CHAPTER IX

CONCLUSION
PART-IV

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In the concluding part of this thesis, we will arrive at the conviction of recognizing Arnold and Vivekananda as critics of society. At the comparative analysis level, we have seen them having reformative zeal to improve the existing order of the society for the better. In the case of Arnold we have seen his literary criticism, in broader perspective, tending towards social criticism. Literary and social become inseparable part of arthritic creation. That is why he was able to highlight on these golden periods like the Athens of Pedicles, the Greece of Pindar and Sapheads and the Elizabethan England as filled with national glow of life and thought. And these periods, as pointed out, the most elevating nourishing epochs for the splendid product for literary creation. These are the precious moments for the poet to cherish, to live and work with it.

Arnold’s critical spirit both of literary and social culminates in the concept of culture. Culture being the study of perfection, and pursuit of perfection; it seeks always for the best that is known and thought in the world. And these crusts of thoughts coming to the aid of humanity will create a beautiful order of society, based on the reason and will of God. Arnold’s critical endeavour has done this job very satisfactorily. And he emerges as the best critic of his time. The twentieth century humanitarian criticism has been much influenced by him.
Similarly the seminal mystical ideas of Swami Vivekananda are of great service to humanity. The humanitarian out-look is expressed in the words of Mohit Chakrabarti as, "Swami Vivekananda makes an introspective inquiry into the world of work and worship and directs out attention to how the two are well synchronized for poignance and efflorescence of humanism. In this respect he cares more for one's involvement in work than in so-called worship that eliminates man from inward divinity."\(^1\)

Vivekananda with his mystical insight has made observation of his contemporary society. This mystical temperament and vision did not come in the way of having unblurred vision of Indian society with its problems. In an efficient manner he probed into the Indian society and discovered the social situation of his time. This was helped by his experience of a wandering monk of some duration. In his critical analysis he touches upon various issues such as religion, caste system, education, political situation, and mass poverty. His incisive criticism on these socio-political, religious problems of the day is landable. Through him we will get the clear picture of his contemporary society as its critic. Although a mystic, but with social concern, his mysticism bears the sociological implications. And he emerges as the best critic of Indian society.

At the comparative analysis level Arnold and Vivekananda meet on the same platform as critics of the society. In the comparative analysis we have seen both displaying reformative zeal. In their zeal we have seen them trying to purge

their respective society of its impurities and at the same time taking the society towards harmonious expansion or total perfection. In this concluding part, a brief analysis is made to show the relevance of Arnold and Vivekananda to the modern society. So the brief reference also to modern society and the relevance are highlighted.

9.1 MODERNITY:

With brief background of the concept of modernity, we will examine the relevance of Vivekananda and Arnold. Modernity, in common parlance is the present day society in all its complexity. Society since time immemorial has been evolved successively compared to the earlier periods of the society, we feel some kind of change is perceptible. The change is natural law of society. To speak about change Malcorim Bradbury writes, “It involves a continuous movement which gives each generation a difficult experience from that of the previous one, superannuates the generation itself more quickly and exposes all of us to the risks and the hopes of an unfixed or an impermanent environment.”

As for the feeling of modernity is concerned, man in the past must have felt their sense of modernity. In our context of modern sense, we feel it started with the advent of science which effected manifold change. As Malcolm Bradbury puts it, “For modernization – a process which affected much of the west in the nineteenth century, and has continued there and developed in most of the rest of the world in the twentieth – is the product of science, reason and

2 Malcorm Bradbury. The Social context of Modern English Literature (Oxford; Basil Blackwell, 1971, p.4-5.)
industrialization. So the various changes can be named in isolation as: industrialization, urbanization, secularization, democratization and massification. Hence, today’s world is predominantly the age of science and machine.

But, if we look at the sense of modernism as interpreted by Mathew Arnold is different. According to him any period in the history will characterize the sense of modernism. A Joseph Carrol puts it, “Arnold lists the elements that seem to him the main characteristics of a sophisticated civilization, and by comparing them within three cultures - Perdean Athens, Elizabeth England, and late republican early imperial Rome—he frees the concept of the modern from all chronological determinism.” Modern World to Arnold is civil peace.

According to Arnold rationality and critical spirit themselves from the basic elements of modernity. Therefore the modern element in Elizabethan England was to return to the human intelligence rather than creation of things out of it. That is why Arnold found England not as a influencing force literally politically and socially in Europe. Instead he found French Revolution in comparison with English Revolution of Charles the First’s time as the most animating event in history owing to its appeal to reason.

In Arnold’s concept of modernism, it does not consist in Hellenic concept alone, but also in Hebraic concept. Therefore he did not favour Dante’s ascetic

3 Bradbury p.5.
attitude at the cost of Hellenic spirit. As Joseph Carrol puts, “Dante was not complete in the life of the World and the imaginative reason requires a human nature complete both in its inward qualities of heart and imagination and in its sensual and intellectual relation to the world.” Hence, if the harmony is upset, the disjunction will set in society.

The very purpose of the modern spirit is to achieve a harmony of ideas. In the worlds of Joseph carrol, “The task of the critic, as an exponent of ‘reason’, is to free Europe from the bondage of an out-moded social and religious ethos and at the same time, to fashion a new ethics that will nurture the instinct for development.” From this consideration it becomes clear that along with combinations of all integral elements for the human development of an individual but should be widely spread among the general population. The culture of Athens is one such example of modern epoch.

9.2 RELEVANCE:

Having examined the concept of modernism in its literal and special sense as Arnold conceived, we will look at his relevance to the present day society. As we are aware of the Arnold’s concept of culture, the one unifying and progressive means towards the state of perfection. Arnold’s influence is perceptible in the social criticism that was taken up by main writers of both the later nineteenth century and the twentieth century such as D.H. Lawrence, F.R. Leavis, I.A.

5 Carrel 60.
6 Carrel 61.
Richards and T.S. Eliot. Although they differed on some issues, but largely relied upon Arnold’s critical approaches.

In the today’s scientifically advanced modern society, we find that society is not immune from its problems. Science, in a way, has become incapable of becoming a sovereign remedy to all the ills of society. The anarchic tendencies still persist in modern society. The religious fanaticism, terrorism, lack of communal harmony, poverty of the masses, political instability are some of the citable scenes of the modern society.

Arnold’s views on culture and Vivekananda’s views of Neo Vedanta can be profitably used in eradicating various social evils of the today’s modern society. Arnold’s culture can stand against hopeless industrial squalor and speaks about sweetness and light in place of it. Based on the cultural concept a nation can undertake social welfare measures of uplifting low strata of the society. So Arnold’s culture formed out of love for our neighbour, one which inspires the desires for renouncing human error, of clearing human confusion and leaving the world happier and better than we found it.

The recent developments at the International level, some organizations have come into existence mainly with an intention to help the humanity at large. The United Nations Organization (UNO), World Health Organization (WHO), The United National Monetary Fund (IUP) and the World Bank among other international national agencies, all aim at improving the material educational and
cultural well-beings of the World’s population at large and removing the squalor and economic inequality of different classes of people in a society.

In the literary criticism Eliot seems to have inherited the concepts of tradition impersonality, objectivity and morality from Arnold himself.

Thus Arnold’s critical spirit stands for polestar, guiding the modern critics both for literary and social aims. As regards the job of modern critic, Robert Long Baum observes as, “His job is to turn the work of art into a cultural acquisition. This has always been, and it remains the function of criticism, and it is to the continuance of this function that the newest critics will undoubtedly bring all their latest techniques. In performing this function, the newest critics will show that, apart from its service to literature, criticism has in modern times a special importance of its own as, in an increasingly technological age, the application to all the affairs of life of what we may call the literary or humanistic, in contrast with the technical mind.”

Speaking of Vivekananda’s relevance of his spiritual ideas especially his newo-vedantism which has sociological implications, he proves to be as much relevance today as he was to his time. Vivekananda’s influence the development of patriotic feelings can not be denied. They inspired eminent personalities like Aurobindo Gandhi, Tilak and Tagore for the nationalistic movement. The same spirit can be kindled today for the national integration on the writings of Swami

Vivekananda. The communal disturbance which is the recurrent scene will be avoid by the patriotic spirit.

Vivekananda’s thoughts on education are still valid. Vivekananda’s synthesizing method in of language study is effective means. In his opinion, education should be given in one’s own mother tongue; and English education, for higher pursuit; and for cultural studies, Sanskrit language. That is why he admonished Brahmin priests to impart sensiest and cultural education to low caste people. Even he asked the low caste people not to neglect Sanskrit language are the views still valid today.

Vivekananda wants Indians to have education based on science and technology as well as cultural and religious values. If India wants to become one of the advanced countries, it can rely upon the spiritual strength, the strength of the some.

Today’s scene of Indian society is afflicted with religious intolerance, fanaticism and the lack of communal harmony. Vivekananda’s ideas on religion delivered at the parliament of religion at Chicago act as an antidote to religious into Laurence and communal disharmony.

Vivekananda’s relevance to today’s modern western society is undeniable. Western society today is not moving towards spiritual destination. Still the political goals are swaying the minds of the western countries. Breaking out of
wars on small-scale, terrorism and religious fanaticism are still prevalent. If the westerners give due importance to spiritual matters as advocated by the teachings of Swami Vivekananda, the Western Society, no doubt, will achieve lasting peace, the peace that passeth our understanding.

Vivekananda’s mystical paths Bhakthiyoga, Rajayoga and Jnana Yoga can be successfully employed even till today. These different paths can be practiced successfully according to the differing temperament of the practitioner. In this modern complex period Bhakthi yoga as the easiest path can be practiced by the large majority of people. The love and surrender to Almighty God take the devotee safely through the mystic wheel of death and birth.

Rajayoga, if practiced, will help to develop mental faculties. Through the Raja yogic method of concentration and meditation will lead to mystical experience of super-conscious state, namely samadhi.

In the complex state of modern society, the modern is found full busy with his variegated activities. But if these activities are performed in disinterested way, that is, in true spirit of Karmayoga, all the activities performed will become Karmayoga. And the practitioner derives maximum spiritual benefit.

Jnanayoga is suitable to the scientific temperament of the modern society. Through analytical method, one goes beyond external world of reality to the ultimate reality. In the knowledge of the ultimate reality one gets over the
miseries of the mundane life and he is ever filled with everlasting peace and happiness.

In the light of the above considerations, Arnold's and Vivekananda's ideas are still relevance today as the critics of the modern society.