Evolving Transcendentalism in Literature and Architecture

Evolving Transcendentalism in Literature and Architecture: Frank Furness, Louis Sullivan, and Frank Lloyd Wright

By

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Sanctuary of Unity Temple
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Sanctuary of Unity Temple
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ABBREVIATIONS

The following abbreviations for works central to the discussion will be used in citation:

ComWRWE	*The Complete Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson*
JMNRWE	*The Journal and Miscellaneous Notebooks*
ColWRWE	*The Collected Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson*
FLWA	*Frank Lloyd Wright on Architecture*
FLWCW	*Frank Lloyd Wright Collected Writings*
FLWWB	*Frank Lloyd Wright: Writings and Buildings*
FLWQ	*Frank Lloyd Wright Quarterly*

INTRODUCTION

Evolving Transcendentalism in Literature and Architecture: Frank Furness, Louis Sullivan, and Frank Lloyd Wright demonstrates how American architects read literature and transformed abstract philosophy and literary form into physical substance. The book also traces the transformation of the Transcendentalist concept of "organic form" into modern environmental architecture. Frank Furness (1839-1912), Louis Sullivan (1856-1924), and Frank Lloyd Wright (1867-1959) were inspired by such Transcendentalists as Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, and Walt Whitman, and embodied the concepts of nature, American identity, and Universalism in their architecture. Specifically, the central focus of the book is Wright's Transcendentalist writing and architecture, which have also been influential in the development of contemporary environmental architecture, although Wright himself was not considered an "environmental architect" in the contemporary sense of the term. Notably, this is the first attempt to analyze this architecture from a Transcendentalist perspective. According to the Frank Lloyd Wright Archive, no scholar has concentrated on analyzing Wright's architecture by way of his Transcendentalist thought, although many scholars agree that Wright did embody Transcendentalist ideas in his work. This is also the first time that reproductions of Wright's copy of *Leaves of Grass* and several tape recordings of Wright's Sunday talks have been published. In tracing the Transcendentalist roots of Wright's architecture, this book begins with an analysis of the architecture and philosophy of Wright's Transcendentalist architectural forerunners, Furness and Sullivan. Then, the book examines how Wright embodied the ideas of Emerson, Thoreau, and Whitman in his different buildings. After examining several of Wright's works, the book concludes with Transcendentalist architects' importance for the contemporary environmental architecture movement on a global scale. This final chapter includes contemporary ecological Transcendentalist architects Paolo Soleri (Italian-American) and Glenn Murcutt (Australian). These examinations will reveal that Transcendentalism in literature has ceaselessly evolved in architecture throughout the world, just as Emerson believed that the soul and society continually progress.

"Organic Architecture" and "Transcendentalism"

In order to understand Wright's architecture in this book, two concepts are essential: "Transcendentalism" and "organic architecture." "Transcendentalism," a core philosophy in Wright's architecture, refers to an American school of thought that arose in the nineteenth century. Transcendentalism connected the philosophy and literary ideas of Romanticism with Unitarianism, which denied the doctrines of the Trinity, original sin, the miracles and deity of Jesus Christ, and everlasting punishment. [1] Transcendentalism generally esteems spirituality and intuition over physical experience and human reason, drawing from Greek philosophers such as Plato and Plotinus.[2] New England Transcendentalists influenced by British and Continental Romanticism respected the concepts of self-reliance and individualism, and admired the beauty of nature. Transcendentalist writers such as Emerson, Thoreau, and Whitman emphasized religious feelings toward nature and a direct correspondence between the universe and the individual soul. Among these Transcendentalists, Emerson was a leader in advocating for American cultural independence. In particular, in his 1837 lecture "The American Scholar," delivered at Harvard University, Emerson urged Americans to develop their own cultural traditions, claiming, "our day of dependence, our long apprenticeship to the learning of other lands, draws to a close. The millions that around us are rushing into life cannot always be fed on the sere remains of foreign harvests." [3] In this statement, Emerson encouraged both intellectuals and artists, including architects of the day, to fight for cultural independence from the weighty and ingrained traditions of European countries.

Wright was embedded in both Unitarian and Emersonian thought through his family. Jenkin Jones, his maternal great-great-grandfather, contributed to the founding of the Arminian sect of Unitarianism in eighteenth-century Wales; therefore, most of Wright's relatives were

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[1] William F. Schulz, "Our Faith," *The Unitarian Universalist Pocket Guide*, ed. William F. Schulz (Boston: Skinner House Books, 1993), 1-7; Paul C. Gutjahr, *An American Bible: A History of the Good Book in the United States, 1777-1880* (California: Stanford University Press, 1999), 95-99.

[2] Frederic Ives Carpenter, *Emerson and Asia* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1930), 20-45.

[3] Ralph Waldo Emerson, "The American Scholar," *The Collected Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, ed. Robert E. Spiller, Alfred R. Ferguson, Joseph Slater, Jean Ferguson Carr, Wallace E. Williams, and Douglas Emory Wilson (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971), 1:81.

Unitarians and Emersonians.[4] Influenced by them, Wright also became an ardent Unitarian and Emersonian. Evidence that Wright was a Transcendentalist architect can be found in two bodies of source material. First, many of his writings and talks reveal his Transcendentalist influence. For example, in one of his Sunday morning talks in 1952 to his apprentices, Wright discussed the importance of philosophy for architects and encouraged each of his apprentices to "be more or less a propagandist" for his or her architectural philosophy.[5] In the same talk, he cited Emerson's words from "American Scholar" about American cultural independence and claimed: "If you don't read [Emerson's Essays], it's your own fault. Especially the one on 'The American Scholar.' 'The American Scholar' was our thesis in architecture in literature enunciated by Emerson at Harvard so many years ago."[6] While in "The American Scholar" Emerson encouraged general American cultural independence from European countries, Wright adapted this concept of cultural independence to the field of American architecture. Wright's words, calling Emerson's lecture "our thesis in architecture," are meant to convey the idea that American architects should design original architecture, not merely imitate European architecture.

The second source of evidence that Wright was influenced by Transcendentalism comes from the words of his relatives, colleagues, and students. For example, Wright's son John Lloyd Wright wrote that: "David Thoreau, Walt Whitman, Emerson and Henry Van Dyke were Papa's friends. [...] He spent long hours printing selections from their writings on tracing cloths. He would blue-print them and pass them out to his friends."[7] Likewise, Wright's apprentices in the Taliesin Fellowship were almost forced to practice the Transcendentalist ideal life as proposed by Wright in Taliesin and Taliesin West. Wright identified himself and was identified by others with Transcendentalism.

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[4] Robert McCarter, *Frank Lloyd Wright* (London: Phaidon, 1997), 11.

[5] Frank Lloyd Wright, "Sunday Morning Talk, 1952," (unpublished essays, ts., Arizona, The Frank Lloyd Wright Archive), 1. Unpublished manuscripts of Wright's Sunday talks now belong to the Wright Archive in Arizona. The Frank Lloyd Wright Archives Registrar Margo Stipe and I checked these materials together. Bruce Brooks Pfeiffer, Wright's apprentice and Director of the Wright Archive, recorded Wright's Sunday talks from 1948 to the end of the 1950s, and published some of them in *Frank Lloyd Wright: His Living Voice* (Fresno: Press at California State University, 1987).

[6] Wright, "Sunday Morning Talk, 1952," 1.

[7] John Lloyd Wright, *My Father Who Is On Earth*, ed. Narciso G. Menocal (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1984), 33.

The other significant term, "organic architecture," which Wright often uses in his writing and talks, arose from European Romanticism in the eighteen century.[8] Richard P. Adams examines the term in his 1957 article "From Coleridge to Wright: The Romantic Movement." Significantly, Wright himself read this Adams article about the relationship between literature and architecture, and mentioned the article in one of his Sunday morning talks in 1957: "I saw a pamphlet on the desk, written by a man named Adams—'From Coleridge to Wright: The Romantic Movement.' And I wondered how many of the boys and girls there know the connotation of that word 'Romantic' in connection with architecture, or in connection with an artistic movement."[9] In this talk Wright emphasized the significance of the philosophy behind architecture, and noted that his organic architectural theory originally stemmed from Romantic theories of literature, which also played a significant role in forming Transcendentalism in the United States.

According to Adams, the poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge popularized the concept of "the organic form" in England.[10] Adams mentions that in an 1818 lecture on Shakespeare, Coleridge expressed admiration of Shakespeare's works as organic works because, unlike traditional religious moral plays, they are neatly organized like "nature's systems."[11] Coleridge's words "nature's systems" imply that Shakespeare's works express human nature and England's nature, separating his works from rigid religious plays. According to Coleridge, "[t]he true ground of the mistake lies in the confounding mechanical regularity with organic form. The form is mechanic. [...] The organic form, on the other hand, is innate."[12] For Coleridge, the "organic" form relating to nature was preferable to the artificial, "mechanic[al]" form.[13] A reason for this was that for Coleridge, the "mechanic" form was associated with traditional Continental "religious" or "moral" styles, while the "organic" form was meant in the context of unique British styles based on British land itself.

In the United States, the first American writer to apply the concept of "organic form" to American architecture was the sculptor Horatio

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[8] Richard P. Adams, "Architecture and the Romantic Tradition: Coleridge to Wright." *American Quarterly* 9, no. 1 (1957), 47.

[99] Frank Lloyd Wright, "Sunday Morning Talk, 1957," (unpublished essays, ts., Arizona, The Frank Lloyd Wright Archive), 1.

[10] Adams, "Architecture and the Romantic Tradition," 47.

[11] Ibid., 47.

[12] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Lectures and Notes on Shakespeare and Other English Poets*, 1884, ed. T. Ashe (New York: Books for Libraries P, 1972), 229.

[13] Adams, "Architecture and the Romantic Tradition," 48-49.

Greenough, Emerson's and Rev. Frank Furness's closest friend at Harvard University.[14] In an 1843 essay, "American Architecture," Greenough advocates for American architects' creation of an original American organic architecture: "The mind of this country has never been seriously applied to architecture. Intently engaged in matters of more pressing importance, we have been content to receive our notions of architecture as we have received the fashion of our garments and the form of our entertainments, from Europe."[15] His words echo Emerson's ideas of American cultural independence from European countries, and later inspired Sullivan and Wright.

In the same essay, Greenough also advises his audience to consult nature, for nature's law is fundamental for all living beings: "Nature spake of the laws of building, not in the feather and in the flower, but in winds and waves, and he [the human] bent all his mind to hear and to obey."[16] Greenough's words assert the importance of focusing on the practical instead of the aesthetic aspects of nature, where he stresses the variety as well as the method of organic solutions for specific structural problems in architecture. He suggests that form should follow function, and that two identical structures should not exist, as they must each have their own individuality.[17]

In nineteenth-century America, influenced by Emerson and Greenough, Transcendentalists elaborated on and combined the ideas of organic form with their Unitarian beliefs, often discussing American architecture as a "possible test-case for organic creation."[18] Just as Coleridge and his colleagues advocated for innate organic form in British literature, American Transcendentalists directly or indirectly encouraged American architects to abandon the old humanistic traditions of the Renaissance, Neo-Classicist, and Neo-Gothic styles, and to establish American architectural styles that expressed the new culture they celebrated.

In early twentieth-century America, Wright, who was interested in Emerson's ideas of American cultural independence from other countries,

[14] Ibid., 49.
[15] Horatio Greenough, "American Architecture," *Form and Function: Remarks on Art, Design, and Architecture*, ed. Harold A. Small (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 1957), 53.
[16] Ibid., 61.
[17] Adams, "Architecture and the Romantic Tradition," 50.
[18] Ibid., 48-49.

further developed the ideas of organic architecture.[19] Wright explains the term, "organic architecture," in a 1931 essay:

> If we have occasion to refer to the visible world, we will use the term 'External Nature.' The word 'Organic' too, if taken too biologically, is a stumbling-block. The word applies to 'living' structure—a structure or concept wherein features or parts are so organized in form and substance as to be, applied to purpose, integral. Everything [that] 'lives' is therefore organic. The inorganic—the 'unorganized'—cannot live.[20]

Wright's concept of the "organic" therefore includes not only all living beings, but also organized systems of structures, including society. Organic architecture is thus an architecture informed by nature's law, and the core idea of Wright's architectural theories.

Chapter One examines the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts (1871-76), in which Furness attempted to express his Transcendentalist ideas of American cultural independence in architecture. Since Furness's father, Rev. Furness, was Emerson's intimate friend, Frank Furness was strongly influenced by the Transcendentalist ideas of both men. While Furness was designing the Academy, Sullivan worked with him for a short period and saw the way that Furness incorporated Transcendentalist ideas in his architecture.

The first section of Chapter Two discusses Sullivan and his work on the Chicago Auditorium Theater. The Auditorium Theater continues Furness's attempt to incorporate Transcendentalist ideas into architectural form. While designing the interior of the Auditorium Theater, Sullivan came across a poem from Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*, which inspired him to transcribe Whitman's poem and a Transcendentalist poem of his own in the Auditorium Theater itself. Since Wright worked with Sullivan in designing the Auditorium Theater, Wright observed firsthand Sullivan's

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[19] According to Donald Drew Egbert, in the twentieth century "organic expression" in American architecture developed in two main strands ("Organic Expression," *Evolutionary Thought*, ed. Stow Persons [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950], 387). One stemmed from European Romanticism, and through the Transcendentalists was popularized by Frank Furness, Louis Sullivan, and Frank Lloyd Wright. The other also stemmed from European Romanticism, but employed modern technology and machines, developed through the Werkbund and Bauhaus in Germany, and was refined by Walter Gropius and Ludwig Meis van der Rohe, all of whom were born in Europe and immigrated to the U.S.

[20] Frank Lloyd Wright, *Modern Architecture: Being the Kahn Lectures for 1930* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1931), 27.

incorporation of Whitman's ideas into architecture. The second section of Chapter Two examines the Transportation Building, which Sullivan designed at the Columbian Exposition held in Chicago in 1893. The exterior of the Transportation Building and the ornamented Golden Door at the entrance express a continuity of his Transcendentalist architectural theories about colours and arches from the Auditorium Theater.

Chapter Three traces Emerson's philosophical influence on Wright and demonstrates what can be called Wright's architectural essence. Since Unity Temple (1905-06) is a Unitarian church and Wright was a member of its congregation, he incorporated his Unitarian beliefs there, specifically his understanding of Emerson's ideas of nature, art, and American identity.

Chapter Four takes up the particular embodiment of Thoreau's ideas of simplicity in Wright's summer residence, Taliesin, Wisconsin (1911-1959). When Thoreau wrote *Walden* in the mid nineteenth century, a serious economic depression attacked to the United States, and Americans were attracted to Thoreau's writing and ideas of simplicity. When Wright constructed Taliesin and made the Taliesin Fellowship during the 1930s, the Great Depression attacked the United States and Wright recalled Thoreau's ideas of simplicity in life and art.

Chapter Five argues that Wright embodied his Whitmanian interpretation of "democracy" in Taliesin West, Arizona (1937-59), where he and his fellows stayed during the winter. In a speech delivered in Los Angeles in 1954, Wright explained his intention behind designing Taliesin West. The careful examination of Wright's speeches and writings from the time will reveal why Wright inclined toward Whitman's ideas of "democracy" in his latter days.

Chapter Six explores how Wright's specific organic architecture, in which Wright concerned environmental factors, has influenced contemporary environmental architecture. The first section clarifies the basic terms of environmental architecture. The second section discusses Wright's architecture from the perspective of environmental issues. I discuss such works as Taliesin West in Arizona, Jacobs House II in Wisconsin, and Price Tower in Oklahoma. Subsequently, the third section of the chapter discusses contemporary ecological architects who have further developed Wright's architectural ideas, focusing on Paolo Soleri (1919-) and Glenn Murcutt (1956-). Italian-American Soleri worked with Wright for eighteen months. Soleri has uniquely developed Wright's ideas, and has expressed his architectural philosophy through his word "arcology" (architecture + ecology). Australian architect Murcutt, who identifies himself as a Thoreauvian and Wrightian architect, won the 2002 Pritzker prize and the

2009 American Institute of Architects Gold Medal. These examinations reveal that Transcendentalism, far from being eclipsed as a cultural phenomenon, has developed and retained an influential role within American architecture, a role that is likely to become more prominent as we move through the twenty-first century.

CHAPTER ONE

FURNESS AND EMERSON: THE PENNSYLVANIA ACADEMY OF THE FINE ARTS

Furness, Sullivan, and Wright

Frank Heyling Furness (1839-1912) was one of the predecessors of Transcendentalist architecture in the nineteenth century. Louis Henry Sullivan (1856-1924) learned how to express his Transcendentalist ideas in his buildings and ornament while he worked with Furness. Frank Lloyd Wright (1867-1959) in turn learned from Sullivan while he worked with him at the turn of the twentieth century, thus indirectly inheriting Furness's Transcendentalist ideas in architecture.[1] John Harbeson has said of the relationship among these Transcendentalist architects: "Frank Furness may [...] be considered as the architectural godfather of Louis Sullivan, and the spiritual grandfather of Frank Lloyd Wright."[2] In this chapter, I trace one aspect of this Transcendentalist architectural genealogy, examining how Frank Furness, in the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, expressed Ralph Waldo Emerson's ideas of American cultural independence. In line with Emerson's ideas, Furness' building reflects the regional nature and culture of Pennsylvania.

I will begin by explaining how Furness's Transcendentalist ideas regarding the arts were formed in his early childhood and then developed

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[1] Biographical information is taken from Michael J. Lewis, *Frank Furness: Architecture and the Violent Mind*, New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 2001; James F. O' Gorman, *The Architecture of Frank Furness*, Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1973; Mark B. Orlowski, "Frank Furness and the Heroic Ideal," Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Michigan, 1986; and George E. Thomas, Jeffery A. Cohen, and Michael J. Lewis, eds, *Frank Furness: The Complete Works*, New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1996.

[2] John Harbeson, "Philadelphia's Victorian Architecture 1860-1890," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* (July 1943), 271.

in his professional life as an architect. I will also examine the background of the Academy, and consider why it was designed to express the idea of American uniqueness through both cultural and religious means. I will then analyze how Furness attempted to express these ideas in the exterior and the interior of the Academy. The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts was one of the nation's oldest art museums, originally founded in 1805 but redesigned by Furness and reopened in 1876.[3] The first American Academy of Fine Arts was organized in 1802 in New York, and the Philadelphia Academy, the former building of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts was the second.[4] The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts has collected and exhibited works by preeminent American artists such as Charles Willson Peale, William Merritt Chase, Thomas Eakins, and Mary Cassatt. Since their works have been crucial in the history of American cultural independence in the arts, it is worthwhile to examine how Furness also demonstrated American architectural independence in the Academy.[5]

Rev. Furness and Emerson

Architect Frank Furness's father, Unitarian minister Rev. Frank Furness, was one of Emerson's cherished friends throughout his life, and both continuously inspired each other and their families.[6] In an 1843 letter to Margaret Fuller, Emerson wrote: "[Rev.] Furness is my dear gossip, almost a gossip for the gods, there is such a repose and honor in the man."[7] In their childhood, Rev. Furness and Emerson attended the Public Latin

[3] Wendell Garrett, "Preface," *Antiques* (March 1982), 671.
[4] Ibid., 671.
[5] Since Furness's relatives and friends complied with his wishes to burn his writings after his death, only two articles written by Furness, "Hints to Designers" and "A Few Personal Reminiscences of His Old Teacher by One of His Old Pupils," have survived (Cohen, "Styles and Motives in the Architecture of Frank Furness," *Frank Furness: The Complete Works*, 92). Therefore, I examine Furness's thought by using Furness's words from these two essays as well as his architecture.
[6] To identify the members of the Furness family, the following conventions are used: "Furness" refers to Frank Furness; "Rev. Furness" refers to his father; and siblings are referred to by full names.
[7] Horace Howard Furness, *Records of a Lifelong Friendship 1807—1882: Ralph Waldo Emerson and William Henry Furness*. Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1910, vi.

School and received private tutoring from "Master Webb" together.[8] Rev. Furness wrote about their experiences as 10-year-olds at the private school: "We two boys were allowed to sit apart from the other boys, where we pleased; we always sat together, Ralph and I."[9] Rev. Furness's words show that his memory of Emerson was always cherished even in his latter days and that he was proud of their friendship. Their friendship continued, and after Emerson and Rev. Furness graduated from Harvard College and Divinity School, Emerson served as a minister in Boston until he resigned in 1832, while Rev. Furness worked at the New England Center for Unitarianism in Boston before moving to Philadelphia to be a minister in 1825. Even though they lived far apart, they frequently visited each other and Emerson often lectured at Furness's church in Philadelphia.[10] Besides being a Unitarian minister, Rev. Furness was a Transcendentalist, poet, translator, and hymn writer. In addition, he played a significant role in the development of American culture in Philadelphia as a member of the Art Union and a supporter of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, which his son, Frank Furness, would reconstruct in 1876.

The Furness Family and the Transcendentalists

Transcendentalism refers to an American school of thought that arose in the nineteenth century, and which connects the philosophy and literary ideas of Romanticism with Unitarianism, which denied the doctrines of the Trinity, original sin, the miracles and deity of Jesus Christ, and everlasting punishment.[11] Transcendentalism generally privileged spirituality and intuition over physical experience and human reason, drawing from Greek philosophers such as Plato and Plotinus.[12] New England Transcendentalists, influenced by British and Continental Romanticism

[8] Furness, *Records*, xiv. Rev. Furness writes about their childhood episodes in "Furness's copy of Mr. Cabot's Memoir," handwritten by Horace's sister and included in *Records*.
[9] Furness, *Records*, xv.
[10] George E. Thomas, "Flowering of an American Architecture," *Frank Furness: The Complete Works*, 26.
[11] William F. Schulz, "Our Faith." *The Unitarian Universalist Pocket Guide.* Ed. William F. Schulz. Boston: Skinner House Books, 1993, 1-7; Paul C. Gutjahr, *An American Bible: A History of the Good Book in the United States, 1777-1880*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999, 95-99.
[12] Frederic Ives Carpenter, *Emerson and Asia*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1930, 20-45.

respected the concepts of self-reliance and individualism, and admired the beauty of nature.

Transcendentalism pervaded the intellectual development of Rev. Furness's four children: painter and portrait draftsman William Henry Furness Jr. (1828-1867); translator of German literature Annis Furness Lee (1830-1908); Horace Howard Furness, a Shakespeare scholar at the University of Pennsylvania (1833-1912); and architect Frank Heyling Furness. From childhood the children were acquainted with their father's Transcendentalist friends; among them, Emerson was a crucial person. Rev. Furness's children directly heard and absorbed Emerson's ideas through their father or Emerson himself at their father's church.[13] Emerson often visited the Furnesses and presented gifts to Rev. Furness's children.[14] For example, Rev. Furness appreciated Emerson's gift of a stereoscope, a pair of binoculars that create the illusion of three dimensions, to his family, and wrote to Emerson in an 1854 letter: "I never told you of Frank's great pleasure in the stereoscope. It was in his hand for days—." [15] As these words suggest, Emerson helped Rev. Furness's children develop an interest in observing nature.

According to George E. Thomas, Rev. Furness frequently cited Emerson's poems and essays in his sermons and lectures, including those given at architectural conferences.[16] For example, at the final session of the American Institute of Architects conference held in Philadelphia in 1870, Rev. Furness gave a lecture on "The Architect and Artist" and emphasized American architectural independence from European architecture, quoting Emerson's poem "The Problem" to illustrate his claims.[17] The poem mainly discussed Emerson's concept of architectural principles underlying nature, art, architecture, and the divine.[18] According

[13] Thomas, "Flowering," 27.
[14] Ibid., 26-29.
[15] Furness, *Records*, 97.
[16] Thomas, "Flowering," 33-34.
[17] Richard P. Adams, "Architecture and the Romantic Tradition: Coleridge to Wright." *American Quarterly* 9.1 (1957): 54.
[18] The following is Rev. Furness' quotation from Emerson's "The Problem":

> Know'st thou what wove you woodbird's nest
> Of leaves, and feathers from her breast?
> Or how the fish outbuilds her shell
> Painting with morn each annual cell?
> Or how the sacred-pine tree adds
> To her old leaves new myriads?
> Such and so grew those holy piles
> While love and terror laid the tiles.

to Richard P. Adams, in order to explain his own concept of the "blood-relationship of Architecture to Nature," Rev. Furness cited the poem's fourth stanza, in which Emerson asserts that architecture is indispensable for humans, like "woodbird's nest[s]," "shell[s]," and "pine trees" for living beings.[19] Frank Furness, who also attended the conference, listened to his father's lecture and his metaphor from Emerson's poem.

Besides imparting philosophical concepts to the Furness family through intellectual exchange, Emerson frequently introduced the Furnesses to other Transcendentalists in his circle. One of them was Henry David Thoreau. In an 1847 letter, Emerson wrote to Rev. Furness that "Henry D. Thoreau is a great man in Concord, a man of original genius & character."[20] When Thoreau visited Philadelphia to give a lecture in 1854, Rev. Furness wrote about his impressions of Thoreau to Emerson: Thoreau "was full of interesting talk for the little while that we saw him, & it was amusing to hear your intonations."[21] The letter also reveals that although Rev. Furness could not go to the lecture, he heard that the general public did not always enjoy Thoreau's talks.

In an 1855 letter, Emerson also introduced Walt Whitman to Rev. Furness and asked about Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*: "Have you read that wonderful book—with all its formlessness & faults 'Leaves of Grass?'"[22] Whitman, later in his life, lived in Philadelphia and maintained a close relationship with the Furnesses. Around 1879 Horace Furness founded a private club with two literary friends, and each of the founders chose another member; "Frank Furness was Horace Furness's choice."[23] On

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Earth proudly wears the Parthenon,
As the best gem upon her zone;
And Morning opes with haste her lids
To gaze upon the Pyramids;
O'er England's abbeys bends the sky
As on its friends with kindred eye;
For out of thoughts' interior sphere
These wonders rose to upper air
And Nature gladly gave them place,
Adopted them into her race,
And granted them an equal date
With Andes and with Ararat.

(from "The Architect an Artist," quoted in Thomas, "Flowering," 34).

[19] Adams, "Architecture and the Romantic Tradition," 54.

[20] Furness, *Records*, 60.

[21] Ibid., 103.

[22] Ibid., 107.

[23] Ibid., 142.

March 26, 1879, Whitman was invited to the club as a special guest, and in an 1879 letter to John Burroughs, Whitman mentioned Horace and Frank Furness, "his brother, the architect."[24] Whitman was attracted to the club and its members, and he frequently attended the club after his first visit and exchanged his Transcendentalist ideas with Horace Furness and his relatives and friends.[25] Introduced to them by Emerson, many Transcendentalists had strong relationships with the Furness family, and directly influenced the formation of Frank Furness's Transcendentalist thought.

Frank Furness and Transcendentalist Thought

Three concepts formed the main Transcendentalist influences on Furness's development of a cultural independence in architecture: self-reliance, anti-institutionalism, and abolitionism. Emerson's concept of self-reliance was the most important and essential for Furness. In "Self-Reliance," Emerson notes: "Insist on yourself; never imitate. Your own gift you can present every moment with the cumulative force of a whole life's cultivation; but of the adopted talent of another you have only an extemporaneous half possession."[26] This statement encourages people to cultivate the ideas of self-reliance, emphasizing that they trust their own intuitions and not imitate other people's opinions. Furness's ideas of self-reliance echo Emerson's statement, and one of Furness's essays, "Hints to Designers," reveals his basic ideas of architecture, especially the Emersonian idea of self-reliance:

> In all cases the student must go for knowledge to the fountain-head, Nature. If the author of the best book upon ornamentation gives original designs, he went to Nature for them: go and look for yourself, trust nobody's eyes but your own.[27]

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[24] Walt Whitman quoted in Michael J. Lewis, *Frank Furness: Architecture and the Violent Mind*, New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 2001,143.
[25] Ibid., 143.
[26] Emerson, "Self-Reliance," *The Collected Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, Ed. Robert E. Spiller, Alfred R. Ferguson, Joseph Slater, Jean Ferguson Carr, Wallace E. Williams, and Douglas Emory Wilson. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1971, 47.
[27] Furness, "Hints to Designers," *Frank Furness: The Complete Works*, 348. Like typical Transcendentalists and some Romantic writers, Furness repeats "Nature" in his writing, and also uses a capital "N." This fact recalls Frank Lloyd Wright's words: "I think Nature should be spelled with a capital 'N,' not because Nature is God but because all that we can learn of God we will learn from the body of God,