

**Department of English, Bharati College**  
and  
**India International Centre**  
mark the bi-centenary of the birth of  
**Henry David Thoreau**  
with a  
**National Conference**  
titled  
**Thoreau and the Transcendentalists: Their Philosophy and Related Concerns**  
**March 15-17, 2018.**

The year 2017 marks the bi-centenary of the birth of Henry David Thoreau (12 July 1817) whose writings -- especially his essay on civil disobedience -- changed the course of history through its powerful advocacy of passive resistance, a form of nonviolent protest later adopted in India by Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, in the USA by Martin Luther King, and in South Africa by Nelson Mandela, among other national leaders. Gandhi declared that he never spent a night in jail without opening his trunk and re-reading the essay. Further, as an economist promulgating in the opening chapter of 'Walden' the doctrine of a radically different value system. Thoreau laid stress on a life of simplicity. This provided a blueprint for Gandhi's famous image of himself in a *khadi* (home spun) loin cloth at his charkha (spinning wheel) that broke the backbone of England's economy. Thus, quite apart from Thoreau's international reputation as a writer, India is indebted to him for his profound influence on Gandhi, resulting in the freedom movement led by him.

The three day conference is a salute to Thoreau for this, as well as for his awareness expressed of the close links between the current of his thought and the philosophy of India, as may be seen in the satisfaction he felt in the symbolic (as well as literal) confluence of "the pure Walden water" "with the sacred water of the Ganges" in the form of ice exported to "Madras and Bombay and Calcutta," affording relief to the "sweltering inhabitants" of these cities ('Walden', "The Pond in Winter").

A defender of individual liberty, an ecologist and environmentalist who saw the steam locomotive as a "devilish Iron Horse," a naturalist, a professional land surveyor, a maker of pencils that equaled the best imported from England, a philosopher, thinker, an explorer of the New England area, and, above all, an outstanding writer, Thoreau's life and work as well as the Transcendental movement that he, Emerson, Channing, and Margaret Fuller, among others, pioneered, needs our critical scrutiny, more so today than ever before when political, social, cultural and ideological pressures are becoming increasingly importunate. Not that such pressures were unknown to Thoreau: strongly opposed as he was to the institution of slavery and to the execution of John Brown the abolitionist, Thoreau described him as "a man of rare common sense and directness of speech and of action" ("A Plea for Captain John Brown").

When Thoreau was jailed for refusing to pay the tax for the Mexican War, Emerson asked him, "Henry, why are you here?". Thoreau replied, "Waldo, why are you NOT here?"

Research Papers are invited, largely upon, but not limited to the following sub themes:

- Thoreau and Gandhi
- Thoreau the Revolutionary
- Forever Changed by Thoreau
- Thoreau the Transcendentalist
- Influences on Thoreau
- Thoreau, social justice and environmental justice
- Individualism, Idealism and Thoreau
- Thoreau and Solitude
- Relevance of Thoreau in the Anthropocene
- Thoreau and Walden
- Thoreau the Intellectual
- Reading Thoreau

Research papers should not exceed 5000 words in length. They should be in 12 point size, font-Times New Roman, with 1.5 line spacing.

Research paper submission dates extend from **September 16, 2017 to October 31, 2017**.

Acceptance of papers shall be notified on **November 15, 2017**. The papers will be circulated in advance among all the paper readers, whose actual participation in the conference will be limited to a 15-minute summary of his/her paper, followed by a panel discussion.

Certificates for paper presentation/participation would be handed over in the valedictory function of the conference. The selected and peer-reviewed complete papers will be published as an edited volume with an ISBN number.

**Papers should be addressed to:** [thoreauconference2018@gmail.com](mailto:thoreauconference2018@gmail.com)

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