

Impact Statement

Hailey Cho, Grade 10

Unending Fervor, 2025

Pen and gouache on paper, 24.6 x 33.1 inches

Seoul International School, Seoul, Seoul Korea

Unsung Hero: Amos Bronson Alcott

The Unsung Hero I chose was Amos Bronson Alcott. Bronson Alcott was a teacher, reformer, writer, and a philosopher part of the transcendentalist group. Alcott challenged traditional ideals and teaching styles, prioritizing conventional methods over traditional teaching methods. Alcott came from a poor family as his father was a farmer. Despite this, Alcott dedicated his life to education and was a self-educated man himself. Driven by his ideals and philosophies, he opened a series of schools, aiming to spread his transcendentalist and conventional perspectives through education. As an educational reformer, he believed education should nurture a child's mind and spirit. He treated children with respect and believed they had innate wisdom and goodness. However, he faced a lot of criticism which forced him to close his last school, the Temple School in Boston. Due to facing a lot of debt, Alcott had to sell its content to ease his financial burdens.

Alcott was an instrumental figure in the Transcendentalism movement alongside other thinkers who questioned the accepted beliefs in the current period. They believed in the power of individual spirit, intuition, and the sacredness of nature. Alcott was very idealistic in his ideas, and he focused on self-improvement and spiritual perfection. Moreover, he was a social reformer who advocated for the causes of abolitionism, women's rights, and vegetarianism. This led him to create an utopian society in 1843 called Fruitlands where members lived by strict principles and the absence of what Alcott believed was irrational. Fruitlands failed after a few months, however, it was successful in proving Alcott's determination and commitment for his idealistic world.

Alcott was a major inspiration to many thinkers of the time. Although his projects were impractical, his perspective on education and life in general helped shape the thoughts of later educators, philosophers, and reformers.

My artistic vision was to have Fruitlands as the background to represent a clear vision of Alcott and his dedication towards his morals. Additionally, I included a few books that have been written about Alcott to demonstrate his substantial influence on succeeding generations. All human figures in my artwork were drawn with black pen while the buildings and setting were with gouache. I made this artistic choice because I wanted to emphasize how their work and contributions are everlasting in current society and how they continue to play significant roles in our world.

Researching Alcott has allowed me to explore different human philosophies and perspectives on various topics. I consider myself deeply confused and interested in philosophy from a young age. Thus, by exploring Alcott's life, it has inspired me to continue asking questions about life and to remain curious. In the future, I plan to share my artwork with my peers at school who are interested in art and those who enjoy spreading positive influence through art. I am part of NAHS, National Art Honor Society at school, which I believe has a great community of artists. I will utilize this opportunity to share my artwork there. For instance, in NAHS, there is a bulletin artwork exhibition every few months where club members can display their artwork. I am committed to displaying my artwork to spread awareness about my Unsung Hero and to inspire others to live with the same dedication and passion that Amos Bronson Alcott embodied.