



# Emerson & Eros: The Making of a Cultural Hero

*Professor Len Gougeon*

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## **Emerson & Eros: The Making of a Cultural Hero** Professor Len Gougeon

This critical biography traces the spiritual, psychological, and intellectual growth of one of America's foremost oracles and prophets, Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882). Beginning with his undergraduate career at Harvard and spanning the range of his adult life, the book examines the complex, often painful emotional journey inward that would eventually transform Emerson from an average Unitarian minister into one of the century's most formidable intellectual figures. By connecting Emerson's inner life with his outer life, Len Gougeon illustrates a virtually seamless relationship between Emerson's Transcendental philosophy and his later career as a social reformer, a rebel who sought to unsettle all things in an effort to redeem his society. In tracing the path of Emerson's evolution, Gougeon makes use of insights by Joseph Campbell, Erich Neumann, Mircea Eliade, and N. O. Brown. Like Emerson, all of these thinkers directly experienced the fragmentation and dehumanization of the Western world, and all were influenced both directly and indirectly by Emerson and his philosophy. Ultimately, this study demonstrates how Emerson's philosophy would become a major force of liberal reformation in American society, a force whose impact is still felt today."

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