Conclusion

It is a pleasure to have interdisciplinary study like studying literature, philosophy and religion.

Interdisciplinary study is fruitful for one and all. Because, it provides us all balanced worldview. Interdisciplinary study helps us understand and appreciate literature properly. This kind of study makes us complete.

Another dimension of the present study is comparison. T. S. Eliot is of the opinion that the best way to understand and evaluate a work of art is to compare it with other works of art. According to him, comparison and contrast are the two tools of study. Comparative study of literature is very helpful in this regard. Comparative literature plays a vital role in our academic life. It bridges the gap between writers and readers and critics. Comparative study is not initiated just for its own sake but it is there for the sake of studying literatures. What we must do is to see how we can reorganize the whole literatures for the sake of comparing. Yet comparative study must be directed to our timely needs and requirements. The study of our own literature is not enough for our fuller developments. Nor can the study of national literature be sufficient either.

Then occurs the question what must be the criterion of comparative literature. Some scholars argue that language must be a criterion of comparative literature. For example, India has many languages and comparison of literature of one language with another language must be undertaken. For instance, a novel written in Kannada say on freedom struggle must be compared with a novel of the same theme in Panjabi. Though the same language is spoken in the breadth and length of a country, its literature will be different in its nature and presentation. For example,
English literature is not similar to American literature though both are in English. This is because of the reason that nationalities are different everywhere. Therefore, Sisir Kumar Das argues that comparative literature has to be both interlinguistic and nationalistic, because literature is born in a language yet it goes beyond it.

Comparative study of literature first started by the Romans after they conquered Greece. Plutarch (6 c AD), Terence and others resorted to do comparative study of literature. But serious comparative study began first in France. Scholars like Van Tieghem did pioneering work in this regard.

Then Canadian scholars followed the suit. Likewise, the Chinese scholars also had a lead in this regard.

Comparative study of literature could not start in ancient India though India had great literature in Samskrit and Tamil. Nor did the Indian resort to study their literature comparatively, though the Greeks ruled the north-west for a century. Even Indians did not study Chinese literature. Unfortunately interlingual comparative study was almost nil in India. The British inspired Indians to think of this in the 19th and 20th centuries. Our famed writers like Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyaya and Rabindranath Tagore need to be remembered for their initiation in this regard.

Comparative study in the field of literature has to focus upon common genres like epic, drama, poetry, novel, and short story that are written in all languages. Comparative literature studies are very good to broaden man’s existential makeup. In the words of Harry Levin ‘it can counteract one’s innate provinciality.’

All this is discussed in chapter one.

Chapter-2 is about Basavanna’s philosophy of Transcendence. He lived in the 12th century South India. He created a socio-religious revolution.
Personal details about Basavanna cannot be had from his contemporaries. Of course, one can understand much from his vacanas (verses). Books about Basavanna by post-period scholars include Harihar’s *Basavarajadevaram Ragale*, Singhiraja’s *Amara Basavacharite*, and Lakkanadandesh’s *Shivatatvachintamani*. What we can understand about him is that he was the son of Madarasa and Madalambike of Shiva-Brahmin community, who ran an agrahara at Bagewadi-Ingaleshwar. Basavanna was born to them in 1131. AD.

Basavanna was a born-prodigy. Jatavedamuni was his teacher. The boy Basavanna refused to have the Upanayana Sanskara (thread ceremony), for the same was refused for his sister on the basis of gender bias. He refused to accept Hinduism which bred inequality. He abhorred orthodoxy. He went to Kudalasangam, a place of another agrahar where his sister Nagalambike had settled down with her husband. He studied Hinduism, and the other possible paths for man’s happy life in the world. Basavanna went to Mangalawade and lived with an army general Bijjal. The latter became his patron. Shortly Bijjal, by force, secured King Tailap of Chalukya’s dynasty in 1155. Basavanna worked for him as his Prime Minister. The Chalukya area was known as Kalyan. This is the present Hyderabad-Karnataka. Basavanna practiced his faith freely and frankly. Many people from other places came to Kalyan and all lived with their policy “work is worship.” They thought all are equal in society as they are before God. Basavanna said a low caste man is as free as a high caste man to live independently. He said caste is a social construct. He said a woman is as free as man. He said all people are equal and they can follow any profession just for life. As for Emerson and Whitman, even for Basavanna, man’s place of living and craft did not matter. This reminds us John Ruskin and Karl Marx. In fact,
Basavanna prepared a ground for reformers like Mahatma Gandhi. For him life was not maya (illusion). The word how one lives mattered. A man who lived well was called a Sharana. Basavanna said a Sharana lived and let others live. Basavanna said one must live by his own work. He called this kayaka. He must treat others as he expects them treat himself. He said one must set apart a part of his earning for charity. He called this Dasoh. Hence, kayaka and dasoh became very fundamental for good life.

Basavanna with the help of the king set up a Wisdom Hall much like the Sumerian King Nebuchadnazar’s. This was called Anubhava Mantapa. Daily discussions over the experiences of one’s life and happenings and thoughts were held there. People debated over the right and wrong in life. All the men and women wrote down their understanding and appreciation of life in vachanas, most of them in prose.

Chapter – 3 is about Emerson’s philosophy of Transcendence. Emerson lived a preacher, poet, lecturer, thinker and visionary in the mid 19th century America. He declared the independence of American literature from its evil of imitating Europe. He developed proper attitudes in people’s thinking and action.

Emerson who was brought up in a literary tradition sought refuge in books. Emerson, through aunt Mary discovered Milton, Bacon, Shakespeare and Burke and a host others to follow. Slowly, as he took over his own education, he added Plato, Montaigne, Newton, Swedenborg, and Plutarch to his list of imperatives. More commonly he turned to histories, anthologies, and translations as shortcuts to usable ideas: Gerando, Schlegel, Stael, Cousin, Hammer’s translations of Persian poetry into German, and Taylor’s translations of the Neo-Platonists. Emerson retired from his ministry soon in 1832. Because he loved independence of mind. ‘Whoso would be a man,’ he
wrote later, 'must be a non-conformist... Nothing is at last sacred but the integrity of your own mind.' Then Emerson taught in a school, and did something else, believing that he would regenerate his mind, manners, inward and outward estate. Three points emerge from this inventory, which are central to an understanding of the later Emerson: his faith in the moral imagination rather than the intellect, his lack of self-confidence, and his choice of eloquence as his natural medium of expression.

Emerson’s rebellion, when it finally came, was twofold: against the last vestiges of ecclesiastical authority over the spiritual life of the individual, and against the eighteenth century rationalism which had killed spirituality, he thought, when it denied revelation. The first pointed to a final schism in which each man becomes his own church; the second sought to provide the rules for a new and personal orthodoxy.


His subsequent books *Essays* (1841), *Essays Second Series* (1844), *Representative Men* (1850), *English Traits* (1856), and *The Conduct of Life* (1867) speak of his idealism based on liberty, equality and fraternity.

Chapter-4 is seminal in the present study. This scholar finds a world of similarity between Basavanna’s socio-religious revolution in the mid-12th century and Emerson’s social reform in the mid-19th century America.

Both Basavanna and Emerson lived a similar kind of life. They did a lot of radical socio-religious reforms. They appeared as revolutionaries. Their world vision has affected man’s thought all over the world.

Chapter-4 has examined this aspect of study.
The first similarity between Basavanna and Emerson relates to their religious reforms. Basavanna lived in the 12th century South India when Vedic life dominated. Both Buddhism and Jainism had degenerated. So Basavanna almost founded Lingayatism. The hallmarks of the religion are monotheism, worship of God through istalinga (eliminating both temple and priest), and discarding all kinds of vedic rites and rituals except baptism, marriage and death. Similarly Emerson who lived in the mid-19th century America found Puritanism as an extreme faction as well as attitude in Christianity. He did not accept the Calvinist concepts of sin and grace (or selectism). He advocated for body-church and secularism.

Both Basavanna and Emerson advocated social reforms. Basavanna through istalinga for anyone, removed many social barriers. He declared liberty, equality and fraternity. He eradicated casticism, and gender-differences. Likewise, Emerson through his lectures advocated for social health. He called for banning of slavery. He advocated emancipation of women. Both loved the common man.

These two great thinkers advocated several economic reforms. Basavanna devised such great concepts like kayaka (honest work) and dasoh (honest and selfless donation). He spiritualized work. This is socialistic approach to life, believing in everybody’s welfare. Similarly, Emerson believed in self reliance. He writes,

‘To believe in your own thought, to believe that what is true for you in your private heart is true for all men—that is genius.’ Greatness is ‘the fulfillment of a natural tendency in each man.’

In Emerson’s view, the self-reliant man lived with God, independent of men’s opinions. Thus, to surrender to life means to surrender to goodness,
and 'a bolder spirit' is 'a more surrendered soul, more informed and led by God.'

Emerson believed in action. He himself lived a great hardship. Emerson once wrote:

'Why needs any man be rich?' Emerson asks: 'It is better to go without the conveniences of life than to have them at too great a cost. Let us learn the meaning of economy....Can anything be so elegant as to have few wants and to serve one's self...?'

Politically Basavanna's age was feudal age. He was the prime minister of the Kalachuri king Bijjal. Still Basavanna through his Anubhava Mantapa created an awareness amongst the people about the beauty of both democracy and socialism. Similarly, Emerson advocated his people every kind of independence from the European hegemony. His Transcendental club protest against racism, and it supported the native Indians' cause. The Transcendentalists supported feminist cause. They even hoped for multiculturalism.

Finally, both Basavanna and Emerson were mystics.

Biographies of the saints of all religions mention the miracles. Jesus converted water into wine. He brought back the dead to life. After his crucifixion he came out of his tomb and appeared before his devotees. One will have to believe them. The biography of Prophet Mohammad mentions many miracles. Shri Krisna redeemed his devotees by being omnipresent. He protected Droupadi when her saree was being removed by Dusyasana. He lifted the mountain by his toe and protected the world from chaotic ruin.

Lingayat Puranas state many such instances of miracles performed by Basavanna. Basavanna himself has stated in one of his vachanas that he performed as many as eighty-eight miracles. He possessed the powers of (i)
mind, (ii) thought, (iii) walk, (iv) talk and (v) vision. He used these powers for the welfare of all beings.

These two writers wrote immensely. Basavanna's vachanas are about man, society and God. The Sharanas have written vachana literature for life sake. Not much different is Emerson's case. His writings from his sermons to his lectures, later converted into essays, and also his poetry is literary as well as philosophical. Emerson's writings have, no doubt, affected the American thought in the subsequent times.

By all means this comparative study of both Basavanna and Emerson as Transcendentalists is quite fruitful.

The thesis has a conclusion and a select bibliography.
References:


3. CW I: 154-55.