

Lokayatic Interpretation of A.D Hope's Poem 'Standardization'**Krishnachandran M**

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e-mail id: krishnachandranmecheriparambil@gmail.com**Abstract**

Man's quest to find the presence of God started way back in time. While most of the people in the society are believers of God, a growing minority thinks the opposite. This paper titled "Lokayatic Interpretation of A D Hope's Poem 'Standardization' ", tries to find the materialistic themes from the modern poem 'Standardization' through an ancient Indian materialistic philosophy called Lokayata. The word Lokayata has different interpretations, among which the most famous one is "this worldiness". It rejects any other things beyond this world which cannot be felt, nor seen. The bridge between an ancient philosophy and a modern poem helps to establish the modernity of the past. Man, as an individual species has established their dominance in the world creating their own standards of living without caring much about nature and neither believing in any power above them. A.D Hope's prolific career, being a presbyterian has always questioned the autonomy of religion over man and the concept of Lokayata, being a total rejection of religion, can be compared with the protestant views of A.D Hope. Man creating their own autonomy over the concept of God's autonomy, with every advancement of modern life makes much sense while viewing through the lens of Lokayata. Hope has always questioned the authority of Christianity throughout his works as a presbyterian and lokayata also deals with the same, despite both dealing with two different religions of different countries.

Keywords: *Standardization, lokayata, autonomy, materialism, modernism*

Introduction

One of the biggest questions that mankind has tried to answer is about the existence of the God. "Does God exist?". Several religions point out towards the presence of God and the majority of

mankind also believe in the presence of God in one way or the other. But there is a small, rather an expanding group of population who are atheists. While the religion preachers about dignity and to follow its rigid rules, the philosophy of atheism promotes the free thinking of an individual. The pioneers of such a stream of thought were the Carvakas/Charvakas. Their philosophy is also known as Lokayata. This ideology can be dated back to 700 BCE. Etymologically, Lokayata can mean "this-worldliness". In Rigveda:

" Who really knows who will here proclaim it? Whence was it produced? Whence its creation?

The Gods came afterwards, with the creation of this universe. Who then knows whence it has arisen?" (Creation Hymn, 10,129)

Even the holy books sometimes doubt the presence of God and the Lokayata philosophy rejects all such ideas of super naturalness. The Lokayats comment that these concepts are "pure fiction, sheer imagination of fevered brains". But later on, the materialistic ideas of Lokayata were rejected through the non-materialistic ideologies.

The writer and his work to be discussed here formed through a religious sect in Christianity, Presbyterianism. Alec Derwent Hope, popularly known as A.D Hope was an influential Australian poet. The sect of Presbyterianism are protestants in Christianity. His works reflect such themes. His works gained prominent in Australia in the beginning of the 1960s, and was lauded for its meticulous artistry and intellectual vigour. However, in the 1970 a faction of young poets began to view him as an archetypal traditionalist who crafted poetry characterised by formal rigidity, opposition to modern some and a retrospective gaze. He was "readily represented as conservative, sexiest, and old fashioned"(McCulloch,21).

This paper, titled "Lokayatic Interpretation of A.D Hope's Poem Standardisation", aims to find the materialistic themes from the modern poem, from ancient Indian philosophy. The poem "Standardisation" was initially published in 1943 in the "Jindyworobak Anthology". The poem is satirical in its tone and critiques the effects of modern industrial society on individuality and creativity. The modern man tries to outshine nature with every modern technology, neglecting the presence of God or spirituality in this universe. This idea goes along with the atheistic views of Lokayata. Details based on the idea of rejecting religious norms have been challenged by A.D Hope. Linking and age old philosophy with a modern poem is one of the key aspects about this research paper.

State of the Research

The review of literature of this paper aims to provide an overview of the relevant works related to the intersections of the Lokayata philosophy and Hope's poem "Standardisation". It was

very difficult to get any primary text related to the theoretical framework of Lokayata since the texts related to it had been long gone. Debiprasad Chattopadhyaya's "Lokayata: A Study in Ancient Indian Materialism" was referred the most. This text has helped to understand the complexities of the Lokayata philosophy. The work of Johannes Quack "Disenchanted India: Organised Rationalism and Criticism of Religion in India" paves way to understand that the only reliable source of knowledge is perception and it rejects inferential methods that have not grounded in direct sensory experience. A personal account of lokayata/carvaka as life's philosophical question is detailed by Pradeep .P. Gokhale in "Lokayata/Carvaka: A Philosophical Inquiry".

The primary text related to this paper was of the poem "Standardisation" itself.

Despite it being initially published in "Jindyworobak Anthology", the text considered here is Hope's own collection of poems "The Wandering Islands". Considering an author's authentic text helps to understand the author more. In order to understand more about the author, we have considered the "Australian Dictionary of Biography". A work edited by David Brooks titled "The Double Looking Glass: New and Classic Essays on A.D Hope" offers a critical insight to this work. Other important reference includes Robert Darling's reviews based on Hope's poetry from a contemporary viewpoint.

The review of literature helped to understand the linkage of lokayata and the poem "Standardisation" despite them never being studied on the same grounds. It can rightly be said that the study done in this paper is a novel attempt to link the past with the present.

Linking "Standardisation" To Lokayata

Through this initial chapter the aim is to establish connections between the practical and materialistic principles held in lokayata philosophy and the thematic components presented in the renowned poem standardization by A.D Hope. An interlinking between the ancient philosophy and the modern society can be seen in Ramakrishna Bhattacharya's text "Humanist Thought in Lokayata":

"It was the most uncompromising philosophical system that ever appeared in India. It refused to accept the notions of afterlife, heaven and hell, rebirth, any creator God, and the infallibility of the sacred text (the Vedas in particular). Its sharp satire is often reminiscent of the French enlightenment writers. In short, it was a materialist physicalist system through and through." (Bhattacharya,4)

Materialistic elements are evident in the first stanza of the poem itself: "When, darkly brooding on this Modern Age,

The journalist with his marketable woes Fills up once more the inevitable page

A fatuous flatulent Sunday-paper prose" (Hope,63)

'Darkly brooding on this modern age' suggest a contemplation of the contemporary world. This can be connected to lokayata's emphasis on observing and interpreting the material world. The aim of a journalist is to report credible news, but the contemporary society is filled with journalists who consider new with some monetary benefits.

Lokayata rejects the idea of an ideal creator and A.D Hope has also viewed creation as a redundant process, through these lines:

"Love, which still pour into its ancient mould The lashing seed that grows to a man again, From whom by the same processes unfold Unending generations of living men." (Hope,64)

The cyclic nature of life is being emphasized through these lines which is celebrated as the inherent self-organising power of nature in Lokayata.

Hope has vividly illustrated a society that has forsaken its varied and distinctive origins in pursuit of mechanisation and uniformity. This serves as a poignant reflection of the rejection of non-sensory based beliefs that lokayata are staunchly opposite and questions. In is obituary to Debiprasad chattopadhyaya in the work "Social Scientist" Rajendra Prasad says:

"Debiprasad maintained in general terms that the physician in ancient India was concerned with medicine and medicine alone and that the medical views of this period were remarkably free from super-naturalism" (Prasad,104)

The answer to all questions can be found from the nature itself. Humans are trying to outline the autonomy of nature with their own. Man can never beat the production capability of nature. Nature itself is necessary to meet all our needs.

"She has standardized his ultimate needs and pain" (Hope,64)

Environmental and Ethical Concerns

"You don't really need modernity In order to exist totally and fully.

You need a mixture of modernty and tradition" (Bikel,1984)

People today live and try to be as modern as possible for stop they forget their roots somewhere. In the present analysis of lokayatha philosophy and hopes standard I session it is crucial to thoroughly examine the obscure implications of societal standardization for stop this chapter aims to thoroughly check the manners in which the amalgamation of lokayata's materialistic principles and the thematic essence of the poem can accentuate ethical quandaries, the deterioration of the environment, the corrosion of fundamental human principles, and the conspicuous absence of spiritual nourishment.

"Rebirth in other less industrial stars

Where huge towns thrust up in synthetic stone And films and sleek miraculous motor cars
And celluloid and rubber are unknown" (Hope,63)

The attachment of humans from nature is lamented by the author as the world has completely changed due to industrialisation which makes the writer think of leaving this world to another non industrialised one. Debiprasad Chattopadhyaya through his work has brought out one of the key findings about Lokayata which was indeed quoted as:

"The evidences were already noticed by Rhys David who concluded that the Lokayata originally meant only nature-lore" (Chattopadhyaya ,15)

Viewed through the lens of lokayata philosophy, this trend signifies a shift away from prioritising the tangible aspects of existence and appreciating the inherent magnificence of the natural realm, thus promoting a more comprehensive understanding of how humanity has become increasingly alienated from its immediate natural environment.

The over advancement of humans for getting their basic needs is also a question by Hope; "She has standardised his ultimate needs and pains.

Lost tribes in a lost language mutter in

His dreams: his science is leathered to their brains, His guilt nearly repeats Original sin"

Such similar ideas can be traced from Chattopadhyaya's book as well, where he has quoted Karl Marx;

"Mankind must first of all eat and drink, have shelter and clothing, before it can pursue politics, science, art, religion etc." (Marx,85)

The erosion of human values portrayed in "Standardisation" can be perceived as a direct consequence of the overarching societal emphasis placed on material possessions and superficial standards, according to the philosophical framework of lokayata. Within the lokayata philosophy there is a distinct emphasis on personal pleasure and sensory experience as fundamental components of human existence; however it is crucial to note that this emphasis should not come at the detriment of ethical considerations or environmental stewardship. D.R Sastri in his work "Short History of Indian Materialism, Sensationalism, and Hedonism":

"Some of the sects of degenerated Buddhists in which laxity in sexual morals was one of the features became gradually affiliated to the lokayata school. One of these was the Kapalika sect. The Kapalikas are a very ancient. They drink wine, offer human sacrifices and enjoy women. They drive to attain their religious goals with the help of human corpses, wine and women..." (Shastri,42-43)

Even when lokayata tries to wipe out all other religious philosophies, it is not a perfect one and that is what Dakshina Rajan Shastri has shown through these words.

Brighter Side of the Synergy

Despite the often critical view of standardization presented in both the poem and philosophical discourse, we can uncover constructive aspects that highlights beneficial synergies. Lokayata was seen at times in good ways;

"Kautilya, in his Arthashastra, mentioned along with Sankhya and Yoga, the lokayata and called it the science of logic" (Chattopadhyaya,25)

This philosophy was not born out of ignorance towards other religion, but came into existence as a result of rationalism. Central to lokayata is the belief that sensory perception is the only valid source of knowledge.

"When from his vegetables Sunday school Images with the neatly maudlin phrase Still one more nature poet, to rant or drool

About the "Standardisation of the Race";" (Hope,63)

The phrase "neatly maudlin phrase" employees a certain level of repetition in the sorrowful expressions regarding standardisation indicating a potential lack of originality. Consequently, these statements may be associated with the advantageous elements of standardisation by under scoring a requirement for new viewpoints. It conveys the idea that rather than simply thinking of the consequences of standardisation, individuals have the capacity to redirect their imaginative efforts towards pioneering resolutions and unconventional methodology aimed at advancing societal development.

The feminist theory and the Marxist theory have gained their own place in the modern world. But the essence of these ideologies were already presented through Lokayata and Ramakrishna Bhattacharya has mentioned about it as follows;

"Krishna Mishra and Sri Harsha, two vedantists and sworn opponents of lokayta, say that the Charvakas denied cast hierarchy and defended women against the charge of being inferior to men. Moreover, the Charvakas are accused of preaching equality of the two sexes. The validity of caste and inferiority of women were accepted without a murmur by the orthodox vedists. Besides the Buddhists and the Jains, only the followers of the bhakti cult and the adherents of the little tradition dared to go against this so called God oriented varna system." (Bhattacharya,1)

It is clear that Lokayata upholds many modernist values and views. This also helps to link the poem's modernist side with the Lokayata. The past philosophies have many such modern implications.

Combining Lokayata's pragmatic and empirical approach with the efficiencies of standardisation can lead to innovative solutions and progressive societal paradigms. Lokayata's reliance on sensory perception and empiricism aligns with the systematic efficiency promoted by standardisation. Both perspectives advocate for concrete, measurable approaches to problem-solving, fostering an environment where empirical evidence and standard methodologies drive progress. The secular human-centred ethics of Lokayata can harmonise with standardisation's capacity to create uniform ethical guidelines. By establishing clear, standardised ethical norms based on human experiences, societies can develop fair and consistent moral frameworks that benefit all members equally.

Conclusion

The impacts of uniformity on personal identity, artistic expression, and moral principles are illustrated through the poem "Standardisation". This analysis is in accordance with Lokayata's doubtfulness towards all encompassing, rigid systems and underscores the importance of a practical and realistic approach of existence. Both viewpoints scrutinise the potential ethical decline and diminishing empathy that may arise from an excessive emphasis on material possessions and compliance.

The imposition of such sameness may give rise to moral quandaries wherein the inherent worth of individuals and the environment are disregarded in favour of productivity and foreseeability. Even though Hope is a poet of the modern age, he has a linking towards the past as well:

"- the literature of the past is one of his main sources of inspiration. Hope is a writer for whom the past is not only important, but a milieu that is more appealing than the present." (Abraham, 1979)

The poet, despite representing the modern era of poetry is heavily inspired from the past. He cannot ignore the ways through which humans have evolved. He respects the paganism blind belief that had been the part of Christian community but he endeavours to correct their follies. A very close similarity can be seen in both the religions. One life based on the ideas of Bible and the other based on the Upanishads and Vedas.

The pessimistic tone of the poem resonates with the extremist side of lokayata. Even though their idea is to lead a liberal life, it should not be in an extremist level. The extremism of communism can be seen in North Korea, China, Russia etc. The world has to keep itself modernised but without forgetting the value of nature, morals and ethics. Extremist approach of the vedic period can also be seen; "Does you wanna really hymns of the rig Veda and the Atharva Veda show that in the vedic period, like purusamedha or following the husband to death by mounding his funeral pyre, was also practiced in a symbolic fashion." (MASI,19). This study helped to understand various thought streams of the world. A better understanding of the poem, as well as the poet was made possible for stop one of the biggest challenges is phase personalities was to adjust this research into a small format. As a blooming researcher it can be said that the framework of lokayata needs to get more attention, and further works should also be viewed through such ancient philosophies.

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