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## A Study of Imagery in A D Hope & Nissim Ezekiel

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### Abstract

The legacy and heritage of leading Australian poet Alec Derwent Hope and Indian poet Nissim Ezekiel to the English literature is unquestionable as they have pioneered the Australian and Indian poetries respectively. Their works have passions, excitements, and delights with philosophical, rational and idealistic insights dealing with lively images of their countries and their people. Their poems are satirical, ironic, mordant, sarcastic and scornful about modernity, culture and urbanity of Australia and India. Imagery means the ability to form mental images of things or events and describing them with mental pictures. It means figurativeness, allusion, insinuation, citation, symbolism, even metaphor or simile. It creates visual pictures of ideas in our mind and it is more complex than the ordinary pictures to understand. Many great poets have developed special techniques to create mental pictures lively in the mind of the readers and showed high talent by creating visual pictures with words that appeal to our five senses such as sight, hearing, touch, taste and smell. It is an extra ordinary talent and ability of the poet to create such images in our minds. The two great poets A D Hope and Nissim Ezekiel have written poems with lively images. The Post-Independence Indo-Anglian poetry begins with Nissim Ezekiel and the Australian poetry begins with A D Hope. They portray, reveal and expose true image, vision and reflection of life of their countries. Their poetry centers on love, personal integration, the contemporary Indian, Australian scene, modern urban life, modern culture and the spiritual side of life. They lived during the two world wars and also in the industrialization era and thus dealt honestly with the pathos, miseries, sufferings, sorrows and agonies of their nations by using various images in their poems. Australia and India are the members of the commonwealth nations which have the common values and goals that include the promotion of democracy, human rights, individual freedom, elite culture and world peace. Hope and Ezekiel present the lively images of their countries and cities and the people who live there in their poems. The images are so effective that a reader cannot forget the image created by these two great poets on them as they try to present their views and ideas through the powerful images to the readers.

**Keywords:** Modernity, Images, Pictures, Mind, Urbanity, Culture, Lively, Mental Picture, Hearing, Seeing, Touch, Smell and Sight.

### 1. Introduction

Australian poet Alec Derwent Hope and Indian poet Nissim Ezekiel have been born and brought up in different countries but they produce the poems with lively images of the pathos and sufferings of their lands as these poets have the same immortal ideas to present before the world. Their works have full of originality, creativity, uniqueness, inventiveness, innovation, novelty, imagination and also greatness and enormity of language. They have contributed much to the literary world but they would be remembered best as great poets of the twentieth century. A D Hope and Nissim Ezekiel have used imagery very effectively in their poems. They are fed up with their places of dwelling Australia and India and also they lived during the two world wars and noted down the pathos and agonies of the society in images in their poetry. The two countries are far from each other but the great poets Hope and Ezekiel narrate the problems of the countries are same in using excellent images. They have also served as professors of English in their countries and thus contributed a lot for the development of the poetry of Australia and India. They have pioneered the English poetry of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and became the greatest poets of their ages and their nations.

The images of Australia used by the great poet Hope and the images of India used by the great modern poet Ezekiel are full of similarities. Australia and India have many problems that are same and these two poets have vividly presented these problems of their countries in their works. They are men of urbanity and modernity and have written poems that are metaphysical, sensual, serious, frivolous, sympathetic, mocking, rational and mystical with great images.

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## 2. Life of A D Hope & Nissim Ezekiel

### A D Hope (21<sup>st</sup> July 1907 to 13<sup>th</sup> July 2000)

Was born in Cooma, New South Wales, the first of four children of Percival and Florence Ellen Hope. He attended Bathurst High School, where his first poems appeared in the school literary journal, *The Burr*, in 1922-1923. He got the opportunity of studying in Sydney University and won medals in graduation of Honors in English and Philosophy. He mastered many languages like Latin, Japanese, Italian, Russian, Spanish and Old Icelandic. He studied English at Oxford University by getting the James King Travelling Scholarship. He got a job in Sydney Teachers' College but he preferred to practice as a psychologist and thus he guided the youngsters to leave the studies to shine in good careers.

Hope became a senior professor in the department of English of the University of Melbourne in 1945. He was appointed professor of English in Canberra University College in 1951, which later became the Australian National University. Even though he wrote poem at the age of 14 but his first collection of poems "*The Wandering Islands*" was published in 1955 when he attained the age of 48.

Hope had the reputation of a brutal, atrocious and insightful literary critic when compared to a creative and innovative poet up to his 50 years of age. "He saw himself as a poet as he said in an interview with McCulloch in 1987, poetry is not a thing you decide to do, or adopt a system of theory and proceed according to plan. It grows out of you and what you have in you. He believed that poetry gave him the feel of the world as he was no longer alone in the light of time and circumstance (bookrags.com). He wrote mostly autobiographical poems and used lot of images in his poetry to deal with the contemporary and modern issues of Australia. Kevin Hart, reviewing Catherine Cole's memoir of Hope, writes, "When A D Hope died in 2000 at the age of 93, Australia lost its greatest living poet" (Hart) as he is considered as the greatest poet of Twentieth Century English Literature of Australia.

### Nissim Ezekiel (16<sup>th</sup> December 1924 to 9<sup>th</sup> January 2004)

was born in Bombay in Maharashtra. His father Moses Ezekiel was a professor of Botany at Wilson College, and his mother was the principal of her own school. He studied in Bombay and later stayed for a brief period in England. He married Daisy Jacob in 1952. His first book "*The Bad Day*" was published in 1952. He headed the department of English of Mithibai College, Bombay and also, was the visiting professor of University of Leeds and University of Pondicherry for a brief period. He is considered as the foremost among the modern Indian English poets.

The dominant passion of Ezekiel's life is poetry and he has taken to his vocation with a genuine and real commitment. John B Beston asked Ezekiel, "Writing in English in India, would you see yourself essentially as an Indian poet, or a world poet?" Ezekiel answered, "I regard myself as an Indian poet writing in English." In other words, the desire to fit in the native tradition and belong to the native scene is explicit" (Shirish, p.30). His poem "The Night of the Scorpion" is used as the study material in Indian and Columbian schools. He penned poems in Indian English and his poems are used in NCERT English Textbooks.

## 3. Imagery in Poetry

Imagery means the ability to form mental images of things or events. It means figurativeness, allusion, symbolism, even metaphor or simile. It is thought that imagery makes use of

particular words that create visual representation of ideas in our mind. It is more than a mental picture and also complex to understand and the poet must have special talent to produce the imageries. "Imagery needs the aid of figures of speech like simile, metaphor, personification, onomatopoeia in order to appeal to the bodily senses. It is a name given to the elements in a poem that sparks off senses. Image means picture but images need not be only visual, any of the five senses (sight, hearing, touch, taste, smell) can respond to what the poet writes" (poetryarchive.org).

One of the great pleasures of poetry is discovering a powerful image in the poem and reader gets satisfaction and interest in reading such a poem. The imagists of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century felt it was the most important aspect, so were devoted to finding strong images and presenting them in the clearest language possible. The people expect this power tool of the poetry in the poem to read and understand effectively, successfully and efficiently.

Ezra Pound gathered the scattered experiments of imagism in a group and published *Des Imagistes* in America in 1914. Later the Imagist Anthologies were followed in 1915, 1916 and 1917. The Imagists announced six principles for themselves to practice:

1. To use the language of common speech, but to employ always the exact word, not the nearly exact, not merely the decorative word.
2. To create new rhythms - as the expressions of new moods and not to copy old rhythms, which merely echo old moods, insisting on the use of 'free verse' for the sake of liberty and individuality.
3. To allow absolute freedom in the choice of subject
4. To present an image in order to avoid vague generalities
5. To produce poetry that is hard and clear, never blurred nor indefinite.
6. To believe that concentration is the very essence of poetry." (Louis Untermeyer, p.305)

Imagery is used for conveying some similarity, resemblance, comparison, relationship, analogy, parallel or congruity and thus makes the poem very effective and attractive to appeal to the readers of the poems. It is found in poems where the writing appeals to the senses.

"Imagery is one of the seven categories of figurative language that is given below:

- It was dark and dim in the forest – the words dark and dim are visual images.
- The children were screaming and shouting in the fields – screaming and shouting appeal to our sense of hearing or auditory sense.
- He whiffed the aroma of brewed coffee – whiff and aroma evoke sense of smell or olfactory sense.
- The girl ran her hands on a soft satin fabric – the idea of soft in this example appeals to our sense of touch or tactile sense.
- The fresh and juicy orange are very cold and sweet – juicy and sweet when associated with oranges have an effect on our sense of taste and gustatory sense." (Literary devices.net)

Thus, we can learn from the above examples that imagery needs the aid of figures of speech to appeal to the bodily senses. It evokes and kindles the truth of human experiences of the life not in abstract, intangible or theoretical terms, as in philosophy, but in more perceptible, noticeable, observable,

distinguishable, appreciable, concrete and tangible forms. This is a device by which the poet makes his meaning clear, understandable, comprehensible, obvious, transparent, strong, glaring, dazzling, certain, sure, effective and reliable. "Sir Philip Sidney says that imaging is itself the very height of poetry. In the simplest terms, an image means "a picture made out of words" (Lewis, p.4). It is more complex than an ordinary picture and also very difficult for the readers to understand, comprehend, assimilate, appreciate and recognize an image of the poetry. The poets must be very careful in using imageries in the poems so that the readers can understand it very easily, undoubtedly and effectively.

Image is usually expressed through a phrase, an epithet, a metaphor, or a simile. Poetries with high imagery have conveyed the message of the poets very effectively, efficiently and successfully to the readers. "C D Lewis has observed, "An epithet, a metaphor, a simile may create an image; or an image may be presented to us in a phrase or a passage on the face of it purely descriptive, but conveying to our imagination something more than the accurate reflection of an external reality" (Lewis, p.4). Many poets and critics have different definitions for imageries but of all these constituents of imagery, Aristotle gives priority to metaphor as Ingram Bowater quotes, "it is the one thing that cannot be learnt from others and it is also a sign of genius, since a good metaphor implies an intuitive perception of the similarity in dissimilar (Bowater, p.78). Thus, fine poetries cannot be produced or the message of the poets cannot be conveyed to the readers without the use of good imageries. "Hugh Kenner says in one of his essays that an image is by its nature more vivid than any statement" (Kenner, p.28). Even a statement fails to give message clearly but an image gives vivid and clear message to the readers. "Ezra Pound once remarked that "it is better to present one image in a lifetime than to produce voluminous works" (Murray, p.13). One image created by the poet in the poems is worth better than the voluminous words used to describe the ideas, thoughts and dreams of the poet.

Hope and Ezekiel have created more than one image of lasting worth to make them immortal in the English literary world. As J. M. Murray remarks, "..... the greatest mastery of imagery does not lie in the use, however, beautiful and revealing, of isolated images but in the harmonious total impression produced by a succession of subtly related images" (J. M. Murray, p.13). The poet must be talented enough to produce better images to make his ideas clear to the audience. Hope and Ezekiel have the innate, intuitive, inherent and instinctive talent, flair and genius of producing lively and attractive images in their poems and thus make their poems immortal, relatable, significant and pertinent in the literatures of the English world.

#### 4. Image of Australia & India

Hope and Ezekiel have the innate talent to use imagery very effectively in the poetry. The image of Australia is found in the poems of Hope and the image of India is found in the poems of Ezekiel as both were dejected that the cultural change has destroyed the old tradition and peace of the people. Hope says about Australia:

They call her a young country, but they lie  
She is the last of lands, the emptiest,  
A woman beyond her change of life, a breast  
Still tender but within the womb dry  
(Australia ACP, p.74)

He uses the image of a young woman to describe the country as he says that still it has the tender feelings but the womb is dry and the image says that Australia is barren and empty land as it fails to produce and sustain life. He presents very gloomy and depressing image of a land and says that the culture of aborigines has been replaced by the disastrous culture of the Europeans in his native land due to modernity and urbanity.

Hope uses the clear image that Australia has become a desert and desolate land and yet he is hopeful of some change or some prophet would emerge from the land. His gloomy image of his nation and also the impact of modernity in the land, which has devastated the ancient and aboriginal culture of Australia are presented in the poems.

Yet there are some like me turn gladly home  
From the lush jungle of modern thought, to find  
The Arabian desert of the human mind,  
Hoping, if still from deserts the prophets come  
(Australia, ACP, p.74)

He believes that someday the country would flourish with the culture of aborigines and hopeful about that change. The Australian desert would breed some prophet to enlighten the land. He uses the image of Australian society as "The Chatter of Cultured Apes" and Australia as stupid and devoid culture. He accepts the modern society of Australia and its culture are in the hands of cultured apes that come from the European lands through the images very effectively. The image of apes clearly shows his anger and anxiety about the land and thus it appeals to the readers. He satirizes the modern society and its evils with varied images in his poem "Standardization".

Whenever the green aesthete starts to whoop  
With horror at the house not made with hands  
And when from vacuum cleaners and tinned soup  
Another pure theosophist demands (Standardization,  
ACP, p.75)

The modernity has given electronic tools to the man and even the modern man builds his house not with hands and he gives the clear image that everyone is addicted to modern technological tools. He paints a picture of sorrowful and fearful modern nation where factories are located as these modern gadgets help us to lead a comfortable life but it destroys the relationship of man with nature. He wishes that he would get rebirth in a less industrial nation.

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  
(Standardization, ACP, p.75)

The finest image of the modern Australia is very effectively presented by the great poet using excellent and lively images so that the readers would understand his feelings of his native land.

The image of India and its superstitions have been clearly narrated in Ezekiel's poems and he considered like Naipaul that the country is marching very fast towards devastations but he is hopeful of a great change and that change he wants to bring in the Indians through his poems. Ezekiel forms the true image of India through these lines:

Here among the beggars,  
Hawkers, pavement sleepers,  
Huntsman dwellers, slums,  
Dead souls of men and gods,  
Burnt-out mothers, frightened  
Virgins, wasted child,  
And tortured animal,  
All in noisy silence  
Suffering the place and time  
I ride my elephant of thought (In India, C P)

The image of India is presented in a gloomy manner. He talks about the beggars and hawkers of India as they are wandering in the cities. The image of slum is also very dismal and depressing as the poet only saw the dark side of India. He uses the irony here to describe how India is noisy in silence. The terror in the country has also been seen in the lines as the poet used the words frightened virgins and wasted children. He presents another image of India:

Barbaric and sick with slums  
Deprived of seasons, blessed with rains  
Its hawkers, beggars, iron-lunged,  
Processions led by frantic drums,  
A million purgatorial lanes,  
And child-like masses, many-tongued  
Whose wages are in words and crumbs (A Morning  
Walk, C P, p.119)

The poet presents the diversity in the life style of people in India and the ironies and vicissitudes of Indian life find a place in his poetry through proper images. The plight of the teeming masses that lack the basic amenities of life and the people living in city slums have to face many hardships in everyday life. He never dissatisfied like Naipaul on the habits and customs followed by the Indian but dissatisfied only with the devastating culture and civilization of the land which hindered the true humanity to develop and flourish in India. His poems show the images of native tradition and culture. His ominous and dull image about the city Bombay and the devastation of the culture due to modernity does not shake his spirit of an Indian and he wants to live in India and thus he declares:

I cannot leave the island,  
I was born here and belong  
Even now a host of miracles  
Hurries me a daily business,  
Minding the ways of the island  
As a good native should,  
Taking calm and clamour in my stride. (Island, C P,  
p.182)

The image he presents about India is very gloomy but he likes to live in his native place where he was born and his image shows the conditions of the poor people of the land. Hope never likes to leave his land like Ezekiel even though he presents the depressing image of his land. Ezekiel says:

Confiscate my passport, Lord,  
I don't want to go abroad  
Let me find my song  
Where I belong (The Egoist's Prayers, C P, p.213)

They satirize the evils of modern society like materialism, artificiality, pollution, corruption, selfishness, egoism, self-interest, brutality, vindictiveness, heartlessness, unkindness, ruthlessness and cruelty in true and finest images so that the citizens of their lands understand them and these images would guide them and bring an awareness to them to lead a blissful, peaceful, harmonious and wonderful life in their native lands.

### 5. Image of Modern Cities

Hope presents the gloomy image of Australian cities and says that they fail to have true culture of the land and there is no life in the cities even though they have all the modern gadgets and things and he sees the death of human life in the cities of his country. He says:

A nation of trees, drab green and desolate grey  
(Australia, ACP, p.74)

The true image of Australia is presented by him as a barren and empty land. It has no history, culture, songs and architecture and the people believe in superstitions and emotions. He says:

The river of her immense stupidity  
The people do not live but survive (Australia, ACP, p.  
74)

The people of Australia want to survive in their land and the poets write poems to make sure that the land is surviving. "Hart comments that when once asked what poets do for Australian, Hope replied that "They justify its existence" (Hart). He believes that the poets are so fed up with their land that they gave the idea about the existence of a land like Australia to the people by writing poems. They are happy to live unhappily in their native lands. He wants to deal with the problems of his country as it is going away from the Australian Aborigines' culture. He tries to explain through his poems with devastating images that modernity has great negative impacts on the cities of Australia. He calls the five cities as the cancerous ulcers and the blood and puss has come out of those five cities by using up, of her all resources and strengths in finest images.

And her five cities, like five teeming sores  
Each drain her, a vast parasite robber-state  
Where second-hand Europeans pullulate  
Timidly on the edge of alien shores (Australia, ACP,  
p.74)

He attacks colonization and calls the people as second hand Europeans derogatorily. He gives the image that in the name of civilization they have buried their own culture. He gives the negative one-sided approach and explores the spiritual and cultural poverty of his native cities by producing disastrous images of his nation. "Igor Maver says that Hope uses lot of traditional poetic forms and numerous allusions from classic literatures and cultures, which he considers the source of Western and Australian culture" (Maver, p.25). His images about the cities are lively and he creates those images to send the message to the world about the impacts of urbanity on the human life and its relationships.

Ezekiel talks about the city of Bombay and says that it has divert tension. He felt in reality the city is inhabited by sick people, with its sick hurry and divided aims. The Indian cities

are full of foul air which is infectious, transmittable and contagious. He depicts the city of Bombay stripped of its glamour in a realistic manner. He was totally involved in a situation, which he felt to be hopeless. The universal darkness is made momentarily bearable. Bombay was the metaphor for the urban life in India.

We noticed nothing as we went,  
A straggling crowd of little hope,  
Ignoring what the thunder meant,  
Deprived of common needs like soap  
Some were broken, some merely bent (Enterprise,  
ACP, p.21)

He says that how people have become deprived of the culture in the urban lands. The image of modernity has been produced very effectively in his poems that make man to live like a machine and there would be no human relationships and life. His poem "Urban" has many lively images to express the unhappy experiences he felt in Bombay. He finds the city dwellers rootless as they belong to the vulgar turmoil, disorder, chaos and havoc of life and he calls them active fools.

At dawn he never sees the skies  
Which, silently, are born again?  
Nor feels the shadows of the light  
Receive their fingers as his eyes.  
He welcomes neither sun nor rain  
His landscape has no depth or height (Urban, C P)

It is the symbol of any modern city that has the dehumanizing influence on human individuality. He bewails and expresses in true images that the modern man has lost contact with nature in his poem "Urban", as Hope also bewails about the same lost in his poem "Standardization" that the modern man fails to appreciate the soothing beauty of nature and also started abusing and looting all its resources. He says that man cannot compete with nature in the production of things and the man has lost the true civilization in the name of standardization. He says:

She had standardized his ultimate needs and pains.  
Lost tribes in a lost language mutter in  
His dreams; his science is tethered to their brains,  
His guilt merely repeats Original Sins.  
(Standardization, A C P, p.76)

The man has lost his ties with the nature and searching the beauty in his technological world and modern science. The man lost his peace and searching that peace in the ultra-modern scientific globe that also in vain. Ezekiel says:

The unplanned city has a death-wish:  
Everybody is in the business, buying cures  
(Healers, C P, p. 231).

They believe that in reality the city is inhabited by sick people, with its 'sick hurry and divided aims'. The modern life in city is howling and crying and the true image of their poems shows the hustle and bustle of the city life.

Hope and Ezekiel believe that the modern culture has reduced human personality to a zero. They never like to leave their lands but love to live there. Australia and India have diverse

culture, the modern European culture and the old traditional Australian and Indian culture, as more alien people started living in these lands. "Mulraj Anand says that modern India is a synthesis of many cultural cross currents and it is conscious of the 'double burden the Alps of the European tradition and the Himalaya of his Indian past'" (Naik, p.33). The same identity of Australian culture we can find in the poems of Hope. They tried unhappily to rectify the mistake of their people to believe in the modern culture and wanted to remove the cultural anarchy and make the true culture of the lands to flourish in the cities of their nations and also hopeful that someday the true civilization would emerge by writing various poems on diverse topics.

## 6. Image of Modern Life

A D Hope and Nissim Ezekiel have presented the gloomy picture of the modern life of Australia and India in their poems as they believe that the culture is devastating, demoralizing, disturbing, ruining and damaging by modernity. They have protested against the erosion and abrasion of values and undignified acts which are an insult to humanity. They do not like the ultra-modern trends which degrade the well-established value system and culture, which have proven their efficacy and usefulness down through the ages.

Hope portrays the modern man's selfish, cruel, merciless and commercial attitudes, feelings, thoughts, approaches and behaviors towards the life in his poems. The hunters hunt musk-deer and kill them mercilessly in the thick forest of Assam, Tibet for Kastura. He speaks about the wickedness, vice, injustice and selfishness of modern man. The hunters plan to play music to attract the musk-deer and then kill them with poisonous arrows as the modern man has become cunning, rapacious and avaricious in killing the innocents. He says:

The hunters now set out by two or three;  
Each carries a bow and one a slender flute  
Deep in the forest the archers choose a tree  
And climb; the piper squats against the root (St.  
Cecilia's Day, ACP, p.78)

The modern man is so cruel that he adopts various sweet methods to kill and destroy the nature. The modernity and urbanity have destroyed the common sense of the modern man. In his selfish motive he destroys nature:

A hundred thousand or so are killed each year;  
Cause and effect are very simply linked  
Rich scents demand the musk, and so the deer,  
Its source, must soon, they say, become extinct (St.  
Cecilia's Day, ACP, p.78)

He condemns the modern man that he would destroy the nature by killing the deer and one day all the deer would be extinct. The modern man has become like a hunter to misuse music for destructions and killings.

Ezekiel presents very gloomy and depressing images of the modern life in which man fails to recognize the true values and human relationships in India as he forgets the old traditions, wisdom and customs of the land, which are suitable for blissful living.

Ancient Indian wisdom is 100% correct,  
I should say even 200% correct

But modern generation is neglecting –  
Too much going to fashion and foreign thing (The Patriot, C P)

The modernity has converted the man in to a machine and he finds no time to divert attention towards the values of life. Ezekiel says that the modern world has reduced and condensed the customs and cultures of the lands to nothing and people struggle to get hollow, futile, worthless, and useless happiness in the modern life and started searching that happiness in the modern India. He presents the image of modern life as:

Poster selling health and happiness in bottles  
Large returns for small investments, in football pools  
Or self-control, six easy lessons for a pound  
Holiday in Rome for writing praise of toothpaste (A Time to Change and Other Poems, p.9)

Hope and Ezekiel have used very effective images to present the depressing life of the modern Australia and India to instruct the citizens to be careful about the modern trend and world scenario which bring only devastations and anarchy. Their lively images make the people of their countries to understand the hazards in the modern cities of Australia and India.

## 7. Conclusion

A D Hope and Nissim Ezekiel try to visualize in true images, the world of harmony, peace, growth and prosperity amidst the chaos and crisis surrounding the individual in their poems. They explore the possibility of combining the secular outlook, with religious feelings in their lands. They understand that life is devoid of charm and aesthetic sense in the modern world and people start behaving like machines and this hostile, aggressive, antagonistic and unsympathetic environment does not allow the individual to coalesce with nature amicably and harmoniously. They say that man cannot compete with nature as they create lot of images of nature to prove that the timeless beauty of nature catches our sensibility. Man neglects the nature in the modern world of industrialization and urbanity. Their poems depict in true images, the Australian and Indian life in general and city life in particular vividly and realistically. They use imagery cautiously, vigilantly, thoughtfully, wisely and judiciously and thus their images strictly remain functional, efficient, purposeful and not decorative and ornamental. The whole human race is standardized by losing all its shape, strength and vigor. They say that the individuality, identity, creativity are lost and man has become a mere anonymous creature.

Thus, A D Hope and Nissim Ezekiel, the great modern poets of English Literature use the tool of imagery in their poems to convey, communicate, suggest, express and deliver their messages to the English World in general and Australia and India in particular, vibrantly, successfully and brilliantly.

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