CHAPTER-I

INTRODUCTION
PART-I

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INTRODUCTION

To have the better perspective of the world at large it necessitates the comparative study of world literature—the world phenomenon through the medium of literature. There are innumerable cases of various circumstances, situations co-occurring and existing in the space and time. In this connection Matthew Arnold, therefore, stressed the study of world literature to know the best that is known and thought in the world. In one of his critical essays called ‘The Function of Criticism at the Present Time’, he writes, “By the very nature of things as England is not all the world, much of the best that is known and thought in the world cannot be of English growth must be foreign; by the nature of things, again, it is just this that we are least likely to know, while English thought is streaming in upon us from all sides, and takes excellent care that we shall not be ignorant of its existence. The English critic of literature, therefore, must dwell much on foreign thought, and with particular need on any part of it which while significant and fruitful in itself, is for any reason specially likely to escape him.”

The study of similar situations or social phenomenon of the literature of different countries helps us to understand in a better way the complex questions of the unity of the world’s historical process. This process allows us to reach certain

conclusions connected with the question of the natural process of social and literary development in general.

The following study shows Swami Vivekananda and Matthew Arnold confronted similar situations of social phenomena during the 19th century in India and England.

The social situation forms one of the background studies in the present thesis. The main purpose of the study is to highlight existing similarities between Swami Vivekananda and Matthew Arnold as critics of society.

In fact, there is apparent dissimilarity between the two; one is a mystic or a philosopher; another is poet-critic. We have the bulk of prose writings of both the writers carrying the forceful current of powerful, enlightening ideas. Their enlightening, rich ideas in prose writings come under the purview or the scope of the present Ph.D. thesis.

These thought provoking ideas of both the writers are analyzed and they are compared. In other words the comparative analysis occupies a major focus of attention in the present thesis. The dissimilarities are also unraveled by pointing out the existing similarities; and the respective visions, the thought process and aiming target of both the writers are presented analytically.

When we try to analyse vision or thought process of Swami Vivekananda, we sense electrifying mystical thinking based on the Vedantic Philosophy. Similarly when we study in depth Matthew Arnold’s vision of life which is based on the rich experience of life, the source for the best ideas and his concept culture.
The respective visions of Swami Vivekananda and Matthew Arnold are source for the refined thinking i.e., the best thinking characterized with their critical sensibility; and their critical sensibility of them sums up their respective wisdom. The purpose of the study of the present thesis does not end with mere analysis of their respective wisdom. Further, in order to show common features in the writings of swami Vivekananda and Matthew Arnold the present study undertakes to present them as critics of society or their social concern of life.

The Vedanta Philosophy or mysticism of Swami Vivekananda is not the dry abstract Advaita; it has social implications or bearing upon social life. Vivekananda is one of his letters says that dry Vedanta must become living poetic in everyday life and that, in concrete, can be practiced in common life. To this end he drew out of Vedanta, a social philosophy and outlook at once dynamic and practical.

The whole teaching of Swami Vivekananda is directed towards bringing about profound resurgence in Hindu Society. This it is an undeniable fact on the part of Swami Vivekananda, the social concern or social passion is part and parcel of his mystical temperament.

It is this social concern or passion that makes Swami Vivekananda to act as a critic of society. Not only he acts as critic of society where he analyses or exposes various evils in the society, but he also suggests remedies on the basis of his mystical knowledge. The ultimate aim of the social passion or concern of Swami Vivekananda to strive to achieve the total welfare of the human society or the betterment of the entire human society.
Matthew Arnold’s vision of life is based on literature as criticism of life and criticism of life in turn based on ‘to Know the best that is known and thought in the world’ and ‘to make the best ideas prevail by making it known to society’. According to Matthew Arnold the causes of sufferings and the ills of humanity can be eradicated for the social good only through wide-spread enlightenment – with that of best ideas. In this regard Matthew Arnold’s concept of culture sums up the whole view of the above discussion. Culture, as described by Matthew Arnold, is disinterested endeavour to learn and propagate the best that is known and has been thought in the world. The culture also aims at the betterment of society. The culture sums up of Matthew Arnold vision of life and his concern to the society as its critic. Thus we find that Arnold as a literary critic and a social critic was essentially one and ultimately striving to achieve the betterment of the society through his social criticism.

Thus Swami Vivekananda and Matthew Arnold meet on the same platform as critics of society in their social passion of doing greater good to the society. It is against this background the present work undertakes comparative study of social criticism of Swami Vivekananda and Matthew Arnold. Added to this, there is striking feature in common, the synthesizing aspect in both of them.

1.1 INDIAN ENGLISH PROSE BACKGROUND:

After the purpose of study, it is worth examining briefly the prose background of Indian and British Literature in the nineteenth century.
The circumstantial forces then existed in the 19th century gave birth to prose literature in India. The beneficial results of English education on Indian people gave rise to the creation of vast literature on History, Economics, religion, philosophy, political thought, sociology autobiography, biography etc. The beginning prose was of informative in its nature; later in the hands of eminent writers like Mahatma Gandhi, Jawarhalal Nehru, Radhakrishnan, Sri Aurobindo and Tagore it became a mode of the Literature of power. The numerous Indian prose writers have adroitly and successfully used prose for expressing their views on contemporary socio-political situation, religion, philosophy, art and literature, personal reflections, biographical and auto-biographical writing, journalism, history, sociology etc. They have proved that prose is not inferior to poetry only the kinds are different. During the era-Indian renaissance the prose was characterized by the two fold impulses of the rediscovery of the Indian past and a strong awareness of the problems of the day.

The earliest prose writers even before Ramamohan Roy were the Cavalry brothers, Venkata Ramaswamy, Venkata Lakshmaiah and Venkata Boraiah. Ramamohan Roy was born on May 22, 1774 in Radhanagar in Bengal. Nurtured in an enlightened family Rammohan Roy discarded Orthodoxy and redundant traditions. He stood for rational and radical change in society. He was also a pioneering spirit of Indian Renaissance. He was also more a social critic and a social reformer. Rammohan did pioneering effort in India prose writings. He was the first Indian writer who skillfully used English for social criticism and the exposition of hypocrisy and contemporary social evils. His prose writing reveals him as vigorous thinker endowed with sharp and incisive intellect. His concern
for well being of humanity makes him harbinger of the idea of universal humanism.

Next in order comes another significant writer, Micheal Madhusudan Dutt. He has contributed to Bengal epic poetry. A Hindu convert to Christianity had devotion to British fashion and British rule and at the same time had aversion to the things Indian. This attitude is aptly expressed in his lecture on the Anglo-Saxons and the Hindu. Masterly handling of English, oratorical skill, reformative zeal and wide ranging scholarship throw light on his characteristic speech. Michael Madhusudan speech represent ‘The Age of Innocence’ whereas, ‘The Age of Experience’ sets in with the forceful spokesmen of the new age, Surendernath Banerjea. In his tour lectures he anticipated personalities like Vivekananda, a Bipin Chandra Pal, a Tilak, an Aurbindo, a Gandhi etc. In his speeches he exhibited beneficial results of British Power in India which would root outcome of the social evils then existing. With this he would equally hope for the freedom.

Contemporary of Banerjea, Lal Behari Day, a Hindu convert to Christianity was a preacher, journalist and school master. A novelist and a story-teller wrote his ‘Unfinished autobiography – Recollection of my School Days. It is an early example of Indian autobiography in English. It gives the picture of Education in Bengal during the nineteenth century.

After the birth of Congress, functional prose came into existence. Opening of University in the 19th Century also gave rise to a variety of prose. At the time, English Journalism also made its appearance. The first fifty names of Congress on
roll-call of Congress represent great men from different walks of life, playing
different roles at the same time. Thus presidential addresses from 1885 till the day
of independence form political literature. Speeches at the early sessions were so
after in tone. Speeches of Dadabhai, Budrudin Tyabji and K.T. Telang in his
speech in 1888 showed loyalist tune to British Government.

After 1890, the Age of Innocence actually ends. In 1893-94, Sri Aurobindo
represents revolutionary aspect in series of articles, “New Lamps for Old’ written
in the Indu Prakash. Further, with the birth of religious movements like Brahmo
Samaj, Arya Samaj, Prathana Samaj and the appearance of Ramakrishna
Paramahamsa on the scene disenchant charm for the British civilization.
Although influenced by Christianity, Keshab Chunder Sen admired Paramahamsa.
He spoke with conviction “like a mighty river, the stream of national devotion
comes into my church from the Vedas and the Upanishads, the Pantheistic books
and mystic scriptures of ancient India”. Under the impact of Paramahamsa,
Keshab Chander wanted India to be active and energetic for purposeful and
creative activities. But this task of waking up lethargic Indians into the domain of
dynamism was given to the chosen disciple of Paramahamsa, Swami
Vivekananda.

Swami Vivekananda–rose to fame in 1893 at the Chicago Parliament of
Religions. In his soul-stirring speech emphasized religious unity on the spiritual
philosophy behind Hinduism. His complete works include lectures on different
Yogas, and ton the Gita, and numerous talks, essays and letters of worldly as well
as spiritual. Characteristic feature of Swami Vivekananda, unlike general ecstacies,
was to give as much importance to the bodily life as to the spiritual life. Therefore he organized the band of selfless workers to build up dynamic energetic and enlightened Indian Society. India’s cultural history finds expression thorough the numerous volumes of masculine prose writings of Swami Vivekananda. He is not only mere prose writer, but prophet and nation builder.

The contemporary of Swami Vivekananda, Behramji Malabari wrote about his impressions of England in the work titled, the Indian Eye on English Life (1893). Malbari, a parsi, was publicist, journalist and social reformer. Malbari is known for his deep sincerity and wide tolerance and his prose reflects sharp cultured mind.

Although Mahadev Govind Renade a versatile genius, partakes the same concern for social well being of the people. Like Malabari, Mahadev Govind Ranade was a historian, an economist, a Jurist, educationist and social reformer. His ideas of Modern India was to represent a model of an ancient, good, gentlemen, teachers of mankind, benefactors of humanity. He wielded a good English speech, although it was meant for a select few, a fit intellectual audience.

Another contemporary of the age of Ranade is Narayana Chandra Varkar, who imbibed the same spirit of the period, the seriousness of the work they undertook. Narayana Chadrnra Varkar was also inspired like many of his contemporaries to given overtly to his political and social thought. Cahndra Varkar had firm belief in the movement of social reform as something emanated from the time spirit of Sanatana Dharma. The synthesizing and liberal out-look of Chandra Varkar and Ranade gave the right lead to the people.
Bepin Chadnra Pal who rose to fame during the time of partition was an extremist. His political oratory was of excellent kind. He also spoke about religious personalities viz., SriKrishna. He combined a himself a revelatory, a Bhakta and patriot for national unity. As Gandhian era sets in, Bepin pal withdraws from the political scene.

From 1905, there was violence in attitude among Indians. The responsible person for his change was Lord Curzon. They were many to raise their voices against Lord Curzon. During this period Dr. Rash Behari Ghose raised his voice against Lord Curzon. Later in the year 1907, he presided over the abortive Surat Congress. He, in his speech delivered in the year 1905, condemned Curzon’s policies haughtily.

In the same year next to preside over Congress was Gopal Krishna Gokhale. Gokhale was man of serious outlook. A political career to him was an intellectual preparation. Gokhale led orderly life and there was an element of Saint in him. Wise men like Ranade, Dadabhai, Joshi and Pherozesha Mehta were his masters. Sastri and Gandhi accepted Gokhale as their political Guru. His farewell speech at the Ferguson College is an good example of Lyrical prose; more feelings sway over the matter. There is also the Congress presidential address delivered three years ago stands for the tone high serious and masterly wielding of language. The comments on Lord Curzon on his administration points out Curzon’s merits and weakness at the same time. Gokhak’s forceful pleading in the parliament has won appraisal from the dignitaries like Viceroy, Lord Minto.
And Sir Guy Fleetwood Wilson described budget debate without Gokhale is play Hamlet without the prince of Denmark.

The elderly contemporary rival to Gokhale is Bal Gangadhar Tilak. Tilak was father of Indian unrest. He woke up Indians from lethargy and slavery of the British rule and goaded Indians towards freedom movement. A matchless statesman, scholar, researcher, orator and thinker. Tilak was the first leader who dominated the Indian Political scene during the first two decades of twentieth century and exhorted the masses to participate actively in the struggle for freedom. He gave the battle cry "The Maker of Modern India. A militant in Congress his mission was not just to destroy the existing order but to build a better future on the solid foundations of the past. His sacrifices for Indians freedom and reconstruction were phenomenal. He has written books like Orion, Studies in the Antiquity of the Vedas, the Arctic Home of the Vedas and Gita Rahasya (Originally in Marathi) Tilak’s style is a true and inimitable expression of his personality. His speech on Swaraj is an imperishable classic of clarity and prose style. In the words of Aurobindo his speeches in Marathi and English are like featureless Brahman. One of the admirers of Tilak’s style is his biographer, N.C. Kelkar. Kelkar has all praise for Tilak’s powers of oratory. Kelkar was also good writer and speaker. He published several books in Marathi as well as in English. His English works are Landmarks of Lokamaya’s life and pleasures and privileges of the Pen (1929), Kelkar long back spoke his balanced view on language problem of English versus regional languages.
Madan Mohan Malviya and Motilal Nehru, contemporaries played prominent role in the National life. Motilal Nehru had debating skill of high order. It was M.N. Jinnah who equaled his skill in debate. At the time, there were eminent men of central legislatures. They were V.S. Srinivasa Sastri, and P.S. Sivaswami Aiyer, Tejbughadur Sapry and M.R. Jayakar, N.C. Kelkar and Srinivas Iyengar, Bhulbhai Desai and Satyamurti. The provincial legislatures also consisted masters of debate. They were Rajaji in Madras, Govind Vallabh Pant in Lucknow, K.M. Munshi in Bombay, Tilak’s death on 31st July 1920 gave substitute for Gandhiji’s Leadership and there ends Pre-Gandhian era.

1.2 VICTORIAN PROSE BACKGROUND:

The Victorian age was essentially the age of prose and novel. It marked the growth of the English novel, and laid the foundation of English prose on a surer footing. The Literature of the Victorian age was co-related to the social and political life of the age. And the prose form was best suited for this purpose. In addition to the novels, which the century produced, a large amount of good prose set forth the idea of the time. The survey of the great prose writers of the Victorian period is undertaken here. These prominent writers in their fresh approach to prose are representative.

Pioneering in the masterly wielding familiar essay was Charles Lamb (1775-1834). Charles Lamb is well known for his Essays of Elia (1823 and 1833), essays on various light subjects written in attractive style. Lamb in his Essays speaks about personal experiences reminiscences likes and dislikes whims and
prejudices. He was an adept in combining pathos and humour in a way that looked as a personal trait in the unique manner. His critical attitude paved the way for romantic development and was largely based on the Pre-Augustan age. Elizabethan tragedy, John Woodville and Tales from Shakespeare and specimens of English Dramatic poets who wrote about the time of Shakespeare mirror to his critical interest.

William Hazlitt, another essayist of the time, was a quarrelsome man. His most important work is probably his literary criticism: characters of Shakespeare’s plays (1817-8) Lectures on the English Poets (1818-19), English Comic Writers (1819), and so on. He was a man in public affairs, but Lamb was a private person. Hazlitt’s standard of dramatic criticism was high, but his bad temper and his political ideas led him into violent language. And fits of anger which occasionally spoilt his judgment. Hazlitt has got a wide range of subjects in his essays in greater degree then Lamb.

Thomas De Quincey (1785-1859) wrote his essays out of his personal life with little of Lamb’s oddity or of Hazlitt’s boisterous. His autobiographical confessions: An English Opium-Eater (1821) tells the story of his early life. He described how he was first driven to the taking of opium. Consequently he had bad dreams and other unpleasant efforts from the opium for eight years. Later he conquered the habit with great effort. His prose is fine when it is at its best, plain when he describes something plain, and much ornamented when, for example, he describes an opium dreams. His Reminiscences of the English Lake Poets (1834)
contain some good chapters on Wordsworth and Coleridge. Other essays were on various subjects. One of them was on murder considered as one of the fine arts.

Thomas Babington Macaulay, a historian, who had prodigious memory like Samuel Johnson... Macaulay offers a curious contrast to Carlyle. The latter was the preacher, the idealist and the sage; the former was the hard-headed man of affairs, taking the world as it come, and offering no remedies to cure its evils. In his prose we find no struggle, exaltation, and despair such as we find in rather prose of Carlyle. Instead, we observe a brisk confidence, a clear vivacious literature, and a selection of picturesque details. We should note the copious vocabulary, the clever variations of the sentences, and the swiftly moving rhythm. His History of England had an enormous popular success, which was due to his selection of telling incident, his clear and rapid narrative and assured manner of statement. As a historian, he was inclined to Whig views, and he is prone to exaggeration.

Thomas Carlyle is another writer of the time. He was considered to be Hebrew prophet. The good reason behind the concept is his very aversion to materialistic mode of life; he opposed all utilitarian concept of materialization. Carlyle wanted to lead England back to more spiritual life by a self-contrived doctrine. He was much concerned with contemporary social and political affairs, as well as with the more personal concerns of religion and private morals. Carlyle, other than a reformer, preacher and a sage, was also a critic of his age. Carlyle opposed to liberalism, as he did not have faith in democracy. To him history of any nation was the history of great souls whose life moulded the destiny of the

John Stuart Mill: His writing like much needed charm of literary qualities, yet his prose was illustrating Victorian reforming thought in its most reasonable disinterested way. The following are the writings based on political and philosophical subjects on Liberty, 1859, thoughts on Parliamentary Reform 1859; Representative Government, 1861; Utilitarianism, 1863; The subjection of women, 1869; three Essays on Religion, 1874. Although influenced by Carlyle in later years was antithetical to Carlyle. Mill in general, to say, represented nineteenth century, secular wisdom.

JOHN HENRY NEWMAN (1801-90): Mill represented 18th Century inheritance, whereas Carlyle the Romantic inheritance. Yet they were not opposed to each other, in all respects. Newman, though agnostic conceded the possible cancel of religion. The phase of English religious history comes into the history of literature, not due to the important men of letters, but due to the cast of mind of Victorian writer – Newman himself. Newman’s tracts sermons theological writings and miscellaneous essays have their added interest, but Apolgie Pro Vita Sua and his idea of University have a status of literature.

RUSKIN: Ruskin was a sensitive soul who pitted himself against the inhumanity of the age of machine. Born in the middle of the Industrial Revolution, he raised his prophetic voice against the rank materialism which had been ushered
in by industrial expansion and cut-throat competition but what is more he was an artist himself and a keen lover of all art. He made himself felt in the field of art criticism as well as in that social criticism. Added to that is his remarkable sense of vigorous and colourful style. So Ruskin’s works have to be studied under three heads as an art critic as a social critic and as a literary artist.

MATTHEW ARNOLD: Matthew Arnold was not only a great poet but also a great critic and prose writer of Victorian age. He was a critic of literature as well as a critic of the social, economic and religious life of his times. For Arnold, a critic of literature was inevitably intertwined with social criticism, for criticism is a comprehensive term, its object being to focus attention on all aspects of human life and society. Arnold’s criticism was in pursuit of truth in all fields.

Arnold comes before his readers as a critic of society as well as critic of literature, and in both these fields he sheds a new light and opens new avenues and channels for his followers like T.S. Eliot, Irving Babbit and Paul Elmer More. His outstanding works were his lectures on Translating Homer (1861) and his Essays in Criticism (1865-88) and his more general criticism of the social and religious problems of his age is Culture and Anarchy (1867) and Literature and Dogma (1873).

T.H. HUXLEY: T.H. Huxley was a scientist as well as an essayist and man of letters and a great master of prose style both cogent and elegant. He was moderate in between the claims of religion and science. In published essays on the public debates with most formidable antagonists of his time, he demonstrated
his confidence, his good humor, his master of all relevant feeds, his power of marshaling argument, his compelling lucidity.

**MORRISON:** Morrison’s deep interest for art led him to inquire into the function of art and the social conditions necessary for its healthy production. Marris did not like industrial liberalization which led to mechanization of life. He thought of a radical reorganization of society prevent this unwholesome growth. Morrison’s lectures and essays echo many of the ideas of Ruskin.

**WALTER PATER:** Walter Pater studied Ruskin’s works but did not have his approach. For, Peter, art meant beauty, and various arts should aim at search of beauty. The very act of search for beauty was satisfying act. This concept was developed clearly in his beautiful prose essays in a large work. Conclusions to studies in the History of Renaissance (1873), and in a novel set in ancient Rome, Marius the Epicurean (1885). The limitations to the cult of his beauty is that he rejects all social and moral obligations. But his attractive prose style is full of colour and melody, marked with ornateness and exquisite polish. The great prose writers of the nineteenth century were all preoccupied with the problems of their age, whereas Peter rejects all such concern. It can be said that the prose of nineteenth century at this juncture to have come to an end.

In the brief survey made of prose writings of Indian and British in the background study of prose writings of Indian and British, it is observable fact that writings in both the cases predominantly prose in form. The era of Indian renaissance is the golden age of the growth and development of prose. With the impact of British rule and British education during the era of Indian reassurance,
Indian re-discovered their ancient growth and woke up to the problems of the day. This two-fold scrutiny led to the creation of prose which expressed, contemporary social-political situation and explored the historical past and antiquity, social customs and traditions, religious and spiritual ideas and ideals. Another important fact to be noted here is that the Indian English prose of the 19th century is considerably influenced by the 19th century prominent prose writers like Macularly, Caryte, Ruskin and Matthews Arnold.

The Victorian age of British Literature is also predominantly the age of prose and novel. To this effect William. J Long makes his observation: “Though the age produced many poets, and two who deserve to rank among the greatest, nevertheless, this is emphatically an age of prose and novel”. Victorian Literature in its varied aspect was marked by a deep moral note. Writers like Carlyle, Ruskin, Mathew Arnold were primarily interested in their message to their countrymen. The literature corresponds with the social and political life of the age. Perhaps for this reason the literature appears to be the literature of realism. The literature becomes an instrument of social reform and social propaganda and it was marked with purposeful, propagandistic and didactic aims.

In the conclusion, it can be said that both prose writings throw ample light on the social, political, religious thoughts in India and Britain.