in the opposite direction of *leveling* the open-ended prospects of meritocratic ideas to a morally lesser or least common denominator of public and private outcomes. Logically as well as morally speaking, such "equalization" trajectories are inertial and luddite, entailing a *reversal* of the inventive potencies of meritocratic mindedness, a *deflation* of the exponentially enriching energies of our high-end sciences, arts, and crafts that are ministrant to our suicultural, civicultural, and speciecultural instincts.

Now it goes without saying that there have always been draconian regimes that have brutally *repressed* the meritocratic possibilities of free market free citizenry. Indeed, that is one of the ubiquitous lessons of human history—the endlessly repeated episodes in Hegel's perennial slaughter bench of history.

But sticking to our contemporary scene and parlance, the "free stuff" model looms large today as an alternate ideological option of thought and practice (*praxis*). As a policy objective which, in principle, endorses a *principle of conservation of energy* contravening the ascendant vitality of historical evolution, it is radically un-Emersonian. Its *deflationary* consequences were already satirized by David Hume in his *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals* (1751/2004). Hume wrote of the "Levellers", religious fanatics and the quasi-socialists of his day, in what has become a prophetic *apercu*:

> But historians, and even common sense, may inform us, that, however specious these ideas of *perfect* equality may seem, they are at bottom *impracticable*; and were they not so, they would be extremely *pernicious* to human society. Render possessions ever so equal, men's different degrees of art, care, and industry will immediately break that equality. Or if you check these virtues, you reduce society to the most extreme indigence; and instead of preventing want and beggary in a few, render it unavoidable to the whole community. The most rigorous inquisition too is requisite to watch every inequality on its first appearance; and the most severe jurisdiction, to punish and redress it. But besides, that so much authority must soon degenerate into tyranny, and be exerted with great partialities; who can possibly be possessed of it, in such a situation as is here supposed? Perfect equality of possession, destroying all subordination, weakens extremely the authority of magistracy, and must reduce all power nearly to a level, as well as property. (HUME, 2004, p. 91).

Hume's astute critique of the Levellers was prescient forerunner to George Orwell's novelistic portrait of "big brother" in *1984,* and again to Kurt Vonnegut Jr.'s trenchant satire *Harrison Bergeron*, which opens with the following dreadful words:

> THE YEAR WAS 2081, and everybody was finally equal. They weren't only equal before God and the law. They were equal every which way. Nobody was smarter than anybody else. Nobody was better looking than anybody else. Nobody was stronger or quicker than anybody else. All this equality was due to the 211th, 212th, and 213th Amendments to the Constitution, and to the unceasing vigilance of agents of the United States Handicapper General.[5]

In Vonnegut's biting short story there is no place to hide from the Handicapper General who turns out to be the double-barreled, ten-gauge-shotgun toting, Diana Moon Glampers!

Hume's shrewd estimation of the policy proposals of the Levellers might also be pondered in the light of his critique of Diogenes the Cynic and of Pascal the Ascetic in the final paragraphs of "A Dialogue", which he appended to his *An Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals* (1751/2004). There he satirized those two icons of idiocentric lifestyles that flouted the norms of common moral sensibility. Their *faux* paradigms of "extreme" conduct of life—he averred—amounted to abstract constructs: "An experiment, said I, which succeeds in the air, will not always succeed in a vacuum. When men depart from the maxims of common sense, and affect these *artificial* lives, as you call them, no one can answer for what will please or displease them" (HUME, [1951] 2004, p. 199). Hume astutely recommended that we should look with jaundiced eye at such disingenuous paragons of abnormal sensibility (whatever their other merits) who live on mithradatic morals and would impose them on their fellow men—a consideration not only relevant to consideration of the proposal of certain of today's "power" politicians but, as well, of certain "celebrity" types who egregiously *politic* deflationary socialist ideas in today's social media outlets (not to mention that the leftist university is *the* underlying wellspring).

In Hume's terms, the ranks and varieties of today's pre- and post-modern socialistic advocates ought to be typecast as patently combining the "artificially" impracticable and deflationary impositions of the Levellers in their *psychological,* not also to mention bottom line *moral*, attitudes to human life.

Patently—thank God!—Emerson, on the basis of his leading concept of the moral liberty of North America's productive individual and families enjoying freedom of mind and opportunity under the law, rather spoke for a higher calling of the human soul. As in the opening sentence of *Wealth* (1860), he proclaimed that "[e]very man is a consumer and ought to be a producer" (p. 33). Again in the essay's subsequent pronouncement that "every man is born to be rich", he pronounced likeminded-Humean reservations against his own socialist-minded Transcendentalist friends who were instituting "leveling" agrarian-moral experiments at Brook Farm and Fruitlands in the Massachusetts of his day. Emerson's considered critique of

5 http://www.tnellen.com/cybereng/harrison.html.

what he called their "Arcadian fanaticism" was predicated on his advocacy for a *moral capitalism* of self-reliant work, accomplishment, and reinvestment. He judged that "communal stuff" would ultimately turn into incentive-depressing, economy-flattening, job-killing, stuff. To the contrary, "free market" incentives he recognized as the very coin of progressive wealth-and-freedom-making for ascendant, inter-generational participation in the "American Dream".

So now, primarily and crucially, the latter ideal predicates open-ended prospects of *a fair marketplace of innovative ideas* across the board of the inventive intellectual professions (such as the academic, medical, legal, manufacturing, and engineering professions) together with all the other forms of product- and profession-making entrepreneurial proliferation that engender a rising, inter-generational "middle class" life world. All these trajectories in the public domain presuppose the philosophic idealism of "life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness for all" that constitutes the *moral capitalism* of a free democracy's work-ethic. It's not about material prosperity! As Aristotle "classically" said in his *Nicomachean Ethics*, material well-being is an essential component in the moral achievement of happiness (*eudaimonia*) "in a complete life".

To an opposite effect, "free stuff" ideology portends un-reasonable consequences of "big-government" regulation that *will reduce* the production of human value to the level of boring beer and unearned trophies for all. It produces *poor people*. In our times, the Cyclopean examples of Venezuela and Cuba are only two of a long historical list of top-down authoritarian systems that *do not work* (the protests of the freedom-tasting citizens of Hong Kong against the potential legal crush of Chinese Communist rule is another of the latest "shots heard round the world"). As in the contemporary case of the "Green New Deal" ("green on the outside, red on the inside"), socialist ideology *aims* downward, aims *to equalize* by systematic *reduction* of our *physical and mental energy systems*, by policies which, paradoxically, will not make free but rather will make bureaucratized rationing systems (e.g., in controlled health care, or in free student loans and resultant non-competitive surpluses in college admissions).

In net effect, such state-controls of our God-given mental and physical capacities will short-circuit the prospective possibilities of the "American Dream". Accounting for cultural differences, the "American Dream" is the Brazilian Dream, the Indian Dream, the Polish Dream. It is about families. Families are a nation's inter-generational moral centers. It turns out that the "free lunch" becomes very expensive, not only in diremption of personal psychological freedom under bureaucratic control but in actual cost paid for by a diminishing middle-class tax base of family-based cultures. Reductive redistribution of the free moral opportunities of families retrogressively devolves into more and more of less and less.

So now, here is the essence of Emerson's prescient articulation—which Fukuzawa too, out of his own historical perceptions, translated into philosophic and policy reform in an ostensibly much more intractable mid-19$^{th}$-century Japanese context. On the *pre-mediated moral* level, each person constitutes his or her own *free marketplace*, as *both* receptive consumer *and* prospective *capitalist* of ideas, ambitions, and moral outcomes in his or her conduct of life. The same freely thinking and acting individual shares and invests in the exponentially proliferating moral outcomes of families and society.

In Emerson's acute perspective, it was such a historically unprecedented free citizenry of the "New World" North American continent which first *realized* the "free market" platform of mental freedom and moral prosperity in civilization's quantum leap beyond the older stratified patriarchic and feudalistic societies of Europe, South of the Border, The Middle East, and Asia. Together with a half-century of other celebrated prose and poetic expressions, his *The Young American* (1844) pointedly spoke for that concrete historical realization.

Emerson, the leading figure in mid-19th century American Transcendentalism, also looms as the proto-philosophic figure in the origination of classical American Pragmatism, a distinctly new strain of thought in the world-history of philosophy which featured epistemological, moral, and ontological principles of proactive, consequential intelligence *tout court*. The potentiality of this trajectory of North American "continental" strain of philosophy was first carried forward by Emerson's Concord neighbor, Charles S. Peirce, the inventor of Pragmatism. Overlapping Emerson's five decades of productivity in the public limelight, Peirce's own five decades of blossoming philosophic career hugely advanced—that is to say, propelled forward—Emerson's multivariate "free market" concept in a categorically ramified ontological semeiosis of the primacy of abductive inference in heuristic discovery along the entire gamut of the sciences and arts.[6]

## 3 *The Young American* (1844)

In broader historical perspective, classical American Pragmatism had its roots in the North American "continental" experience, which was a *risk-taking* experience dating from the first efforts at survival of the original pilgrims in New England, and again then from Concord's "shot heard around the world" that broke the tie with colonizing English rule. In the generation after the eight-year-long Revolutionary War, Emerson's *The Young American* thematized the subsequent "pioneering" and "settling" of young America's continental expansion—westward from the original Thirteen Colonies to the Rockies and onward to the golden shores of the Pacific—as fostering a strenuous character of the new generations of risk-takers and a national appetite for inventive intelligence that the classical American philosophers eventually inscribed in their theoretic texts.

To be sure, every sustaining nation acquires a "labor force" to mine its exigent modes of material subsistence, to survive the menacing exigencies of its wars, and to support its luxuries. In this regard, Emerson astutely featured the post-Revolutionary War inhabitants of the United States as facing historically new challenges and framing new opportunities of survival and prosperity. Based on foundational documents of the Declaration of Independence, the United State Constitution, and the Bill of Rights, every young American became a virtual *pioneer* in a tough work environment requiring new patterns of risk-management and consequential intelligence. In due course, the United States of America's "continental" mindset achieved the abolitionist victory of the bloody Civil War to sink even deeper roots of free sovereignty in historical contrast with the aristocratic governments of England

6 See DILWORTH, 2015, p. 233-258. For the magisterial framing of the components and the inner logic of Peirce's mature system, see Ibri (2007).

and Europe (which continued to exploit the labors of minority pools of skilled craft workers as well as of larger populations of uneducated peasant classes, some of whom were destined later to become "the workers" in socialist regimes). The same kinds of top-down, retrogressively stratified political and economic conditions prevailed in the centuries-old civilizations of South America, Middle East, India and Southeast Asia, China, and Japan.

In the generation following the American Revolution, and still within living memory of Washington, Jefferson, and other founding fathers, Emerson came to articulate the *pragmatic-pragmatistic* trajectory of this newly forming, future-oriented, "American Dream" experience in which each generation was constitutionally authorized to enjoy a personal prosperity of body and mind excelling its previous generation. Following upon his inaugural work of compressed genius, *Nature* (1836), and such celebrated first addresses and lectures as *The American Scholar* (1837), *Divinity School Address* (1838), and *the Method of Nature* (1841) among others, Emerson's *The Young American* (1844) pointedly described how the American colonists, originally inhabiting the Atlantic coastal cities, were pursuing the "prospects" of a vast geographical landscape replete with new "free citizenry free market" resources. By mid-century, Walt Whitman, directly impacted by Emerson, inscribed his poetic version of the New World experience in *Leaves of Grass* (first edition, 1855), as he did again in *Democratic Vistas* (1871) and *A Backward Glance O'er Travel'd Roads* (1888), celebrating the national "body electric" and pathos of post-feudalistic American life in "Song of Myself", "Song of the Pioneers", Song of the Broad Axe", "A Song of Occupations", "Song of the Open Road", "Song of the Exposition", "Pioneers! O Pioneers!", and many other songs celebrating North America's free-enterprising vitality. Together and in unison, Emerson's "Work is victory!" and Whitman's "Open Road" symbolically grasped the New World trajectory of *proactive pragmatic intelligence* that later took theoretical shape in the philosophic writings of Peirce and James.

So now, once again, my thesis is that, in the perspective of *world history*, Emerson can be cited as the pioneer exponent of the *philosophic* "free citizen free market" concept. Any significant philosophic concept of course traces back indefinitely through the developmental teleology of its past precedents. As mentioned, the British social contract theory in Hobbes and Locke, and particularly Locke's formulation of property rights in his *Second Treatise of Government* (1690), established the Elizabethan precedent to Emerson's democratically liberating mindset. John Stuart Mill's *On Liberty* and other works carried on this British heritage into the 19th-century.[7] The *Jena-Zeit* intellectual revolution that produced Fichte, Schelling, and so many other German exponents of modern freedom contributed other precedents (in contrast to J.-J. Rousseau's 18th-century version of social contract theory which was destined to carry on in the line of Hegel and Marx). But though Locke formulated the mainstream philosophic concept of differential property rights in the 17th-century, and Hume followed suit in the 18th-century, these were abstract constructions still presupposing the existing social stratifications of British society.

7 J. S. Mill planned his *On Liberty* in 1854—thus after Emerson's lecture tour of England in 1850—and only published it in 1859.

Locke, in several passages of his *Second Treatise of Government* (1690), theorized the possibility of an exponentially productive "acorn of corn" planted *in the new land of North America* to illustrate his private property concept. After Washington, Jefferson, and the other founding fathers of the Revolutionary War era, it was Emerson who came forth explicitly to initiate a new strain of literary culture concerning the sovereign North American "public marketplace" of ideas and values in philosophic and poetic perspectives that in turn produced a distinctly new "acre" of philosophic expression in the proactive, connatural Pragmatisms of Charles Peirce, William James, and John Dewey.

But for present purposes, let us concentrate on Emerson's *The Young American* (1844), reading it as the symbolical *magna carta* for the philosophic concept of the meritocratic "free market". Emerson's inaugural *Nature* (1836) and the first of the career-long amplifications of its compact expression in "An American Scholar" (August 31, 1837), "Divinity School Address" (July 15, 1838), and "The Method of Nature" (August 11, 1841) (among other early addresses), already harbingered his representative role in shaping a new historical sensibility. He then took to the road in his early-phase series of lecture travels during which he eventually honed collections of famous essays ("History", "Self-Reliance", Circles", "The Over-Soul", etc.) published in *Essays: First Series* (1841) and *Essays: Second Series* (1844). In the next three years he published 100 of his early poems (*Poems*, 1847) in the first of what was to grow into three poetry collections of over 500 poems (EMERSON, 1994). He continued this itinerant pattern of poems, lectures, and essays, both at home and abroad, into his old age.[8] This is a record of intellectual momentum and accomplishment that should be given its deserved place in the history of philosophy.[9]

Going back to Emerson's first writings after his inaugural classic *Nature* (1836), we can follow the thread leading up to *The Young American* (1844) in such early lectures as Literary Ethics" (July 24, 1838), where he spoke for several pages of the "resources of the New Day" that "yields the Spontaneous Sentiment for the American today" (EMERSON, 1983, p. 96-100). This same public address of his 35th year has an outstanding re-inscription of the central theme of *Nature* (1836) in featuring the concept of the "consanguinity" (affinity, connaturality) of the inquiring human Mind and Nature – here, in the terms of the theme of "going into the forest to find novelty never before experienced", with a particular application to philosophy "which must open a new view of nature and man" (EMERSON, 1983, p. 103). A final part of "Literary Ethics" applied this to the "conduct of life", keynoting the self-reliant, hard-working, "modest and charitable soul", a theme he expanded at considerable length in his ensuing public address, "The Transcendentalist" (January 1842). This latter address drew a sharp contrast between Materialism and Idealism, the former in

8 Between a continuing cascade of philosophical essays in *Representative Men* (1850) and *The Conduct of Life* (1860), Emerson's second trip to England resulted in another major publication, the aforementioned *English Traits* (1850); still further celebrated essays appeared in *Society and Solitude* (1870).

9 In passing it can be noted that George Santayana, by contrast, while and after flourishing at Harvard, condemned Emerson and Whitman, and ended up "retiring" from what he called "English liberty" and opting for an "Epicurean" retirement under Mussolini, while expressing certain measured flirtations with Nazi and Stalinist ideologies.

the form of crass commercialism and political opportunism and the latter in vital self-reliant affinity with Nature, prioritizing beauty, intuitional instinct, and personal nobility of soul. "Man the Reformer" (January 25, 1841) was another early public address that, after initial condemnation of the ever-trending materialistic corruptions of American political life, again turned to celebrate the idealistic prospects of a self-reliant work-ethic.

Emerson's *The Young American* (February 7, 1844) re-gathered this transcendentalist pattern of affirmative articulations into its front and center articulation of the potential for a new meritocratic *moral marketplace* opening up in the American continental experience—in effect, unfolding a sequence of overlapping animadversions of a *national character ethics*. Good climate and good health, *physical and moral*, go together, he averred. Emerson expressed his personal witness to this potentiality of the American continent for creating a new historical sentiment—"a sanative and tranquilizing influence", he wrote, "as in gardening and agriculture", sprouting to life in the locales of his wide-ranging travels in the New England, mid- Atlantic, and mid-western states. From there he segued to the *historical evolution of modern Trade* which he personally eye-witnessed as having already undermined the old feudal foundations of the past. This historically transformative phenomenon of *modern Trade* he regarded as its own kind of *moral witness* toward an inter-national commercialism that has a veritable Entelechy—that is to say, a *moral Destiny* toward an ameliorative affinity between Man and Nature (EMERSON, 1983, p. 117-18). This sense of an ameliorative destiny became one of the nuances in his contemporary poems, as for example "The World-Soul", "The Sphinx", "Woodnotes", "Wealth", and many other poems.

A decade later, the United States of America's possibilities of literary and sociological progress *beyond* the life-world of European feudalism became the front and center insistence of Walt Whitman's 1855 Preface to *The Leaves of Grass* and all his career writings.

Now it was pointedly in this context of *The Young American* (1844) that Emerson described the world's historical passage from "Patriarchism" to "Feudalism" to "Commercialism" in terms parallel—as we will shortly see—to the "three stages of civilization" inscribed in Fukuzawa Yukichi's *Outline of a Theory of Civilization* (1875). Emerson's essay first turned to critique the negative side of an ethical binary, namely, lingering outcroppings of the Old World feudalistic aristocracy of Trade in the current political soil of Free Commercialism. In tandem with that, on the other side of the coin, he cast a jaundiced eye on the new Socialist movements that were being promoted by some of his own Transcendentalist colleagues in their experiments in agrarian Fourierism at Brook Farm and Fruitlands. He rejected these socialistic endeavors of communal commercialism as pragmatically and morally impracticable. Though these new forms of agrarian socialism advanced moral causes in the equality and education of their members, Emerson wrote, he wanted to see the work-force expanded in trajectories of self-reliant privatization, with the government having the limited role of mediator between want and supply. What are needed, he said, are "true land-lords": in such terms the United States of America has a potential for moral leadership in the world, but such leadership is held back by the current degeneration of both political parties, the conservatives and the reformers alike, who fight for the control of money, while, for their part, the socialist experiments are blind alleys.

Emerson's *The Young American* then articulated its central message that the true direction of the expansion of the American continent must carry the "common conscience" toward "organic simplicity and liberty":

> Gentlemen, the development of our American internal resources, the extension to the utmost of the commercial system, and the appearance of new moral causes which are to modify the state, are giving an aspect of greatness to the Future, which the imagination fears to open. One thing is plain for all men of common sense and common conscience, that here, in America, is the home of man. After all the deductions which are to be made for our pitiful politics, which stake every gravest question on the silly die, […] there still remains an organic simplicity and liberty which, when it loses its balance, redresses itself presently, which offers opportunity to the human mind not known to any other region. (EMERSON, 1983, p. 228).

From this prospective forecast of the United States' moral leadership in the world, Emerson then concluded with a pointed critique of English aristocratic culture which, "[…] incorporated by law and education, degrades life for the unprivileged classes" (EMERSON, 1983, p. 229). A decade later in 1855 an electrifying "American" poet burst on the literary scene, proudly declaring himself to be one of the unprivileged, "Walt Whitman, a kosmos, of Manhattan the son, […] I speak the pass-word primeval, I give the sign of democracy" (*Leaves of Grass*, 1855, stanza 24). In exuberant poetic language Whitman inscribed his Emersonian variant on the new continental prospects of "organic simplicity and liberty" that dovetailed with Emerson's words that America "*offers opportunity to the human mind not known to any other region*".

Now then, among other things, we need to place "The American Scholar" (1844) as a bell-weather text between the brutal eight-year Revolutionary War and the bloody Civil War, both catastrophic historical events which propelled the liberating forces of Emerson's moral and political idealism as well as his realistic sense of the fatalities of nature and life (as he further articulated this theme in "Experience" of 1844 and in "Fate" of 1860). Coincidentally, Emerson's first of many pro-abolitionists pre-Civil War orations date from the same year as *The Young American* (1844). His "free market" *meritocracy* concept prophetically resonated of *winners and losers* in what William James might later have included in his writings on *The Energies of Men* (1906). But what is more, Emerson's 1844 essay had a decidedly "World-Soul" sensibility that he also inscribed in his poem of that name between 1843 and 1845. In a remarkable passage in *The Young American* he opined in a more cosmical register of thought:

> The census of the population is found to keep an invariable equality of the sexes, as if to counterbalance the necessarily increased exposure of male life in war, navigation, and other accidents. Remark the unceasing effort throughout nature at somewhat better than the actual creatures; *amelioration in nature*, which alone permits and authorizes amelioration

> in mankind. The population of the world is a conditional population; these are not the best, but the best that could live in the existing state of soils, gases, animals, and morals; the best that could *yet* live; there shall be better, please God. (EMERSON, 1983, p. 218; *Emerson's emphasis*).

The passage can plausibly be read as affirming that the "continental American" experience in Emerson's time carried the human race's conditional privilege of mankind's amelioration. This "conditional" prospect of amelioration informed his major poems as well.

In an overall trajectory expressing strengths and weaknesses, winners and losers, Emerson placed evolutionary mankind as a central node of both horizontal and vertical (spiritual) metamorphoses. In his poetry that are replete with polysemic symbolization, the geographical and historical site of the "American Continent" counted nothing less than as another resonant *metaphor for the amelioration of nature*. It is "cosmical Nature" itself – alternately, the "World-Soul", the "Over-Soul", the *Natura Naturans,* which *"respects genius and not talent",*—that inspires the United States' vertical ascendency in the "free-market" platform of historical existence. Likewise, the recurrent affirmation of Emerson's poems featured the twin principles of *identity and metamorphosis* in framing an exhilarating perspective on how our personal and inter-generational accomplishments are the places and ways we share connaturally in the *genius loci* of Nature.

Emerson's earlier addresses and lectures had already laid the groundwork for this cosmical dimension of *connatural anthropomorphism* set within an encompassing sense of humanity's spiraling Destiny.[10] Thus again, it was in this context of describing the "Serene Power" of Nature's enigmatical purposes of amelioration—"which alone permits and authorizes ameliorization in mankind"—that Emerson leveled explicitly negative evaluations against socialistic forms of welfare state, on the one hand, and against oligarchical party politics, on the other.

As for the former, ameliorative Nature does not deal in "free stuff", but in an ascending "free market" of energetic exponents and outcomes. Accordingly, he averred in *The Young American*: "Nature's law of self-preservation is surer policy than any legislation can be". "Our pitiful [party] politics" stakes its ephemeral concerns on "a silly roll of the dice". "We concoct eleemosynary systems, and it turns out that our charity increases pauperism. […] "We inflate our paper currency, we repair commerce with unlimited credit, and are presently visited with unlimited bankruptcy" (EMERSON, 1983, p. 219). As well, then, Emerson's sense of *moral possibilities and failures* in the historically new "free market" included repudiation of crass business interests and its oligarchical-minded money-managers, namely, "of

10 Emerson's motto to *Nature* (1836):
A subtle chain of countless rings
The next unto the farthest brings;
The eye reads omens where it goes,
And speaks all languages the rose;
And, striving to be man, the worm
Mounts through all the spires of form. (EMERSON, 1983, p. 5).

the two political parties". In the historical sequence from Patriachism to Feudalism to Trade—he averred—it is requisite to take note of signs of corruption, namely of governmental supervention which "[…] in our times is beginning to wear a clumsy and cumbersome appearance". The true role of government is to be mediator—occupying the Aristotelian middle ground between the rich and the poor—in adjudication of "supply and want" in the expanding "middle class" of the American continent.

From here we can segue to any number of Emerson's contemporarily inscribed essays. For example, "Politics" (*Essays: Second Series*, 1844) begins: "In dealing with the State, we ought to remember that its institutions are not aboriginal, though they existed before we were born: that they are not superior to the citizen […]" (EMERSON, 1983, p. 559). It concludes with "The appearance of character makes the State unnecessary". Namely, it is "[moral] character, that is the end of nature":

> The wise man is the State. He needs no army, fort, or navy,—he loves men too well; no bribe, or feast, or palace, to draw friends to him; no vantage ground, no favorable circumstance. He needs no library, for he has not done thinking; no church, for he is a prophet; no statute book, for he has the lawgiver; no money, for he is value; no road, for he is at home where he is; no experience, for the life of the creator shoots through him, and looks from his eyes (EMERSON, 1983, p. 568).

In sum, such affirmations of the "wise man" were vintage variations on Emerson's New World *moral character* portrait of the "the young American". It was in such a full-fledged, unprecedented philosophic sense that Emerson declared that "every man is born to be rich" and that "a dollar increases its value along with the genius and the virtue of the world". Charles S. Peirce and the next generations of American Pragmatists caught the ball and ran with it in expansive theoretical articulations.

## 4 Fukuzawa's *An outline of a theory of civilization* (1875)

Let me now highlight Emerson's intellectual, moral, and political pragmatism by way of the aforementioned instructive comparison with the near contemporary writings of Meiji Japan's leading modernizer ("westernizer"), Fukuzawa Yukichi (1835-1901).

In any comparative hermeneutic, Fukuzawa Yukichi deserves the credit for a likeminded pioneering of the concept of free market free citizenry on the 19th-century East Asian world stage. Let us remind ourselves that we are referring here to huge territories comprised of enormous populations with millennial cultural histories. *Pre-modern* Japan's first encounter with its 19th-century Western counterpart occurred half-way into Emerson's career (and just before Whitman's inaugural version of *Leaves of Grass* of 1855). When Commodore Perry sailed into Tokyo Bay in 1853 on a mission of "opening" commercial ties with Japan, he encountered a 250-year "closed country" (*sakoku*) under the control of the Tokugawa shogunate (*bakufu*, military government) comprised of 260-odd feudal domains—domains with centuries-long patterns of hereditary hierarchies of *non-citizens*—even the daimyo-dependent

samurai class did not have *citizenship* in the Western "social contract" sense, and the lives of the daimyo were beholden to the recognizance of the shogunate. The samurai class, which represented only about 5 percent of the population, did not "work"; while serving in peacetime functions under their feudal lord, they lived on hereditary stipends in vertical loyalty relations to their lords. In the tradition-bound feudal domains, the 80-percent peasant populations and the smaller percentages of artisan and merchant (*chônin*, townspeople) classes comprised lower strata of the social hierarchy, which, based an ancient Chinese Confucian prescripts, officially restricted upper mobility between the classes. Since 1588 only the samurai class was authorized to wear their long and short swords; the rest of the population lived unarmed under the dominance of top-down military government within a system of centralized feudalism under the Tokugawa shogun (the daimyo of daimyos since the victory of Tokugawa Ieyasu in 1600). The status of married women was even more politically subordinate in their moral dependency relations to their fathers-in-law in traditional-bound Confucian households.

It goes without saying, that this overall pattern of top-down (no wiggle room) social stratification of Fukuzawa's pre-modern Japanese society comprised distributions of hierarchical social stratifications that analogously prevailed in Europe and the other parts of the Old World, East and West. Japan's case was unique in certain respects. Pre-modern Japan was a distantly situated "island country" (*shimaguni*) whose culture was bounded by virtue of the Tokugawa shogunate's policy of national seclusion (*sakoku*) instituted in the early 17th-century. And to be sure, in world-comparative perspective as well as in contrast with the neighboring countries of East Asia, Tokugawa Japan's military society famously achieved a high degree of internal civilization while sustaining the longest stretch of civil peace in human history (from c.1600 to 1868).

On North America's side, by the time Admiral Perry's "black ships" first entered Tokyo Bay in 1853, the constitutionally authorized generations of "middle class" United States citizens had gone through several "pioneering" generations of free market expansion in energetic competition with one another and with their European neighbors. Namely, in Emerson's terms, the "young Americans" were realizing historically unparalleled prospects of "free market" in tough challenges and strenuously pursued opportunities in their sprawling continent as well as in competitive international waters. This competitive situation further fostered a sense of *pragmatic workplace* and an underlying *adventure of innovative ideas and opportunities* that were structurally unavailable in pre-modern Japan (and analogously, in the rest of the Old Worlds, East and West, North and South). In due course, the 19th-c North American continental life world exceeded the rest of the world in its technological as well as political *inventions*. As a conspicuous case, the United States' technological and political incentives produced the exigencies of trans-Pacific commercial expansion and international competition involved in Commodore Perry's several negotiations for "open" markets with Japan in the 1850s and 1860s.

Now re-enter Fukuzawa Yukichi. We are not here concerned with setting Fukuzawa's accomplishments in a historical account of the full sweep of Japanese civilization, significant as that may be in its own right, and spanning so much longer than the origins of American civilization after the Revolutionary War. Our focus will be to characterize him as the "Emerson" of 19th-century Japan in the focus of his

parallel philosophic *reasonabilitation,* so-to-speak, of the concept of free market free citizenry in both individual and societal senses.

In short form, Japanese history presents a *model study* of the historical evolution from Patriarchism to Feudalism to Trade. Of course, the special aspects of Japan's isolated "island country" (*shimaguni*) have to be factored in: most significantly, Japan's unbroken Imperial lineage accompanying its historical transition from direct Imperial rule from 710 until 1186 (*Patriarchism*), followed by stages of aristocratic military rule until 1868 (*Feudalism*), followed by Japan's "modernizing" and "westernizing" Meiji period (1868-1912) and extending until the present day (*Trade*). As for the latter, historians are concerned with narrating the myriad of details of Japan's celebrated "Trade" stage which "uniquely" reprised the heritage of Imperial rule while blending it with "Western" forms of sovereignty—not to mention the pull of several retrogressive steps backward into pre-modern militant imperialism as well. It will suffice for our purposes here to focus upon Japan's general transition to "modernity" in the philosophic respect of its "catching on" to what Fukuzawa called the "third stage of civilization" (namely "Trade"), especially in the comparative context of Asian cultural history.

While it is always a matter of achieving an amplifying estimation of the critical factors and players in matters of historical and cultural transition, Fukuzawa Yukichi is cited by the Japanese themselves as the most influential intellectual pioneer of the early Meiji period modernizers of Japan. His portrait appearing on the 10,000 yen note of Japan's currency still reminds the generations of Japanese people of the developmental teleology of their—comparatively speaking—deservedly celebrated successful economic modernization in East Asia.[11] Fukuzawa first grasped and lived out such an unprecedented "free market" concept in his own career, as he rose from low samurai ancestry to become of one of Japan's most influential thinkers in the late Tokugawa period's extremely conservative marketplace of ideas and its transition into the early Meiji period. In fact, in retrospect, he arguably became the first and foremost of world philosophers of East and West, with no notable rival for the honor on the Western or Asian side. Through his pre-Meiji period best-selling works, his founding and presidency of Japan's first private university (Keio University) in the early Meiji era, and his later journalistic career, he contributed to the transformation of Japan from a historically insulated and isolated nation into an independent international force, as well as widening the philosophic lens on our inter-nationally modern life world. In these accomplishments he echoed the ideas of Western contemporaries such as Emerson and Walt Whitman, encouraging a grassroots "education" of the individual and national "spirit" (*seishin*) by way of prioritizing free-mindedness in the private and public domains, all in the cause of elevating Japan's possibilities of "equal status" in the emerging international marketplace of competitive "Trade" among the modern foreign nations. In retrospect, Japan's "modernization" in free-mindedness was a tall order, only to be accomplished over many decades of striving and struggle; it required keen foresight and leadership in the face of the powerful inertial drag of Japan's centuries of national isolation under aristocratic and military rule.

11 See Albert M. Craig on Japan's economic accomplishment in the year 2000 when Japan's GDP surpassed the GDPs of England, France, and Germany combined (CRAIG, 2003, p. 155).

Again, re-enter Fukuzawa Yukichi. After beginning his education in the Confucian classics in his home domain in southern Kyushu, Fukuzawa managed to travel to distant Osaka to school in late Tokugawa era "Dutch Studies", and then, in the rapidly changing context of the time, presciently switched to study the more internationally viable English language—efforts which earned him a minor role as domain teacher in Edo and appointment as low-ranking interlocutor for Japan's foreign ministry's first three embassies to the United States and Europe between 1861 and 1868. Back from these trips abroad before the Meiji Restoration, he occupied himself in the daunting work of translation of foreign books while publishing several accounts of "Conditions of the West"; and then, from 1872, after the Meiji Restoration, he blossomed into a full-fledged East-West philosopher, writing a best-selling *An Encouragement of Learning* (*Gakumon no susume)*, between 1872 and 1876 (FUKUZAWA, 2012) and then publishing his *An Outline of a Theory of Civilization* (*Bummeiron on gairyaku*) in 1875 (FUKUZAWA, 2008). The self-educated achievements of these latter two works are now Japanese classics: they explained to himself and the Japanese people the historical watershed they were passing in their transition from Feudalism to Trade notwithstanding Japan's return to its legacy of Imperial sovereignty in the Meiji Restoration of 1868.

In *An Encouragement of Learning,* Fukuzawa (2012) wrote, in charming and popular style, to a population of about 30 million countrymen that freedom and equality were "God given", that is to say, inherent in man's nature. This stunning pronouncement was social dynamite; it broke the old Confucian mould of social hierarchy in Japan's political and family relations. Resonating an antinomian blend of Lockean, Jeffersonian, and Emersonian ideas, it was a *risk-taking* pronouncement *par excellence* in its day in which political assassinations still threatened in the corridors of power. It justified Japan's "modernization" process from a feudalistic four-class stratification of society to one in which each person was authorized to any moral and political status achieved in "independence and self-respect" (*dokuritsu jison*); and it extended the same moral and political normativity to Japan's relation between nations on the world-stage. As the title of his chief theoretical work indicates, his daunting intention was precisely to theorize for Meiji Japan the possibility of participation in the newly emerging world-historical phenomenon of *free market civilization.*

Fukuzawa pointedly extrapolated his inter-continental theme of progressive "civilization" out of Western sources; foremost among these were the English historian Henry Thomas Buckle's 2-volume *History of Civilization in England* (1872-73) and the French historian François Guizot's *General History of Civilization in Europe* (1828, 1870).[12] However, not content with thematizing the progress of civilization in the terms of social science, Fukuzawa elevated it into a philosophic discussion of evolutionary progress (and degrees thereof) among the civilized nations with comparative reference to the "moral" situation of Meiji Japan. He astutely expressed this by way of focusing on the pivotal point of Japan's "spirit" (*seishin,* spiritual and intellectual character), tying it to his initial theme of establishing "a basis of argumentation" for comparative and pluralistic scrutiny of the progress of nations.

12 Fukuzawa also drew on J. S. Mill's *On Liberty* (1859). Fukuzawa's narrative of the progress in civilization traces to the 18th-century Scottish Enlightenment thinkers.

And in this context, Fukuzawa's *An Outline of a Theory of Civilization* (1875/2008) inquired to the effect that if the geographical progressions of civilized nations are relative—depending on what specific criteria are employed—where does Meiji Japan now stand, by such a pivotal criterion of advancement embodied in a nation's "spirit" or "character"? With his background in Confucian learning, this was as much a philosophical as a political question. Here Fukuzawa divided world civilization into three paradigmatic "ages of civilization", namely, "the primitive", "the semi-developed", and "the civilized" stages of development, by way of distinguishing between a country's *outer* visibility and its animating *inner* "spirit". He was then minded to recognize that the advanced nations of the West have progressed to the more enlightened stage of *outer* visibility of civilization "to date", namely, as measured by their accomplished investigations of nature and the gamut of their social patterns of conduct, private and public. The Westerners—he said—have so far excelled in general initiatives of social evolution, such that "their spirits enjoy free play and are not credulous of old customs". Not so for pre-modern Japan.

Accordingly, Fukuzawa drew upon Thomas Buckle's *History of Civilization in England* to critique the habits of "credulity" and "superstition" (*wakudeki*) which he viewed as having pervaded pre-modern Japan's theory and practice of "national polity" (*kokutai*)—as well as to combat impracticably conservative (Neo-Shinto, Neo-Buddhist, and Neo-Confucian) claims to Japan's exigent modernization that were circulating in the early years of the Meiji Restoration. His criticism extended implicitly to the wider gamut of pre-modernized nations of the world as well. He argued for the current ascendancy of Western civilization's scientific and material progress precisely in this context of discussing the urgent task of realigning and preserving Japan's "national polity", which he classified, together with China, India, the Ottoman Empire, Mexico, and other cultures of the Old World, as still existing in "semi-civilized" phases of moral development, despite these cultures having achieved a plethora of distinguished religious, artistic, and literary legacies. Other countries in 1875, such as those to be found in Africa, South America, and Australia, he ranked as stuck in the more un-evolved "primitive stage" of civilization.

Fukuzawa's initial basis of argumentation for Japan's modernization thus came down to reckoning the bottom line meritocratic standard of "Western enlightenment" on the side of *outward* visibility. This estimation of a standard, however, did not mean a necessary shift from monarchy to democracy in the case of Japan's Imperial nation. The bottom line of his analysis was that Meiji Japan could remake its own "spirit" (spiritual makeup) of "national public opinion", by "catching up" with the Western standard of outwardly visible "Enlightenment" while retaining the positive spiritual energies of its indigenous cultural history. At the same time he downplayed the contemporary political platforms of Japanese Shintoism, Confucianism, and Buddhism, saying that while their "ethical teachings" were on a par with those of Western history, the whole lot of them should be assigned to the less significant category of "private virtue". He asserted that the advancement of "private knowledge" was more important for the Japanese than "private virtue", "public virtue" more important than "private virtue", but again, "public knowledge" more important than "private knowledge" in the context of competing world-civilization. He was himself writing the new pragmatistic script for "public knowledge".

In all this, Fukuzawa astutely drew upon Buckle's and Guizot's works to thematize Japan's potential amelioration of its "national character" in the context of evaluation of certain key historical differences obtaining between East and West. He strategically made use of Guizot's notion of the "pluralism of authority" that eventuated in Western civilization's sense of freedom in contrast with an authoritarian "imbalance of power" in Japanese (not to say in China's and other) "semi-civilizations" of Asia. In the West, several kinds of authority jostled with one another—the separation of Church and State; the rise of the feudal aristocracies against the monarchies; the founding of free cities against the feudal aristocracies; the continuity between the barbarism of the Germanic tribes and their spirit of freedom and independence; the Protestant Reformation's break with the ecclesiastical authority of Rome; the rise of Renaissance learning. By contrast, in Japan the "imbalance of power" inscribed in the Five Constant Relations of traditional Confucian teaching authorized the subordination of subjects to their rulers, hierarchical gender relations, hierarchical parent and filial relations, corresponding hierarchical fraternal relations extended to teacher and student relations, relations of masters and servants, the stratifications of rich and the poor, main houses and branch house, etc.

Now, in so emphasizing the social conditions that fed the rise of freedom in the West and, conversely, retarded it in the East, Fukuzawa bypassed Buckle's explanation of the geopolitical conditions affected by climate, food, soil, and general aspects of physical nature that, in a fuller account, would be relevant to the contrast between contemporary 19th century North America's expansive "continental" experience in contrast to Japan's limited natural resources in its Pacific rim "island country" (*shimaguni*) perennially racked by typhoons, earthquakes, volcanoes, tsunamis. His theoretical focus was exclusively on Japan's centuries-old "imbalance of power" that created ingrained class distinctions between "the ruler and the ruled", the latter "simply the slaves of the rulers". Again, this emphasis on imbalanced "national polity" Fukuzawa was prepared to extrapolate to the other "semi-civilized" nations of the world. (He argued, for one example, that China's situation was worse than Japan's in that Japanese history included competing heritages of Imperial and samurai authority in contrast to the monolithic Imperial national polity of China).

As for pre-modern Japan, in contrast to certain famous Tokugawa era historians focusing exclusively on the ruling class, Fukuzawa wrote: "In Japan there was a government but no *nation*". That is to say, in pre-modern Japan there was *no middleclass citizenry* and there was little or no mobility among the classes. Shintoism and Buddhism were institutionally entwined with and subservient to governmental power; and, indeed, there were no religious wars for that reason. State-sponsored Confucian scholarship supported top-down "benevolent" rule and time-honored customs of dependency. The economic vitality of the merchant (*chônin*) class, the lowest rung in the four-class social system, remained suffocated. As Fukuzawa noted, it took the arrival of the foreigners to awaken a repressed vanguard of an intellectual class as to realistic possibilities of social reformation (in historical hindsight, this especially portended the liberation not only of the Tokugawa era's educated class but also its bottom-rung merchant class).

But in sum, these negative considerations led Fukuzawa back to his central heuristic and purpose, namely his "declaration of independence" for Japan in the Meiji era's transition *from Patriarchism to Feudalism to Trade* based on a free

citizenry possessed of "self-respect and a spirit of independence". This agenda, involving the disenfranchisement of the thousand-year-old military rule of the 5% samurai class, imported Japan's transition to a free market free citizenry society that would take the lid off her historically "closed" national polity and release her economic potential to compete in the "open" marketplace of international relations. In the spirit of Fukuzawa's constant advocacy, the journalistic slogan of Meiji Japan became "catch up with and excel beyond the West". And in historical fact, Meiji Japan, against a very strong drag of tradition, succeeded in launching such a turnaround, in contrast with the other nations of Asia. Major signs of that turnaround were Japan's adaption of a German-style National Constitution in 1890, its victory over the Chinese in the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-95, and victory over the Russians in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-05. After 1945, it repeated the Meiji period turnaround toward modernization in the aftermath of the disastrous defeat of its retrogressive imperialistic ambitions to create a "greater East Asian co-prosperity sphere" in the Second World War.

## 5 A final word

The infinity of historical details remain for the historians to tell—and can never fully tell. The single point for this paper's limited narrative is that Fukuzawa Yukichi pioneered, in the nearly contemporary early years of the Meiji Restoration, parallel philosophic ideas of self-determining and sovereign citizenry that Emerson had propounded in *The Young American* (1844) and the other writings of his career. Fukuzawa's ensemble of progressive ideas were destined to run against the headwinds of nativist conservativism at various stages, most notably against Japan's 20th-century ideological regression into militaristic imperialism in the 1930 and 1940s. But his ideas remained a *legacy of ameliorative trajectory* available to underwrite Japan's "miraculous" political and economic restoration in the postwar years. In significant comparative respects—as symbolized by his image on the mighty 10,000 yen note—Fukuzawa's advocacy of Japan's participation in free meritocratic citizenry has merged and partnered with the progressive legacy of the United States of America's own progress in Emersonian modernity. We inherit these momentous outcomes today. Arguably, Emerson's and Fukuzawa's legacies of fair and free marketplace have emerged as the most reasonable—that is to say, the most liberating—moral, political, and philosophical concepts in the international strivings and accomplishments of contemporary civilization. Their philosophic legacies contain the gold standard, the normative standard of future human destiny, against the resistant drag of a host of pre-modern and post-modern alternatives.

Given the randomness as well as the deep-rooted resistances of racial and ethnic distributions in our "global" modern world, the differences between Emerson's and Fukuzawa's liberating worldviews should also be recognized. The arrival of Admiral Perry's "black ships" in Tokyo Bay in 1853 was cataclysmic for Old Japan. The disenfranchisement of the Tokugawa regime eventuated within a 15-year span occurred in the time frame of Fukuzawa's three travels to the West. He then participated in a vanguard of prominent Japanese thinkers and politicians who astutely *reacted* against the waves of Western colonialism that had already washed

over the shores of the Philippines, India, and China. These Meiji period (1868-1912) leaders famously turned the cataclysmic event of the disenfranchisement of the top-heavy Tokugawa samurai regime into the painstaking but progressive prosperity and security of the Meiji and Taisho periods against the real threats of Western colonialism. In world historical perspective, it was a proactive as well as reactive predicament, scripted in advance by Fukuzawa who parlayed Western social contract theory into a patriotic brief for Japan's "rich country and strong military" required to survive and to compete in the international arena of "foreign relations".

The reactive and defensive posture of Fukuzawa's patriotism is intelligible in the light of Japan's unique historical-cultural determinations, more specifically, in view of its "island country" (*shimaguni*) condition that constitutes the distant (Pacific Rim) bedrock of its natural and spiritual life. The leaders of the Meiji period saw Japan as the last of the dominoes destined to fall to Western colonial expansion in East Asia. Drawing upon the resilient energies of his country's "spiritual" legacy, Fukuzawa's advocacy of social contract theory predominately ministered to Japan's *civicultural*, that is to say, to an indigenous racial and ethnic instinct, in the 19th-century context of Western expansion into East Asian waters. By contrast, Emerson's philosophic advocacy, though "young American" in the context of the burgeoning prospects of the United States' "continental" expansion, was arguably more *speciecultural*—that is to say, more intellectually multi-cultural, and more idealistically inter-continental—in its pluralistic world-civilizational outlook. Emerson could mount to Spinoza's (or Schelling's) heights of "God or Nature" as basis of ascendant liberation of humanity's ameliorative possibilities of rational freedom; Fukuzawa inherited a life world with more pragmatic East Asian urgencies. But, as he reflected in his astute form of philosophic hermeneutic, Fukuzawa spoke for a Japan whose legacy of high-level internal civilization provided its own potential for first-rate credentials of "independence and self-respect" (*dokuritsu jison*) in the international marketplace of the modern world. Such were the intervolving destinies of the times—and of ours, still ongoing and unfolding. In the longer run, historians will record the historiographical details of East and West, while philosophers will recognize the accomplishments of Emerson and Fukuzawa as world-history-making thinkers. Their careers are first-tier lessons in Pragmatism, theoretical and experiential.

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