CHAPTER IV: INDICTMENT OF CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

And saw its water break and saw in fear,
Its quaking muscles in the act of birth,
Between her legs a pigmy face appear,
And the first murderer lay upon the earth.

[Imperial Adam]
The satire composition whether a poem play or prose attempts to shame its subject. A work of wit, satire employs such resources as irony and invective, diminution and derision, innuendo and allusion, parody and pastiche in order to expose malpractice and corruption, folly and vice.¹

The accretion of satire is not new to English Literature. Its origin belongs to the Middle Ages. One can find satirical elements in fabliaux, beast fables, and dream allegories of Medieval Literature. Geoffrey Chaucer, John Skelton, Samuel Butter of Hudibras, T.S. Eliot, W.H. Auden are famous satirists of their own representative age. But the great period of satire in English is between 1660 to 1760. John Dryden, Andrew Marvel, Alexander Pope, Jonathan Swift are eminent satirists of this age. A satirist can use any form for his purpose. And the major subject matters of satire were often contemporary corruption, hypocrisy, woman, political issues, malpractice in profession etc. One thing is for sure that satire enthralls social elements.

Satirists have contributed in Australian Literature too. The earliest satirists on the Australian Literary Scenario of 1840's were Lowe and Forster. They were the wittiest but Charles Harpur and H. Kendalls works marked vigour. Kendall's style was violently abusive and even editors refused to publish his work. Victor Daley was unusual in the gaiety he brought to his satires and Kylie Tennant and Lower adopted his style later. The satires of John Manifold and David Martin were political in nature but controlled and skilful. The unanimously elected gem of all satirists in Australian Literature of the Modern Age is Alec Dervent Hope:
of all the satirists in the verse the most brilliant is A.D. Hope. Etched in acid, his lines bite deeply. His wit is cerebral, yet savage and sometimes mocking gaily ....2

Hope propounded several questions through his satires; each will be considered separately. It would be more entertaining, illuminating if prior to this; a historical, sociological sketch of conditions prevalent at that particular time will be drawn. Because the mental set up of all intellectuals is profoundly shaped, by their social settings. The entire gamut of Hope’s satires is on various aspects of man and society.

Development of modern science, technology, and industry indicates a definite change and progress in social life of mankind. The idea of progress helps in assessing and assuming that each succeeding age in human history is ‘better’ and ‘superior’ to proceeding ages. Hope argues that these degrees of ‘better’ and ‘superior’ can be only applied to the living standards of human beings. On the contrary the basic values of life had become worst.

Scientific Revolution has reduced man to insignificant stature. Man’s conquest of earth, the demon of technology, and reason superseding emotions resulted in life losing its meaning life. Hope accepts that man is solely responsible for his own fate because there is no moral ethics and principles left. Hope’s major concern was the material progress and hedonistic attitude of modern man; which proved catastrophic.

The Industrial Revolution transformed the world from agricultural to technocratic ushering in the Machine Age. Man moved to urban settings. This nature of urban life and its problems attracted many sociologists especially Karl Marx. Technological products of science were affecting every sector of
life. Marx analysed and explained the whole history as a struggle for a revolutionary reconstruction of society. Marx asserts that economic condition and economically based action form the ‘base’ of the social structure, which in turn profoundly influenced all other aspects of human activity. He says:

The mode of production in material life determines the general character of the social, political, and spiritual process of life.³

Marx stresses on ‘economics’, which has a great influence on all human activities. The previous chapter on ‘Isolation’ dealt with how man felt lonely, isolated, alienated and estranged and the main causes for the emergence of ‘Nihilism’, ‘Existentialism’ etc. Hope empirically expressed this in his poems. James McAuley, Judith Wright and few other contemporaries were primarily engaged in writing on aborigines, Australian present, or its unique flora and fauna. But Hope was disturbed by the resulting chaos and disorder of the post-war and pre-war period. He used all this strength and wit to write about man in the face of hostile elements crises and disaster. The incomprehensible contemporary life gave full vent to his feelings in the form of satires. He attacked fakes and shams of society. His satires present a medley of modern man’s reaction. He makes uncertainty of the future and certainty of death noticeable. In his The Wandering Islands (1955) he not only highlights loneliness but also makes the readers aware of the fears of modernity.

To begin with an aggressive and challenging poem Standardization (1938-1942); is antimarxist in its content and tone. Standardization leads to bereavement. Hope in this poem strikes on two major factors: Firstly, the so-called standardized living. Secondly, unlike William Wordsworth and Robert
Frost who praise Nature in all her forms, Hope claims the superiority of nature over man made productions. He ponders those natural productions and gifts of nature have not lost their pristine glory. Man-made progress has only brought ephemeral happiness, which gradually results in drudgery, dullness and loss of individuality.

A realistic view can be seen throughout the poem. As a keen observer he analyses technological progress and discovers the 'faux pas' of modern society. He wishes for the good old days and is fed up:

With horror at the house not made with hands
And when from vacuum cleaners and tinned soup

Where huge towns thrust up in synthetic stone
And films and sleek miraculous motor cars
And celluloid and rubber are unknown;

Hope's intention is not just to surprise or shock the reader but to confront the harsh realities of life. The man-made productions are all alike and ten times ahead of nature. Here his concern for environment can also be felt. He often relates earth with woman. This again proves that he has tender sympathy for woman. He respects feminity, because in Standardization his analogy of the earth is with the mother figure; an old woman embodied with all productive powers:

I see, stooping among her orchard trees,
The old, sound Earth, gathering her windfalls in,
Earth's production is always directly or indirectly beneficial for humankind. Nature gathers everything in and produces things in her own way. Man cannot compete with nature's production. He can imitate her but cannot bring that originality. Hope enjoys the superiority of nature and cherishes her indestructible richness too:

For there is no manufacture competes
With her in the mass production of shapes and things.
Over and over she gathers and repeats
The cast of a face, a million butterfly wings.

The role of 'journalists', 'aesthete', 'theosophysist' and 'nature poets' against standardization is superficial Hope wants to slash the intellectual world for their inane responses to the results of industrialization. Dissatisfied with the prevailing condition of affairs; he firmly believes in power of 'love':

Love, which still pours into its ancient mould
The lashing seed that grows to a man again,
From when by the same processes unfold
Unending generations of living men.

Hope thinks love is the seed of procreation. It gives birth to generations of living men. The very aspect of man's existence has been affected by *Standardization*. Hope proclaims:
Qualitative value are not only being submerged in the quantity of thing they are more and more disparage. Life becomes everyday more mechanized while the creative impulse, so far as it survives flows increasingly into technical channels. Standardization, with its leveling effect is everywhere apparent, so that not only motor cars and objects of use are assuming a uniform appearance, but human beings are more and more conforming to type which may be physically and mentally efficient, but which lacks expressiveness or soul.

Hope wants to rectify man’s failure in the name of standardization, all his eulogy for nature being victorious throughout. In a nutshell, Hope concludes that what is standardized in front of nature is quiet ‘standardless’ in comparison to Nature.

If Standardization’ speaks of the fall in morals and values then Conquistador (1944), another satire speaks of the sexual encounter of modern man. It is not always that man is in a better position than woman is. This poem refutes one more allegation that Hope portrays man as more powerful compared to woman. Hope’s Conquistador has no relation with the epic poem Conquistador based on the 16th century journal of Bernal Diaz del Castillo. Nor does his poem have any resemblance with his American counterpart, Machiesh’s poem Conquistador, which won the Pulitzer Prize. A peculiar title in Spanish the word ‘Conquistador’ means soldier, an explorer or in-fact a conqueror. Often his title has to be mediated to grasp the meaning of the poem, because mostly he reinterprets myth, words, and idioms according to his own requirements.
Hope's hero, Henry Clay is neither a conqueror, soldier nor an explorer. He is a commoner placed in the modern world. He is a hard working man full of 'enterprise' but accidentally meets a girl and falls in love with her:

I sing of the decline of Henry Clay
Who loved a white girl of uncommon size.

.............

Each day he caught the seven-thirty train
To work, watered his garden after tea,
Took an umbrella if it looked like rain
And was remarkably like you or me.

Engaged in monotonous routine Henry Clay became restless to find a novel experience. It is inherent in human nature to enjoy love, beauty, sex or all riches and honours of life. But as a man without following or ethics and principles, he ultimately meets his downfall. As the poem progresses it is observed how man is incapable of any great exploits of passion. Henry Clay is not able to conquer his drives or impulses. He surrenders before libidinal desire and makes it an ambition to meet the 'white girl':

..... in the lounge of an hotel
- A most unusual place for him to go -
But there he was and there she was as well,
Sitting alone. He ordered beers for two.

Henry Clay's 'parched soul' swelled like a desert root, longing for consummation. Both of them meet in the hotel lounge. As it was not a place to
be visited by an ordinary common man. Both of them enjoyed themselves, and soon his dreams turned to reality. The ‘white girl of uncommon size’ invites him to her house:

Her bulk of beauty, her stupendous grace  
Challenged the lion heart in his puny dust.  
Proudly his moment looked him in the face;  
He rose to meet it as a hero must;

Climbed the white mountain of unravished snow,  
Planted his tiny flag upon the peak.  
The smooth drifts, scarcely breathing, lay below.  
She did not take the trouble to smile or speak.

Her beauty and grace fully loaded challenge his ‘lion heart’. Hope makes fun of Henry, as he was not a conqueror. But this ‘conquistador’ accepts the challenge, which is witnessed in the sexual congress with his huge partner. He met the challenge as though were conquering undiscovered land. Finally the soldier ‘plants his tiny flag’ on the highest peak. Even then the girl enjoys ultimate victory in the sexual battle. Infact at the end of the poem Henry is denunciated and mastered by the girl. If the woman is a destroyer, it is only because man by his very superiority invites destruction:

And afterwards, it may have been in play,  
The enormous girl rolled over and squashed him flat;  
And, as she could not send him home that way,  
Used him thereafter as a bedside mat.
Now Henry Clay the conqueror is metamorphosed into a comic hero, because this ‘mate’ thereafter was used by the girl as a ‘mat’, whenever, wherever and howsoever she wanted him for her ease. Finally, in a very satirical tone, Hope does not request for an ‘obituary’ for his conqueror but pathetically asks the readers to pray for his fallen state/soul. Poor Henry ‘Clay’ was moulded like ‘Clay’ by this girl. Poet warns that monetary sexual triumph or pleasure may also be the cause of downfall. The name clay seems to ring a bell; a puny man named after The World Champion was reduced to nothing. The highest creation of God ironically becomes an inanimate object. Here the poet talks about the fallen state of man but in a small poem Totentanz: The Coquette (1956) he talks about a flirt who is smart and attractive. Again, the title is very appealing ‘Totentanz’ in German means ‘dance of death’ they believed that it was good for a human being to remember ‘death’ which was always on the left shoulder to remind human beings to live life fully because they just don’t know when death may strike. Here one thing is clear that Hope is not satirizing carnal love, rather he is trying to evaluate every aspect of human life:

.... good deal can be taken as being agreed by common consent: the high seriousness of Hope’s verse, even at its most sexy, its tactile sensitivity; the synoptic complexity of the best of it, its sense of “the mystery of the whole world of man,” the effortless seeming craftsmanship that rules its energy .... As against all this, most of his critics have also agreed on the presence in the poems what Vincent Buckley called an element of “beastishness”, something that can set the verse oscillating between
"a controlled affirmation of the physical [one thinks at once of “Imperial Adam” of “The Lamp and the Jar”] and a less firmly controlled revulsion revulsion from it [as in “Circe”, or perhaps ‘Totentanz :The Coquette’]...... 5

Hope wants to convey that in the modern age, the attitude towards sex is generally unhealthy, unnatural, immodest and exhibitionist. It is generally a malediction. In this short poem the young woman is unaware of her future. Her lover is waiting for her:

.... the deep armchair’s gloom,
The dandy’s pose, one hand upon his cane,
A bald skull and a melancholy grin.

He appears to be a phantom or ghost. He seems to be ‘Antony’ disarmed in his comp. As she moves ahead to consummate her love with the so-called dandy, she feels the ‘rigid mask of bone’. And finally Hope discloses the reality: when she leans:

.... back to her gaunt lover with a smile,
Half turning, with her plenitude of grace,
In sensuous surrender to her death.

Hope apprises us that it was ‘DEATH’ in guise of a lover. He expresses how love withers under the merciless onslaught of so-called technological progress, scientific discoveries and materialism. How it hinders the perfect union i.e.
spiritual, mental and emotional of modern lovers. This aspect is analysed in *The Lingam and Yoni* (1944).

*The Lingam and Yoni* is the title but it not confined to lovers only in the Indian urban setting. Hope through this poem wants to convey the mundane aspect of urban ‘lovers’:

So deep in thought, debating
The suburb and the street;
Time-payment calculating
Upon the bedroom suite.

The modern lovers are muddled and are in a dilemma. Another poem *The Walker* (1957), on the other hand, speaks of the coward heart’ of modern man. Hope culls those aspects, which debase modern man. In *Heldensagen* (1942) contemporary man has reduced himself to a ‘Pop-eye’ hero. The poem itself is a self-evident truth requiring no proof; as it is very important to take notice of the fact that it has been composed in 1942 the period of Second World War.

The journey of modern man has reduced him to ‘Pop-eye’, the American comic strip hero: spiritually and religiously bankrupt. The strip-hero gloats over his ill-gotten wealth, his journey is without a destination; even if he reaches a point, he cannot come back. Hope questions why the spiritual aspects are ignored and only the corporeal and somatic are emphasized. The life span on this earth is a journey, once accomplished; it cannot be changed or corrected. This strip-hero reaches a state where he feels vacuous. Even he wishes he couldn’t come back. He thinks that ‘Everyman’ is his refuge:
Pop-eye my hero, Everyman my refuge,
Ahab within, mad master of any craft,
My instinct Noah, safest on his wet raft
And only bed-wrecked in the bibulous deluge.

'Everyman' is an allegorical figure for the human race, is summoned by the allegorical figure of death. He discovers that his friends, Fellowship, Kindered, Cousin and Goods, will not go with him. It is Good Deeds (or virtue) whom he had previously neglected who finally supports him and who offers to justify him before the throne of God. An equivalent of Maharishi Valmiki, previously being a dacoit used to provide every luxury to his family. But when he was made to realize that his actions (vice) would one day is justified by the Almighty, he tried to expiate his crimes by abdicating materialistic life. He meditated for years and years in a static position murmuring 'mara' 'mara' till termites made anthill on him. Finally he started uttering RAM RAM. It indicates that he found the path of virtue, righteousness and knowledge. But here contrary to Maharishi Valmiki his refuge to 'Everyman' is in vain, because his satanic intellect 'Ahab' is the mad master of his deeds and actions. The evil is getting held on his life and actions day by day. His rational thinking and intelligence is no more the guiding principle of life, as it too got perverted. Here Hope says modern man of the post-war period is not able to realize:

Egotism is as rampant the true individuality is wanting,
while the right to "do what you will" is most emphatically claimed by those who are at least certain what worth willing.
This leads to the deterioration in the state and condition of man. The only saving thing, is ‘instinct’. There is a struggle between ‘Noah’ and ‘Ahab’ in modern man’s psyche. He has to realize the struggle between haywire, intellect and unstable instinct. Finally the ‘hero’ realizes that he has nothing in his life. Now his:

.... evening bus seeks out her north-west passage

Following a spiritual path, Hope also asserts that in every age man has moved away from religion, which makes his march not onwards but backwards. He is not able to benefit from the noble preaching but is compelled to hear the tales of ‘commercial travelers’. Life has been reduced to ‘plastic millenniums of the technocrat.’ Man is not able to judge the variety in life. Precisely modern man’s spiritual condition: ‘a bottled abortion’ Still the hero of Heldensagen feels his strength as though he is Ulysses or Odysseus.

Admirals with power to organize my search

For Ithaca through this......

In reality it is only a ‘monstrous dream’ as it is not going to be fulfilled inspite of the strategies of ‘Admirals’. Because the post-war period has changed the thinking of man; he thinks of war as a solution. He turns a deaf ear to all the Messiahs who want to spread the ‘Noble message’ (religious preaching) among mankind:

I am ............

Sinbad and on this Roc you build no church!
His journey was not like that of Sinbad the sailor, but was that of ‘Sin’ and ‘bad’. The adventures of Sinbad were first mentioned in the great Arabian fable Alif Laila. Sinbad had gathered much knowledge, experience, and wealth from adventures of his long voyages on sea and land. But Sinbad the character of numerous stories got metamorphosed into ‘Sinbad’ in Hope’s poem. Modern man’s journey has made him Sin bad due to his sins and this at once brings to mind of Eliots verse:

There is shadow under the red rock  
(come in under the shadow of this rock)  
I will show you fear in a handful of dust.

A church cannot be built on the foundations of sins. Many critics shunned A.D. Hope, calling him an apostate for different reasons. But his satires pertaining to religion do not prove him to be an anti-Christian or an atheist.

_Easter Hymn_ (1940) is a complex and meditative poem, which has nothing to do with celebration of the death and resurrection of Christ. Easter always falls on a Sunday the day of resurrection. It is the most important of Christian feasts. If is equivalent to the Jewish ‘Passover’. Even a rapid perusal captures attention:

Make no mistake; there will be no forgiveness;  
No voice can harm you and no hand will save;

The above lines bring to mind the closing lines of _The Wandering Islands_ in which the shipwrecked sailor hears voices saying ‘The rescue will not take place’. The prevailing conditions compel the poet to ponder and aver: ‘Make
no mistake'. The poet warns man about his actions and deeds, because there is 
no forgiveness. The reality of evil, sin, fall of man was a constant theme of his 
poems. A deep perusal concludes that Hope partially agrees with St. Augustine 
and Manichees:

The Manichees held a highly critical view of the 
Christian scriptures. They expressed great respect for 
them, but rejected quite freely texts which did not 
harmonise with their views, holding that the authority 
of such texts was doubtful and that the New 
Testament was deplorably corrupt at various points 
They taught the essence of Christianity was moral 
conduct and not dogmatic beliefs.7

The very statement of Hope “make no mistake” emphasizes the moral conduct 
of man. As though Hope is talking of ‘Karma’ in Indian philosophy where man 
is punished or rewarded as per his deeds in this world. But he excludes himself 
from the belief in the ‘cycle of birth and death; his views fuse with the 
Manichees that the present world consists of dualistic elements, a mixture of 
good and evil, light and darkness, Truth and Error. Man, in this world, must 
‘walk on the sharp edges of the wave’, and with a God-sent mind, he, “.... must 
become aware of the mixture present in all things. He must thus discover the 
true meaning and significance of the world and conduct himself accordingly, in 
such a way as to avoid any further contamination of the light and promote its 
release from its mixture with darkness.”8

If a man fails to do so he has to be ‘Lazarus’, who has to wait with a 
troubled soul in a cave with his rotten body. Eventually on the fourth day
‘Lazarus’ came back to life due to Jesus’ miracle, a type of resurrection. Hope is meticulous in abhorring the false dogmas. But no where is he in complete accord with Manichees who:

observed the festival of Manes with great rejoicing while they seemed quite indifferent to the value of Easter Day.... on the Manichean principles Christ was only a phantasmal being who could not die and who could not, therefore rise again.⁹

Hope’s purpose in this poem is to edify and not to satirise, to enlighten not to amuse. He only brings forth his extreme antipathy against ‘institutional religion’:

The city of God is built like other cities:
Judas negotiates the loans you float;
You will meet Caiaphas upon committees;
You will be glad of Pilate’s casting vote.

Hope is not referring to St. Augustine’s work The City of God. But in the above lines he is referring about Christ and his ministers. Now for Jesus to reside in the city is an ironical statement to show that man is also living in the city:

The same social references are present (loans, committees, ‘official guests’) which in disguise a fundamental contempt for any kind of social concourse.¹⁰
In sum total Hope is against any kind of imposition of religious dogmas like celebrating Easter, Papal rule or that of his hierarchy. In addition to this, he compares modern man’s life with ‘City of God’ these days; adhering to these practices is not going to effect the existing condition of modern man much.

In the concluding lines he explains ‘continence’ as a compulsion for nuns and women priests. The Ten Virgins who wanted Christ as their bridegroom had to wait with lamp and oil in a vessel. Five of them were wise and five were foolish. Here Hope wants to say that these ‘foolish virgins’ are the truest lovers as they are still waiting for Him:

Your truest lovers still the foolish virgins,
Your heart will sicken at the marriage feasts
Knowing they watch you from the darkened gardens
Being polite to their official guests.

He says those who follows, this path have to deviate on there own from the normal lives of women; for poet primarily a female is meant to become a beloved, lover, a wife and a mother.

If *Easter Hymn* strikes hard on the factitious practices of society another counterpart to it is *The House of God* (1946). The scene shifts from ‘the city of God’ to ‘The House of God’. The poem has no resemblance to Samuel Shem’s (a pseudonym of the psychiatrist Stephen Bergman, 1978) novel *The House of God*, which is the classic novel of life and death in an American Hospital. This humourous satire pities at those worshippers who demonstrate their love to God – “In all theistic religions, whether they are polytheistic or monotheistic, God stands for the highest value, the most desirable good for a person. The understanding of the concept of God must, therefore, start with an analysis of
the character structure of the person who worships God. Hope in this poem basically deals with the same theme i.e. the ‘character structure of the person’ whom worships God. The triviality of man before God is displayed by the imagery; people turned into poets (cats) before God. The poet gibes at worshippers who are debased into pets:

Morning service! parson preaches;
People all confess their sins;
God’s domesticated creatures
Twine and rub against his shins;

These domesticated creature’s i.e. human beings worship in church. They come and attend morning service and listen to the sermons. But the logic is that God is omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient. God as a spirit is everywhere in mountains, deepest seas, and moon, beyond stars that ever shine. Even in prison man can communicate with God. When one can pray to God anywhere and everywhere, why does he go to church? there is no need for a specific place to worship or glorify Him. Then why do these worshippers only come on Sundays and pray:

Lord we praise Thee; hear us Master!
Feed and comfort, stroke and bless!
And too severely cast a glance
Glance upon our trespasses:

They pray to the Almighty for their own needs and comfort. They confess their sins in the confession Box to wash their guilt. They take it as an obligation and
think that God will shower His blessings in return. For the poet this is not more than ‘cup-board love’, an acrid remark on the superficial and materialistic aspect and approach towards modern life. They are pets of the church: a ‘show piece’:

Home at last from work in heaven,
This is all the rest God gets;
Gladly for one day in seven
He relaxes with His pets.

As pets relax at their master’s home, man too feels free in the church. The motif here is not communion with God which is something very personal and interpersonal between God and man. With so many distractions, he cannot relate to ‘The Ultimate’ Hope says that man is engaged in a hedonistic approach:

Sexual noises in the garden
Smelly patches I the hall –
Hear us, Lord, absolve and pardon;
We are human after all!

The poet is not an atheist; he is against the semblance of worship and worshippers. His view is similar to St. Augustine’s teaching that, “when we engage in a prayer or meditation, numerous distractions come to us through the avenues of the senses. We hear sweet music and are pleased; harsh sounds reach us and we are annoyed. If attractive sights stretch before us, we are apt to gaze on them and smooth flow of our thoughts is disturbed .... the appetites of
the body and its senses determine the nature of our meditation. If there is to be effective prayer, the clamour of the senses must cease and the urges of the body must stop. It is only then that we can commune in peace with God."\textsuperscript{12} The method of meditation explained here have much in common with the Neo-Platonist and are of Indian spiritual techniques.

Even then the benign Lord listens to His worshippers irrespective of their deeds and actions, He provides them everything:

Looking down He smiles and ponders,
Thinks of something extra nice:
From His beard, O joy, O wonders!
Falls a shower of little mice.

The garbled worship confuses Hope. Hope is not a seer; he voices his views based on logic. The 20\textsuperscript{th} century Christians cannot imagine how seriously the Christians of the first centuries celebrate the Divine Liturgy. It is not enough to go to Church. But must attend church with faith, revenue, and fear of God. One should enter the church, \textit{The House of God}, with this faith that god hates sin, hypocrisy, lies, and mere lip service. They should worship with their hearts. He slashes his satirical whip on the board members of the church, custodians for their immodest actions. The poet avers that there is no longer any difference between the holy church and common tavern. The love of God, Love for God, concept of God, knowledge and thought of God, is to experience oneness with God. So, the Parson’s preaching, prayers, confessions are all demonstrative. Because:
In prayer we always use words when we pray aloud; if we pray in silence we use the images of words; but both words and their images have only a limited scope. They cannot fully express all our deepest feelings and thoughts. If after a long separation we meet a friend, we are unable to speak because the joy is so great. The human spirit and the Divine spirit meet in lofty level where words are woefully insufficient.¹³

Hope's erudite attempt through these satires and poems is to know the basic reason for the decline of religious institutions. This does not prove him to be anti-Christian; on the contrary, he has a high-level faith in God. He thinks of good and evil. The assimilation of his poems reveals that he made a conscious choice dealing with several questions like fall of man, nature of sin, providence, redemption, heaven and hell and punishment of sinners in the contemporary context.

A curse for sinners is the underlying theme of *A Commination* (1959). It will be seen how often he confronts the problem of evil: "The title means a cursing, and part of the Ash Wednesday service of the Church of England is a ceremonial cursing of evil – the commination."¹⁴ It is all about renouncing God’s wrath and judgement against sinners, or praying or proclaiming God’s anger against sinners, the existence of evil/sin since primordial times is an obvious fact. It is man’s birthright to fight against evil in his own nature and around him. It is the paramount and constant duty of each individual to fight the forces of imperfection in all phases of human life, the poet being no exception. Hence he wants to rectify the errors of society.
Unlike Plato Hope has crystal clear views about poets. According to Plato who in *Lysis* agrees that poets are “fathers and authors of wisdom”\(^\text{15}\) for society. But in *The Republic* Plato concludes that poets are useless and, “they have been neither legislators, generals or inventors.”\(^\text{16}\) The logic of Plato is that all poets ‘imitate and thrice remove’ from truth. But Hope refutes the latter theory. He is crystal clear in his perception to modern life. He openly presents a savage picture of the whole modern materialistic world. Hope argues that his presentation of truth, and an attempt to curse all sinners, will not be in an insignificant way:

\[\text{…… the piddling kind:}\]

- Drivellers, Snivellers, writers of bad verse,
- Backbiting, bitches, snipers from a pew,
- Small turds from the great arse of self-esteem;

Hope is not going to waste his caliber time and art of versification like ‘writers of bad verse’. Instead, like a soldier on the battlefield and an athlete fully prepared to win, he too is ready with his poisonous shafts to hit:

- Some Caliban of culture, some absurd
- Messiah of the Paranoiac state,
- Some Educator wallowing in his slime,
- Some prophet of the uncreating word
- Monsters a man might reasonably hate,
- Masters of progress, Leaders of our Time;
Hope does not terrorises his reader with this aspect of God's wrath against sinners. But he wants a code of conduct to be followed. He is in favour of the progress of mankind but very much against 'on the gods of scientific materialism'. His prophecy and satire is against the systems, ideals, morals and manners of modern life. Hope's anger against poets is because they are neglecting their prime duty to cull the ills of society, because he expects an artist (poet), and that too a writer, to be socially conscious, before anything else. But he too is haunted, as he is aware:

In this great Sodom of a world, which turns
The treasure of the intellect to dust
And every gift to some perverted use,

Hope cannot keep himself aloof and his intellect and art may get 'perverted' in this 'Sodom' world. Nor does he consider himself apart; an exclusive person on a mission against ills and evils. He does not want to use his deadly weapon against:

...... my children, nor in rage
Mock at the just, the helpless and the poor,

Hope's poetry speaks of 'Karma', rewards and punishment according to ones deed and action, an idea or a concept running parallel to Indian faith and philosophy. Hopes poetry has an autonomous element; various streams of thought perfectly fused together to create on 'Utopia' a perfect refuge for
disillusioned, defeated modern man. His poetry is perfect amalgamation of Christian vision, classical mythology, Buddhist concept of hell, philosophy of Karma. He conforms to the rules of St. Augustine that fall and damnation of sinners are universal principles. The principle of moral balance is, "sin, which is culpable misuse of freedom, is not allowed to mar the perfection of God’s universe, because the balance of the moral order is preserved by the infliction of appropriate punishment ... since happiness is for those who do not sin." 

.... since in Heaven creatures purified,
Rational, free, perfected in their kind
Contemplate God and see Him face to face,
In Hell, for sure, spirits transmogrified,
Paralyzed wills and parasite minds
Mirror their own corruption and disgrace.

The line: 'mirror their own corruption and disgrace' is almost identical with the Buddhist concept of Hell, which one get acquainted with in an another poem also: The Damnation of Byron. He prays to the Lord that this curse should fall on all those who are supposed to be enemies of ‘mankind’. He is against all those things, which are responsible for the deterioration of mankind. In the case of the poet in this ‘Sodom’ city (world), he learns to ‘gibber and gloat’, to ‘seek those hills for peace and tranquility. Like Maharishi Bhagirath who went to the hills to seek ‘Moksha’ or peace for the tormented souls of his ancestors, Hope too wants to leave this city:

To seek those hills in which the heart finds ease:
Give Lot his leave; Let Noah build his boat
And me and mine, when each has laughed his full
View thy damnation and depart in peace.

If the poet seeks damnation, he also prays for Lot and ‘Noah’ to be released while the rest of the world is going to be completely destroyed. Volumes have been written on Neitzche’s Nihilism and Sartre’s ‘Existentialism’. Many modern writers were inspired by these – ‘isms’; Hope being no exception. But to say that Hope’s poetry was inspired by Nihilism would not be correct. No doubt he was influenced by a few aspects of it. In **Chance Encounters** he opines that during his childhood he was taught effectiveness of prayers. His personal experience was just the opposite to it, which led him to believe – ‘GOD DON’T EXIST’. Except this statement there is no proof in his poems to sustain this statement, though later in his poems, he repudiates traditions, beliefs and institutions of Christianity. Unlike Nietzsche who held opinions contrary to the doctrines of the church, Hope only refuses to accept the final authority of the church. **Easter Hymn** and **The House of God** reflected this notion. Hope’s prayer for Noah’s and Lot’s release is similar to the Nietzsche’s belief:

It is out of the ashes of the old, therefore, that the new order can arise. Not by any change or transformation, but only by a total destruction of the old can the new make its appearance. Nietzsche does not believe in any attempt at converting or improving the weak decrepit. The only way according to him, to deal with them is to annihilate them.¹⁸
Hope’s *Commination* is evidence that he too is an active participant in the ceremonial cursing of the evil and of the disgusting world. On the other hand, being a Christian, he is also aware that after commination, “the Ash Wednesday service appoints the reading of Psalm 51, a song of loving forgiveness:

> Heavy mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving kindness: according into the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions.  

Shifting his attention from ‘institutional religion’ to the institution of marriage; he wrote an entertaining satire *The Brides* (1951). The Reader is confronted by a massive set back suffered by the institution of marriage in this materialistic age. Hope detests the mechanized production of ‘brides’, he uses the car as a symbol for a beautiful ‘bride’.

> Down, the assembly line they roll and pass  
> Complete at last, a miracle of design;  
> Their chromium fenders, the unbreakable glass,  
> the fashionable curve ....

The cars roll down the assembly line to be displayed in showrooms while customers wait to select the models of their own choice and comfort. In the same way ‘brides’ are fully ready with make-up and charm to display their plastic beauty. They are surveyed by the groom’s parents with full care. But the selection is only on the basis of external appearance, and the conclusion drawn by Hope is:
“He will find every comfort: The full set
Of gadgets; Knobs that answer to the touch
For light or music; a place for his cigarette;
Room for his knees; a honey of a clutch.”

The whole picture created by Hope is that of a customer, who is only ready to invest his money if he gets the highest comfort and pleasure but not contentment. Keeping all requirements in mind, he selects one that:

……. her wheeled in to love, console, obey
Shinning and silent! ............... 

Eventually as it gets the number plate that is registration parson’s blessings Mr. XYZ, and her heavenly bowser-boy assumes his seat. He paints a pathetic picture of modern man’s search not for a ‘soul-mate’; a search, which ended with a submissive rather inanimate object, which shall work according to his own whims and fancies. One would imagine he has ‘Indian brides’ in mind. The only difference being that here the cost of the car is paid for by the bride’s parents. Hope makes the readers realize that the very purpose and sanctity of marriage has been lost in the modern age. It is the worst example of modern culture.

In Australia the history of ancient culture is very brief in comparison to popular culture. “It is popular culture which counts most, which provides the best guide to Australians and the way they live: milk bars, race meetings, Anzac Day, bush picnics, the beach, poker machines . . . .” And in addition to this, “if one excludes sex and conversation drinking is probably the most important social activity in Australia.” After drinking comes sport, which
occupies a central position in Australian culture. Playing or watching sport is a favourite pastime. A.D. Hope uses this big metaphor in his poem *Sportsfield* brings to mind Shakespeare’s statement in *As You Like It*: ‘all the world’s a stage’. In the same way Hope portrays life, love and sex as a sport. Hope is traumatized by observing the condition of love, a tender and compulsory aspect of life. Even Judith Wright has not dealt with the subject in such psychological depth as Hope. In Hope’s poetry incompatibility in human relationship is seen not in the Australian context; his vision is universal not regional.

In the first part of the poem the poet invokes the Goddess and asks her to return to earth, as she has forsaken human beings. The very purpose of love has failed in the modern age. Hope shows the state of modern lovers whose love is like a game being played on the field, which has fixed time duration resulting in a winner and loser:

> The Olympian game brings all together at last;
> For lonely Heart today may join the team,
> Lover by proxy now enact his dream,
> Ex-player one more live over all the past.

Secondly, Hope concludes that the modern age is an age of ‘Voyeurism’. An element of voyeurism can also be seen in *The Double Looking Glass*. Now it does not remain a private affair but a public performance. Many changes have taken place in moral values, which is inevitable. But the question arises whether man or the poet himself is also conscious of the fact that life without romance and sex is neither rich nor exuberant. The very purpose of the sexual act rather the act of fertility has now been reduced to a Tennis game which is leisurely. Taking tips from professionals, Hope uses personified images of light and lust when he says:
All will be well: the muscular child of light
Arriving just when she seems doomed to yield,
At lust, disqualified, limps from the field,
Kisses away her tears and holds her tight.

The entire game is stated by Hope as ‘brilliant fake’ when the game starts the athlete, ‘crosses the line and scores the first embrace’. When the first point is scored i.e. ‘embrace’ the school girls i.e. future players, cheer them ‘from the members stand’. The lust of the player is deliberately described as cheap and second-rate. Now the game has reached its climax:

Now in the final play their lips are met –
The grandstand holds its breath, the field ....

It seems that the winner will be loaded with gifts and accolades. But Hope wants to make the readers realize that the very purpose of sex i.e. procreation is lost. It has become just a source of entertainment. And at the grand finale, exhibits the bankruptcy of both the participants. Nobody is a winner in the real sense; this is precisely the message:

All play at love where love is only play;

True love no more exists in man’s heart. It is all in the mind, fully based on social status, financial security, material possessions etc. Here the poet has used all those images, which suggest the passive and gaudy life of people who are not living but ‘existing’ in this world. Man-woman relationship is based on the heart full of despair and loss of hope. At last he prays:
Goddess of kind, whom twilight and the dawn
Bare to our eyes, if, as of old, you still
Keep holiday with men, descend and fill
The loins with light, with honey the curving horn.

In his prayer to Venus he asks the Goddess to come down and fill the ‘curving horn’ with honey and to infuse ‘loins with light’. It is essential to mention that Hope wants to revive the very purpose of sex, because ‘the horn was moreover a phallic symbol, believed to promote fertility’. The association of ‘horns’ with the pagan religion was a natural attribute of Satan. For these reasons Hope prays to Venus to bring back the past glory and its purpose. Because in primitive society sex was not so regulated, but as the evolution of society took place it degenerated. Marriage and procreation were given supreme importance, before the moral standards of the institution of marriage and purpose of love were reduced. At this juncture the poet felt the necessity of a Hymn. It is not, that the poet is satarizing or mocking at the physicality of love but he is trying to evaluate every aspect of human life.

Another poem on ‘Parasitism’ is *The Kings* (1956) Hope’s verbal slashing on technocratic life can be seen in this poem where the tapeworm is the hero. The analogy presented is of the tapeworm and modern man. The existence of man is obscured and distorted like living in a gut. The technocratic age, which is solely responsible for the decline of art, culture, nature ultimately ends in man being equated to the tapeworm.

It is only Hope’s unique style, which makes the whole poem, “the defence of civilization against barbarism and parasitism, point beyond the tormented and ambiguous splendour which first brought Hope into prominence.”22
Apparently it may mean grotesque, mocking but it has a deeper meaning. This hermaphrodite spends its whole life in a gut. Similarly modern man has fallen from his heroic stature and metamorphosed into a tapeworm. The past heroic symbols have been sidelined by the poet and like a tapeworm modern man is enclosed and shut:

In a rich bath of pre-digested soup,
Warm in the pulsing bowel, safely shut
From the bright ambient of horror of sun and air,
His slender segments ripening loop by loop,
Broods the voluptuous monarch of the gut,
The Tapeworm, ..............

Man is greedy, a sucker, and dependent on others at present. The poet thinks of the past when man lived an adventurous and glorious life like a king, and performed brave deeds like lion:

The former times, as emblems of an age,
Graved the gier-eagle’s pride, the lion’s great heart,
Leviathan sporting in the perilous sea;
Pictured on History’s or Muse’s page,
All knew the king, the Hero, set apart
To stand up stiff against calamity,
These qualities are missing from the personality of modern man. Either he is Henry clay or a Tapeworm. And he feels crippled to accept the challenges. Instead he became:

...... the great, greedy, parasite worm,
Sucking the life of nations from within,
Blind and degenerate, sung in excrement.

Such tapeworms make nations weak from within. The acts of valour, the masterpieces and classics of the past are always valued. But man should be well abreast with day today events and facts too.

Good poets usually write about their own times. Hope's contemporaneous elements, through his poems provide insights into human experience. In Observation Car (1942) he used myth from daily life. Australia is one of the world's most urbanized countries, managed by huge machines. A huge population depends on private cars for transport. Man cannot escape from the hustle and bustle of the city. This is observed by the poet- as hero in this poem. The very first line of the poem shows a child put into train by his parents:

To be put on the train and kissed and given by ticket,
Then the station slid backward, the shops and neon
Lighting,
Reeling in a drunken blur, ..........
................. It used to be very
exciting.
Initially the child is very excited about his journey, on the ‘observation car’ of a train, and everything slid out at a fast pace. While he was observing he was unable to capture the whole view of things. This poem has a bit of personal touch because the speaker is the ‘poet-hero’. Hope, in the first line, says ‘child’ referring to the juvenile phase of his poetic career. He wrote this poem in 1942 and it took him the next 13 years to get his first book of poetry published. So, at that stage, only the initial excitement of the journey mattered. He was only concerned about the present conditions and took inspiration from the past. The future was unpredictable and the present bewildered him:

The present and past were enough. I did not mind having
back
To the engine ....................
.................................

Was a now dwindling off to oblivion I thought it was fun:

He is not aware of what is happening around. It was fun. But the poet was worried about the present. The fast movement of the train made him confused and worried. The sight was getting blurred and soon the child gets perplexed and fed up:

But now I am tired of the train. I have learned that one tree
Is much like another, .....................
....................... I am bored and a little
perplexed;
Hope switched over to many professions. But his main interest was to become a poet. And this traveler was fed up with drudgery and a monotonous routine life. He was seeking for kinder creative impulses, and wanted stability and certainty because man: in the present condition, was in an unbearable and inconsolable state. Man has to look into the past to revive the morals, ideals and values of life. The cultural change is compared with:

...... maddening way the other passengers alter:

The schoolgirl who goes to the Ladies' comes back to her
seat

A lollipop blonde who leads you onto assault her,

And you've just got her skirts round her waist --

The poet broods about the Anglo-Saxon and puritan character of his country in the past. This Puritanism rapidly shed by youth and girls due to the American influence. Because, “...... the working - class suburbs the main meeting place is the local dance hall or picture show; ..... these parties have existed mainly for teenagers to experiment with sex. There is nothing new in this, what is new in the youth and teenagers going to these parties and the single-minded concentration on sex to the exclusion of everything else, even having a good time.” And these young ‘lollipop blonds’ travelling in the observation car, displaying their sexuality, do not realise ‘Time’, that soon they will turn into pink ‘hippopatamus’, and in the end the beauty is transformed into horror:

... She has whiskers, no teeth and foot in the grave
This is the point when the poet realises he got into the wrong train, like all other travelers, not knowing about their destination [aims of life]. Because driver himself is 'mad' just driving aimlessly, the future seems to be a rumour and drivel. From this observation car, the poet is only sure of the past, the distance covered by mankind until boarding the train. So he realizes that all are in Hell:

…….looking back and watching the landscape shrivel,
Wondering where we are going and just where the hell we are,

The conscience of the poet pricks him that he is on the wrong track, the poetic-self within continuously insists that he should stop the journey, and 'drive' his own vehicle one day. He should enjoy the autonomous power to control it. He has to be the poet first and from this very moment should hone his poetic skill. He doesn't want to be like the historian or someone else. He places the poet above historian and wants to develop an honest, critical insight, the main function of a poet. His poetry would be the strident voice about 'Now', which will accomplish his poetic task. Hope is not much worried poetic laurels but about his poetic task. He is a poet apprehensive about the future with:

…… full of a sense of frustration, stopped stopped
growth defeat of psychic energies ............even a kind of fear of death of the personality. It is from this state of apparent defeat that the poet begins the search and struggle ....24
And much later, in *Beyond Khancoban* he got his own powerful vehicle in the poet’s control.

To sum up Hope’s satires in few lines is impossible. As a writer, he is a free being, and primarily his pieces of writing are glossy flights of fancy. It is also true that along-with other elements they involve the writer’s personality. Civilizations may vary but, writers throughout the ages, weave their creations around love, sympathy, tolerance, urge for freedom, search for truth everything, which is related to humans in particular. In relation to these values they reflect two elements – ‘personal and universal’. But the unavoidable third element is the social element. The social element varies from writer to writer:

The fundamental point that social and universal elements, the national and literary, are not in themselves opposed or contradictory. They may be dissociated, but in general they join harmoniously in the work of literature. The great writers are usually both national and international.²⁵

Hope is also great because his themes flow beyond nationality. *Standardization* may seem a simple satire against over production, industrialization and mechanization of life. But he wants man to learn much more from nature. “For in Nature is no mechanical, business – like standardization. In nature, even in its patterns of repetition, there is a sense of celebration:

I see, stooping among her orchard tree
The Old, Sound Earth, gathering her winfalls in
............... 
The cast of a face, a million butterfly wings”²⁶
Hope's poem was sustained 'several years later by the political scientist, Barbara Ward she said:

...... that the two worlds of man - the biosphere of his inheritance and technosphere of his creation - are out of balance and in deep conflict But humankind inhabits only one earth.²⁷

*Sportsfield* is about the relationship and physical love of man and woman. The beauty of the poem lies in how he examined love and sex in sport. If the participation of woman in early Western civilizations Greece, Egypt, Rome is examined it is discovered to be vague. But many historians confirmed that women did engage in physical and competitive activities like swimming, boating, running and so on. On the whole, sports symbolized male power. But Hope beautifully fused the popularity of sports and male/female love, the substance of human life. This exploration of sports in relation to physical love makes his poetry 'unique'.

Religion is a sensitive issue to be satirised. But Hope boldly wrote on religion too. *Easter Hymn, The House of God*, and *A Commination* at a glance gives an impression that the poet may be heretic. As though he wants to lead the rally of anti-Christians holding a placard - 'God is Dead'. But it is not so. Hope conveys:

Religion is the organization of life around the depth dimensions of experience - varied in form, completeness and clarity in accordance with environing culture [(1987)
1995: 285]. It is the notion of "depth dimension" that is useful here to focus attention toward something in the way religious people conceive of and organize the totality of their world such that these conceptions and organizations provide structure for understanding the universe and for acting in response to it. Thus, religions tend to deal especially with the most puzzling of human questions and predicaments and provide means to deal with these issues: Such as evil or death ....

The Brides, Observation Car empirically prove that human beings are turned into commodities, a number or a thing; Hope concludes – "Man is not meant to be a thing, he is destroyed if he becomes a thing; and before this is accomplished he becomes desperate and wants to kill all life." In The Lingam and Yoni he uses Indian myths. India is basically known as land of spirituality. But here Hope is portraying by using Indian myths that how land of spirituality too affected by materialistic aspect of life. Being a (India) commonwealth country it too had to face the same problems of developing countries fully affected by the mechanical, technological Marathan. Lovers are seen fully suppressing their basic instinct of life and love in front of Marx’s ‘Economics’.

If Hope wants to justify his ideas, he also get inspired by the animal kingdom. The Kings is an optimum example, which subtly explains the attitude of parasitism, solitary and yet bisexual modern man. Another lengthy poem Lambkin: A Fable (1958) too depicts modern man’s life comparing it to that of a lamb:

    Alone, unshepherded, his state
    Was little less than desperate,
Lambkin represents entire humanity as facing the hostile universe. Man (Lambkin) though isolated still arrogant, proud needs a 'guru' (shepherd) to show it the right path. It lost its way and is on the hard track of spiritual lacuna, amidst the mountains of 'Id'.

In a nutshell satire and humour in literature allude to aspects of society. Satire is 'ostensible, reformative: it prosecutes vice but prescribes virtue. Hope's satires are an expansion of this statement. Satire was not so developed in Australia. But after Hope's arrival it was considered that he was the best satirist of Modern Australian Poetry. He was an iconoclast. The subject he selected for his satire was contemporary but his own discretion in these matters made him 'autonomous'. His concern for man transcends the topography of Australia. It is only A.D. Hope's power to transmute man through his satires. Ultimately one can conclude that through this he tried to shock the bourgeoise into realisation and awareness.
NOTES


6. Hugh I’Auson Fausset, op.cit., p. 3.


13. Ibid., p. 118.


16. Ibid., p. 88.