

# Highlighting Ideas of Human Rights: A Review of American Intellectuals' Classic Writings

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## Abstract

This article intends to review the ideas of human rights appearing in several American intellectuals' classic writings from the Puritan era up to the modern era. It is a descriptive qualitative writing whose focus is on a literature review. In so doing, close reading is applied as a method and interdisciplinary perspective as its framework. It is found that the ideas of human rights have spread as a public issue from the Puritan era until the modern era when proposed by many intellectuals, i.e., Anne Hutchinson, Roger Williams, Thomas Jefferson, Thomas Paine, John Adams, James Madison, Frederick Douglass, Martin Delany, George Fitzhugh, Abraham Lincoln, Sarah Grimke, Louisa McCord, Margaret Fuller, Betty Friedan, William Lloyd Garrison, and so forth. In response to many inhumane social conditions in the United States, human rights ideas arose. The ideas certainly support the establishment of the United States as a country. Consequently, this fact indicates that human rights ideas have persisted in the veins of the American nation over time, preserving it as the most plural and multicultural one in which all entities are welcome and acknowledged.

**Keywords:** human rights American intellectuals, literature review, classic writings, interdisciplinary perspective.

## 1. Introduction

The United States of America pioneered and encouraged the application of humanitarian principles, and as a result, it became the foundation for all formal legislation produced by international organizations like the United Nations or other nations (Henkin, 1998: 231; Maddex, 2002: 52; Moyn, 2010: 12). The nation typically takes frontier action to put an end to the tragedy after a human tragedy occurs. When a terrorist organization threatens the lives of its own citizens as well as those of citizens of other nations, as has happened in the past with militant organizations like Al-Qaida and the Islamic State of Syria in the Middle East, the United States of America will also take such immediate action as part of its official policy. Even though the USA and its allies sometimes go to war to stop these kinds of actions, the USA always takes the risks that are necessary to keep the world free from massacres and genocides. This fact could be likely considered the ultimate agenda of the USA.

In other words, as a nation-state, the idea of human rights is unquestionably guided by the principle of human rights (Hathaway, 2007: 587; Kane, 2003: 777). It implies that everyone in society must uphold the principles of personal equality and liberty in all spheres of life. The American identity, either as a nation or as a country, can be considered to be embodied in the human rights movement. Americans hold the view that human rights are innately ingrained as a built-in ethic (Montgomery, 2007: 117) in every person from the moment they are born, that they are natural, presocial, inalienable, and even moral (Nuriadi, 2014: 164). By viewing human rights from a liberal point of view, it becomes evident that the USA as a nation has long regarded those rights as civil and/or constitutional freedoms guaranteed to every citizen (Kane, 2003: 777), as stated explicitly in its Constitution and Amendments. Because of this, the country's commitment to protecting human rights has really taken root.

This article aims to further investigate the aforementioned themes in the context of tracking how some notable American intellectuals have articulated their views on human rights in their writings over the course of four historical eras. In this light, this article examines this topic through the lens of four historical eras in America: the Puritan era in the 17th century, the revolutionary era in the 18th century, the democratic era in the 19th century, and the modern era in the 20th century. It first covers the texts produced during the Puritan era, including those of Anne Hutchinson, John Winthrop, Roger Williams, and John Cotton. The discussion then moves on to present some important concepts from the Revolutionary era, including those from Thomas Jefferson, Thomas Paine, John Adams, and James Madison. Human rights concepts are thus traced in this essay from several intellectual writings that arose in the subsequent democratic era, including those by Abraham Lincoln, Frederick Douglass, Martin Delany, Sarah Grimke, Du Bois, Margaret Fuller, and Louisa McCord. The topic is then concluded by presenting some writings by contemporary intellectuals such as Malcolm X, Jane Adams, Elizabeth Stanton, Betty Friedan, and Nancy Chodorow.

## 2. Methodology

This article uses a qualitative method in the context of a library study. The presentation of its analysis is done using descriptive and

argumentative propositions (Mohajan, 2018: 23), not in a statistical or numeric way. This is so because the sources of data are taken from a number of classic writings in the form of essays, pamphlets, and speeches that were written and addressed by American intellectuals existing in four stages of era in American history, i.e., the Puritan era, the revolutionary era, the democratic order era, and the modern era.

The classic writings used as the main data for this article are selected based on the popularity of the intellectuals or figures who expressed the ideas of human rights. In fact, their writings have been recognized as masterpieces, and they have become very important documents in the United States. When identifying the data, the close reading method is conducted with the use of several techniques, such as direct quotation, paraphrasing, underlining, and so on. These are used in finding out the ideas of human rights in all writings. Moreover, in presenting the data as the main part of this article, the framework of interdisciplinary research is used in order to triangulate the data as being suitable for historical context when those writings appeared.

### 3. Discussion

#### 3.1 Human Rights in the Puritan Era

The words "equality" and "freedom" are the two pillars or conditions that must always be present in order for human rights to exist, according to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948). To put it another way, it can be assumed that the practice of human rights merely exists if there is a guarantee for the equal treatment and freedom of every human being or individual in a certain country. So, how did things go throughout the Puritan era, particularly during John Winthrop's and the following eras in the Massachusetts Bay Colony? I have my doubts about whether or not the two principles of human rights actually exist. Why is that? The idea put forth by John Winthrop in his book *A Model of Christian Charity* (1630) really strengthens this doubt. According to him, God created humans in various states, including varying levels of wealth, dignity, and submissiveness. One is higher and more honorable than the other. According to Winthrop, it is God Almighty who has disposed of the condition of mankind in the world through His holy and wise providence. He determines them all times who is rich and poor, who is powerful and powerless, and who is in mean and in submission (Winthrop in Hollinger and Capper 2001a: 7).

It implies that wealth and poverty, as well as height and lowness in dignity and authority, are implied as natural conditions or as heavenly gifts that cannot be disregarded by all people. In other words, the John Winthrop remark illustrates clearly how there was no equality during the Puritan era. Hence, this time period differs significantly from the ages in which John Locke and Thomas Jefferson first began to see human rights as the cornerstone of a country.

It is accurate to say that this Puritan society's whole governmental structure was founded on the Bible. In other words, the constitution was formed from the Holy Book, which served as a means of guiding and governing everyone. Two principles -- "justice" and "mercy" as borrowed from Scripture -- are used here to guide individuals. Winthrop claimed that while justice and mercy are always distinct in both their act and their goal, they may still accord on the same issue in all respects. These two comprised the "double law" (Hollinger and Capper, 2001a: 7). Winthrop envisioned a world in which people would treat one another with kindness and justice in accordance with the double law. On this foundation, all of the moral law's principles pertaining to interactions between people are based. Winthrop cautioned, however, that two conditions were necessary for such a law, namely: firstly, every man affords his help to another in every want or distress and secondly he performs this out of the same affection, which makes him careful of his own good according to that of our Savior (Winthrop in Hollinger and Capper, 2001a: 7). In addition to the ideas he expressed in his writing, Winthrop wanted to set up a perfect government that was based entirely on the Bible. He thought that the rich had a duty to help the poor, that the weak had no power to stand up to the powerful, and, most importantly, that each person had no right to disagree with what and why an authority decided certain things because the authority was the powerful and God's representative. Everyone needed to take it for granted. If not, they would be punished and exiled by the authority of God. This is what Winthrop intended when she wrote "A City Upon Hill."

Additionally, Winthrop's idea that the Scriptures serve as the primary law was supported by John Cotton, another prominent Puritan, in his book *A Treatise of the Covenant of Grace* (1636) saying that the law which was fully based on the Holy Scripture was the School-master to Christ in which a School-master drove his Scholar through fear, unto this or that duty so the Law of God drives the soul through fear unto Jesus Christ (Cotton in Hollinger and Capper, 2001a: 17). Cotton went on to say that the law, as derived from the Scriptures, becomes a trap for them and that which is of special and beneficial use to the Children of God, and as their adherence to the law is a trap for them, delight and comfort is a greater trap than the others (Cotton in Hollinger and Capper 2001a: 18). The "knitting together" between the two opposing sides can take place in addition to the Law of God (or the Scriptures), as Winthrop suggested (Cotton in Hollinger and Capper, 2001a: 7) and as vividly described by Cotton, and the brotherhood exists among people on account of their obedience to God through the Law assigned. Despite the fact that there is still a strong sense of brotherhood, there is undeniable disparity (Cotton in Hollinger and Capper, 2001a: 7). Therefore, there are no "human rights" as we currently understand them, which are based on equality and freedom as their two primary foundations.

Thus, Anne Hutchinson, in her work *The Examination of Mrs. Anne Hutchinson at the Court at Newtown* (1637), described how she personally suffered from being accused and tried due to her different beliefs from Puritanism in that area. This was done to bolster evidence that there were no human rights, particularly a right to liberty, in that era. Hutchinson refused because she saw it as a violation of her freedom to believe in God in a different way while being forced to return to the Puritan way of thinking. Governor Cotton consequently concluded that she was an Antinomian and needed to be apprehended and immediately exiled or sent away. The following quotation below amply illustrates this fact:

Gov: "The court hath already declared themselves satisfied concerning the things you hear, and concerning the troublesomeness of her spirit and the danger of her course amongst us, which is not to be suffered. Therefore if it be the mind of the court that Mrs. Hutchinson for these things that appear before us is unfit for our society, and if it be the mind of the court that she shall be banished out of our liberties and imprisoned till she be sent away, let them hold up their hands".

Gov: "Mrs. Hutchinson, the sentence of the court you hear is that you are banished from out of our jurisdiction as being a woman not fit for our society, and are to be imprisoned till the court shall send you away".

(Hutchinson in Hollinger and Capper, 2001a: 18).

Not only Anne Hutchinson was aware of the reality of a lack of freedom, but other European immigrants to the New World, particularly in Massachusetts, also had this problem. Roger Williams is another noteworthy person. Before founding Rhode Island, Roger Williams first visited Massachusetts, where he was imprisoned for having revolutionary ideas and being opposed to Puritanism. He later traveled to Rhode Island and formed it as a new colony. Freedom of conscience was his central philosophy. Similar to Hutchinson, it indicates that everyone has the right to practice their religion freely and that religion is a personal or private matter. Williams expressed his viewpoint unequivocally in a 1645 essay titled "Christenings Make Not Christians" by writing the following:

"I know (lastly) the consciences of many are otherwise persuaded, both from Israel state of old, and other Allegations, yet I shall be humbly bold to say, I am able to present such considerations to the eyes of all who love the Prince of truth and Peace, that shall discover the weakness of all such allegations, and answer all objections, that have been, or can be made in this point. So much negatively". (Williams in Hollinger and Capper, 2001a: 44)

Furthermore, Williams added:

"The truth is, having not been without (though the mercy of God) abundant and constant thoughts about a true Commission for such an Embassy and Ministry, I must ingenuously confess the restless unsatisfiedness of my soul in divers main particulars: I say whether Gods great business between Christ Jesus the holy Son of God and Antichrist the man of sin and Son of perdition, must not be first over, and Zion and Jerusalem be rebuilt and re-established ...". (Williams in Hollinger and Capper, 2001a: 45).

It follows that equality and freedom could not develop as defining elements of political and social norms in the majority of Puritan settlements in the seventeenth century, especially in the Puritan society in Massachusetts Bay Colony, if they were to become the primary prerequisites for the existence of human rights, as the majority of people currently hold. This was due to Puritanism, which was the supreme law of the society and strictly governed people's beliefs and behaviors. As a result, inhumane rigidity and homogeneity were present in all facets of human life. However, as was already established, Rhode Island, where the visionary Roger Williams served as governor, was the only location that may have served as a first indication of the human rights idea's existence at the time.

### 3.2 Human Rights in the Enlightenment or Revolutionary Era

It must be acknowledged that the birth of enlightenment, which marked the beginning of the recognition of human life and the power of reason, was the spark for the revolutionary age that occurred in the United States (Montgomery, 2007: 18). To put it another way, the concept of human rights, which is now taking shape, originated during this time period. Then, whether you believe it or not, the majority of American leaders at the time were aware of the existence of human rights, which ultimately led to the United States' independence.

The earliest evidence of human rights can be traced to the intellectuals of that time, whose thoughts drew some inspiration from the great thinkers of Europe like Rousseau, Montesquieu, Locke, etc. Thomas Paine is one of them, to name a few. Through his essay *Common Sense* (1776), Paine may inspire the American people to embrace their identities. The spirit is encouraged to be independent because, as John Locke noted, achieving full "inalienable rights," even if they are only partial rights like the right to life, liberty, and property, is only possible via independence. If there is self-government and no more colonization, their rights could be successfully attained. In light of this, Paine claimed that the establishment of government was crucial for Americans at the time. Through Paine's so-called pamphlet writing, this message is subtly conveyed where the government functions to protect all kinds of people and convince their lives safe and welfare (Paine in Hollinger and Capper, 2001a: 126). Paine's concept of governance in *Common Sense* refers to the democratic framework, with one of its foundations being the enforcement and acknowledgment of human rights. In line with this, Frederick Jackson Turner proposed in *The Significance of the Frontier* that the frontier men discovered or created the idea of democracy that Paine advocated as the form of self-government for the United States (Turner 1893: 1-38).

As we continue our discussion of human rights, it becomes evident that the discourse around them during this time period really supported Americans' declaration of independence. When the concept of human rights is applied to the political system, the people have the most power, as Alexander Hamilton stated in support of some of the above-mentioned figures and in an attempt to support Jefferson's idea in his Constitutional Convention Speech on a Plan of Government (1787) when saying that the sovereignty of government is a must to be immediately practiced and shared for all people in the country as a way for the government protect them (Hamilton in Kamiski et al., 2009: 59).

Also, as is already widely known, John Locke, an English philosopher, served as the primary inspiration for Thomas Jefferson, who was a crucial figure in the formulation of that declaration. Jefferson made three significant points that were directly related to the formation of

human rights. The first of the three is that all people are created equal in God's eyes, the second is that all people have unalienable rights, and the third is that in order to protect and advance those rights, a strong populace-backed government is required. The quotation from the Declaration of Independence (1776), which is presented in more detail below, reads as follows:

"We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness, that to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers in such from the consent of the governed, that whenever any form of government destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it and to institute new government..." (Jefferson in Hollinger and Capper, 2001a: 134).

According to the quotation, there are three different types of human rights: the rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Jefferson said that John Locke, who once said that people have the right to life, liberty, and property, helped him think of ways to show how special these three rights are.

Jefferson thus seems to concur with Paine's contention that immediate action by the government is necessary to advance the human rights to which all Americans are entitled as future citizens of the new nation. Here, the government acts as a kind of "tool," a political instrument, to accommodate and uphold the civil rights of the people that were fairly allocated. In this case, Jefferson suggested a plan for a federal government if any states became free and independent. This is shown through his statement in his address at the General Congress of the United States of America. He said that the government and legislatures are actually serving as the representatives of the United States of America where they assemble in order to appeal to the Supreme Judge of the World. Regarding this, they must follow the major voices of people and acknowledge the equal rights, freedom, and independences for all colonies or states (Jefferson in Hollinger and Capper, 2001a: 135–136).

John Adams also advocated for a Republican style of governance for the US. In a letter to Samuel Adams from 1790, he brought up this notion and stated that republican rule would be the norm. He has a firm belief that republican government is the only kind of good government that can exist. In republican form, there is a representation where all people collectively hold sovereignty and have the same, equal rights to decide the course of the country (Adams in Hollinger and Capper, 2001a: 173). In connection with this, James Madison concurred with Adams' viewpoints and elaborated on them in *The Federalist No. 10* (1787) saying that a republic opens a different prospect, and promises the cure for which we are seeking. He addresses the points of pure democracy in context of the way to comprehend the nature of the cure and the efficacy of the union, which should have as little agency as possible in the appointment of the members of the others. If this principle is strictly followed, all appointments for the supreme executive, legislative, and judicial magistracies would have to come from the same source of authority, the people, through channels with no communication with one another (Adams in Hollinger and Capper 2001a: 158-161).

Following this country's declaration of independence, the discussion and idea of human rights were to be advanced as the fundamental basis for the creation of its Supreme Law, known as the Constitution. The civil rights that are officially recognized and governed by this Constitution are the human rights that apply to all Americans. Human rights were now a significant component of the national structure, particularly the governmental system. The Constitution validated all laws and stipulated that all political instruments would be used with respect for and protection of people's rights and dignity. For example, the US Constitution's First Amendment, which upholds a number of civil rights for Americans, was ratified in 1791 as support for this assertion. The First Amendment protects a number of freedoms, such as the right to freely practice one's religion, the freedom of the press, the freedom of speech, the right to gather, and the right to ask the government to fix problems.

### *3.3 Human Rights in the Era of Democratic Order*

The question of how to administer the country continued to be an issue in the United States after its independence or sovereignty as a nation-state was reinforced with its Supreme Law as a federal nation. In fact, from the moment of its declaration of independence until the present, this country has consistently experienced social issues that have placed it in paradoxical situations (Ryan, 2009: 4), particularly when they first surfaced in the nineteenth century. In actuality, at least two significant events that happened in the nineteenth century were the causes of the situation.

The first cause is that slavery, a bizarre system used in a nation recognizing "all men are created equal," was a very large societal problem in terms of human degradation (human rights issues) in this century. This is clearly a paradoxical situation. As a consequence, this situation caused the country to split in two, with the North opposing slavery and the South supporting it. Because of this problem, the United States was forced to fight the Civil War, which lasted about five years, in the middle of the 1800s. Therefore, the abolition was the only way to free the Negro people from the South's system of slavery, according to William Lloyd Garrison, who was a vocal proponent of human rights and the North's anti-slavery movement. He made this claim in his work entitled *Thoughts on African Colonization*, published in 1832. He actually argued for the slaves' immediate personal freedom, exemption from punishment except in cases of law violations, employment and compensation as free laborers, exclusive ownership of their own bodies and those of their children, education, and admission to all the trusts, offices, honors, and emoluments of intelligent freemen (Garrison, 1832: 24).

Frederick Douglass, another well-known person from this age, saw that slavery had actually led America to believe falsely in both mankind and the Bible. He therefore joined Garrison in his fight against slavery. This man says that slavery is a sin and a disgrace. He stated in his paper, *What Is the Fourth of July to the Slave?*, that America was false in the past, present, and solemnly vows to be false in

the future. He would take the stage in defense of outraged humanity, restrained freedoms, and the ignored and violated laws of the Constitution and the Bible. Additionally, he ventured to examine and oppose everything that supports the continuation of slavery, which is America's greatest sin and disgrace (Douglas, 1852: 502). Martin Delany's writing entitled *The Condition, Elevation, Emigration, and Destiny of the Colored People of the United States* (1852) prompted all African Americans (his race) to awaken from slavery in order to determine their own inalienable rights granted by God and to inform all white people that the African Americans also have such rights. Delany's book was written with the same tone and idea as Douglass' (Delany, 1852: 1).

The anti-slavery movement, which served as the spark for the anti-slavery sentiment and spirit that was growing in the North, was exceptionally powerful, and it inexorably unified the people of the region in the pursuit of the rapid abolition of slavery. On the other hand, those who lived in the South made an effort to protect and justify the legitimacy of the slavery system. In this particular instance, one of the intellectuals from the South who attempted to ridicule the concept and the spirit of anti-slavery from the North was a man named George Fitzhugh. He was of the opinion that white people, in terms of both intelligence and social standing, were superior to black people. Fitzhugh said in his book *Sociology for the South* (1854) that he supported slavery because he believed it to be the only method of humanizing African Americans and that it had to be carried out in conformity with sound legal principles (Fitzhugh in Hollinger and Capper, 2001b: 480).

Nevertheless, despite the South's valiant defense efforts, anti-slavery sentiment was considerably more powerful and widespread. In other words, the concept of human rights is expanded in order to end slavery. Even Abraham Lincoln, who was serving as president of the United States at the time, was personally aware of this truth. In his speech, *Speech at Peoria, Illinois* (1854), this man also showed his strong support for the movement to end slavery by saying that all men are created equal that they are endowed by their Creator and the real function and responsibility of government is to protect and treat all people regardless of the differences of race, skin color, sex, religion, and primordial background (Lincoln in Hollinger and Capper 2001a: 518).

The absence of women's acknowledgment is the second major cause or problem that occurred in the nineteenth century in terms of the human rights issue (or the gender issue). When slavery was abolished in the United States, this issue first surfaced, which means that by the time the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Amendments of the US Constitution were ratified, all black people had been released from the slavery system and were officially acknowledged as American citizens. Despite the fact that the Fifteenth Amendment prohibited it, African-Americans were allowed to participate in politics. Sadly, the status of women was still lowered, ignored, subservient, and thought to be a "supplement" for the men. The women had to continue working in household affairs because they were not permitted to participate in public or even political affairs. Because of this growing problem in the status quo society, some women began to try to change things.

Sarah Grimke is the first and most well-known reformer to be named in this. Through her literary work, *Letters on the Equality of the Sexes and the Condition of Woman* (1838), she analyzed and developed her theory of the equality between men and women. The concept of equality first existed when God created Adam and Eve, particularly when they were still in Heaven. Thus, she proclaimed that God created all people regardless of different sexes as the equal and free agents and people must acknowledge that God is the Lawgiver, the king and the judge whom woman is only bound to be in subjection and to be accountable for the use of the talents with which her Heavenly Father has entrusted her (Hollinger and Capper, 2001a: 271).

Margaret Fuller even attempted to make the more specific claim—in terms of equality or equal recognition—that, in her opinion, women genuinely require "freedom" for their realization. She made this point in her book, *Women in the Nineteenth Century* (1845) through her statement that what woman needs is not as a woman to act or rule, but as a nature to grow, as an intellect to discern, as a soul to live freely and unimpeded, to unfold such powers as were given her when we left our common home (Fuller in Hollinger and Capper, 2001a: 390). Fuller said the statement because she thought that men kept women as "prisoners" in the home and didn't let them do the same things as men outside the home. So, the only thing women want is to be free. This happens because women have always thought that they could not do things that were not in line with what men wanted.

Louisa McCord, on the other hand, tended to disagree with this position when women pressed for true equality and the same treatment as men in public and governmental settings. If this occurs, the women have degraded themselves and violated her natural law because, in her opinion, the only appropriate role for women is to take loving care of their husbands. Women might truly carry out their roles as respectable people thanks to love. In *Enfranchisement of Woman* (1852), she put out this idea, stating that it is a woman's duty or nature to love, influence others through love, rule through love, instruct through love, and civilize through love. Thus, such sneers cannot dim the beauty of a sincere woman's love (McCord in Hollinger and Capper, 2001b: 460).

McCord holds the view that women can achieve the highest positions without having to be equal to men; rather, by becoming ideal women, they can make everyone better, even men. McCord says that this was an effective way to win men over or, more moderately, to make themselves equal to men. They did this by not competing with them. Here is what McCord said to make it clear that the only way for a woman to achieve her whole potential is not to transform herself into a male but to become more of a woman than she has ever been before. Through this way, she can also perfect mankind and her position becomes the more important duty because it is from her that the progression toward perfection must begin. In other words, the woman's role in the man's upbringing is to assist him, not to compete with him (McCord in Hollinger and Capper 2001b: 466).

Even though people didn't agree on what women's "proper position" was at the time, as McCord pointed out above, the fight for equality was still going on. Lucretia Mott, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Angelina Grimke, Sarah Grimke, Susan B. Anthony, and Margaret Fuller, to

name a few important figures, went on to declare and demand their "correct position as human beings, as equal creatures of God. In this case, Elizabeth Cady Stanton said in her book *The Solitude of Self* (1892) that women should take their rightful places and exercise their natural rights, even though law and custom still made it hard for them to do so (Stanton in Hollinger and Capper, 2001b: 41 and 42). The fight was settled by the Seneca Falls Convention in 1848, and it was a success in the end. This is shown by the fact that, at the beginning of the 20th century, the 19th Amendment to the United States Constitution gave women the right to vote or to be voted for.

### *3.4 Human Rights in Modern Era*

It goes without saying that the modern period began at the end of the nineteenth century. It is demonstrated by the rapid pace of industrialization in the United States, which is concurrently bolstered by the rapid expansion of capitalism in terms of advancing human civilization. On the other hand, the human rights challenges that had initially expanded in the nineteenth century continued into the twentieth century. These problems are the oppression of women and the segregation of the black race.

Despite the fact that the slavery system had been abolished, members of the Negro race (now referred to as "African-Americans") continued to fight against the discriminatory treatment they received from white people, particularly in the South. Only because of their various skin tones did they get discriminatory and segregatory treatment. To that end, Malcolm X wrote in *The Ballot or the Bullet* (1964) that whenever someone is going after something that belongs to him or her, the other who's depriving him or her in context of the right to have it is a criminal (Malcolm in Hollinger and Capper, 2001b: 400). In 1964, the concept that Malcolm proposed had already been discussed by a number of academics in the early 20th century, therefore it could not be considered truly groundbreaking at the time. In this regard, the notable black figure W.E.B. Du Bois made a passing reference to that concept at one point. He made it quite obvious that African-Americans were still a target of discrimination and that they had an obligation to push back against it. In addition, according to Du Bois, the freedoms that African Americans want include the right to life and limb, the right to work and think, the right to love and aspire, and the right to be free from discrimination. (Du Bois in Hollinger and Capper, 2001b: 161).

Along with the subject of Afro-American existence, the topic of gender also arises and is still relevant in the present period. The earlier contributions made by women served as a foundation for later activists to further advance the status of women. In other words, the views of American feminists, particularly Elizabeth Cady Stanton, had been influencing nearly every element of human life. This effect extended not just to the political sphere, where Stanton actively engaged in activism, but also to the economic sphere. Elizabeth Cady Stanton emerged as a "heroine" for American women in this context. Again, in her opinion, the transformation should begin at home, where a woman shouldn't actually follow the rules (as a sign of her husband's authority). Stanton wrote in *The Solitude of Self* (1892) about this situation by saying that whatever may be said of man's protecting power in ordinary conditions, the woman alone must ever meet the honors of that situation. Man's love and sympathy enters only into the certain sides of the woman's live (Stanton in Hollinger and Capper, 2001b: 43).

However, even though it was written in the same tense as Stanton's, Adams's *The Subjective Necessity of Social Settlements* (1892) was written in a more moderate way and tried to explain her great idea about the social settlement. In order to improve the position of women (especially girls) living with men, she says that the social settlement is a breakthrough (or an experiment) where women can be taught to be more humanistic in the world of industrialism and capitalism, which has been mostly ruled by men up until now. Adams said that the settlement is an experiment to help solve the social and industrial problems caused by modern life in a big city. Also, it needs to be based on a philosophy that is based on the unity of the human race and won't change even if the race is represented by a drunk woman or a stupid boy (Adam in Hollinger and Capper, 2001b: 136).

Also, we thought that American women were more "pragmatic," or practical, in how they ran their struggles. It means that the American women had shown that they had become more American. From our point of view, this is a long-term effect of the fight for women's human rights in the modern world. Frederick Jackson Turner said that the women were not only practical, but also more "individualist" in the sense that they believed in their own power (in Hollinger and Capper, 2001b: 91 and 92). As a sign of how practical and independent these American women were, most of them had jobs. Betty Friedan's book *The Feminine Mystique* made this point clear by saying that women should show what they can do that goes beyond having children (Friedan, 1963: 67). From Friedan's functionalist point of view, this means there is a "ideal" woman, or "what a woman should be." So, being a homemaker is a career for a woman as long as she also has other skills or knowledge. This makes her a general practitioner instead of a specialist (Friedan, 1963: 67). So, with Friedan's idea, women can finally be more independent, more themselves, and even show themselves in their "separateness" from men. Nancy Chodorow wrote in her 1979 book *Gender, Relation, and Difference in Psychoanalytic Perspective* that some women are preoccupied with psychological separateness and autonomy and that individuality is a necessary goal for women. This worry comes from the fact that many women feel they don't have the same freedom as men (Chodorow in Hollinger and Capper, 2001b: 442).

Finally, human rights issues keep coming up in people's lives, though they aren't as big as those that happened in the 1800s and early 1900s, such as the slavery of African Americans, the emancipation of women, the genocide of the Indians, segregation in public places, and so on. After that, there were no more changes to the Constitution. Even so, the ideas of human rights in this case are still talked about in more concrete and empirical ways, such as how minorities should be treated more fairly in the workplace and when it comes to getting paid. This is because liberal feminism says that both men and women have the same skills and strength to do jobs.

## **4. Conclusion**

When looking at the concepts of human rights in regard to the historical framework that was mentioned before, it can be seen that they

grew up and developed in each stage of the era in accordance with the spirit of the nation and its world view. With the exception of Rhode Island, the majority of the colonies during the time of the Puritans did not have nearly as much of a presence of liberty and equality as modern-day Americans do. In that time period, any deviation from Puritanism was strictly forbidden. Throughout the Enlightenment or Revolutionary era, intellectuals began to promote the spirit of liberty and equality as the two primary concepts of human rights. These are the ideals that are considered to be the cornerstones of human rights. In this particular instance, they were all motivated by the European philosophers, most notably John Locke, and, as a result, human rights were a truth that was obvious to everyone. As the question of slavery and liberation developed, the principles of human rights that had been proclaimed in an earlier century were finally put into effect during the era of democratic order, and they were even put to the test as the vision of the American people. Due to the fact that it is supported by a lot of active thinkers, this fact is still gaining in importance in the current period. As a consequence of this, the concepts of human rights have been around since the inception of the United States of America as a nation, and they serve as the veins and skeleton that support the nation's claim to being the most pluralist and multicultural nation in the world.

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