Prefatory Note

Comparative Literature or Comparative Literary Studies is an area of literature-study which gives opportunity to compare works of different authors and varied cultures. Sometimes it is inter-authorial, or at times intra-authorial. When the comparison is between literary works in two different languages, the task becomes still more important sociologically, since the comparatist makes an inter-textual and inter-cultural study during his comparison.

According to experts, Comparative Literature is a useful academic exercise. Anthony Thornby observes:

Comparative Literature does not in itself commit one to any other principle than that comparison is a most useful technique for analysing works of art, and that instead of confining comparisons to writings in the same language, one may usefully choose points of comparison in other languages. To see one poem, or one picture, or one building is to have little feeling for its qualities. To see another example of the same thing, which being another work of art is, of course, not the same but only comparable, is to take the first step towards recognising what is in each case good, original, difficult, intended.
While speaking about the usefulness of this discipline Matthew Arnold says:

everywhere there is connection,
everywhere there is illustration: no single event,
no single literature, is adequately comprehended
except in relation to other events, to other
literatures.²

This is true in the sense that the concept of relativity, as in
the field of physical science, becomes helpful when we compare
literatures from two countries. As Welleck and Warren have commented:

It is the study of relationships between
two or more literatures.³

In Comparative Literature one literature is to be studied with
reference to other literatures within and outside the country. It transcends
the provcicialty of a national literature. In this sense Comparative Literary
Studies broaden the horizons of literatures all over the world.

Comparative Literature gives its student a cosmopolitan view. Similarly the readers of such comparative studies can develop an international outlook. Literary works of different authors having thematic similarity, if studied comparatively, could yield productive results.
It is with this view that the present study is undertaken. The impact of the Romantic poets of the eighteenth century England on the Indian poets during the pre-Independence times is discernible. It would be very interesting to compare the poems of two Nature poets from varied cultures- William Wordsworth (English) and Balkavi (Marathi).

Drawing parallelism and pinpointing contrasting features if any, would be a useful academic exercise. It is a modest attempt of the researcher in this vast field - namely Comparative Literature. The method adopted for this purpose is comparison method. Poems of the two poets have been compared one to one in Chapter Five of the thesis.
References


2. Arnold, Matthew, On the Modern Element in Literature, Lecture at the University of Oxford, 14 Nov. 1857