

Book Review on Dr Dalip Khetarpal's *Sculptured Psyche*

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Dr Dalip Khetarpal, a prominent poet and a sculptor of our times has dexterously chiseled out poetic image out of human nature, behavior and attributes. He also has the introspective eyes to see through the world within as much as the globe outside. He explores human psyche amazingly and touches human heart silently, but with such words as remain to ring inside. His fourth anthology of poems *Sculptured Psyche* bears out instances galore of this observation which makes us finally face the unavoidable question: "Sculpturing so much of nature's gift/has led to forfeiture of all human attributes./So, what is left of man?"

While exploring the anthology one finds that Dr Dalip's aesthetic vision is juxtaposed with his absorbing mysticism. It gives birth to a poem like *A narcissist condolence*, revealing the truth of human frailties. "One

may also be blown to bits/ While belling the cat./Once the gift of reflected appraisal is imbibed,/all narcissists would be wiped out from this planet". In another poem *Could re-incarnation be real?* the poet questions the theory of Karma in the Hindu theology, compares it with other schools of religious thought and makes a humble confession: "The highest, the most sublime form/Of spiritual state that could even be illusional/Mystical , psychological, para-psychological/Or metaphysical or some other truth /Which may or may not even be the real final truth/That I, perhaps, fail to imagine".

But God's expertise remains quizzical to Dalip. He parodies as he observes that the practice of religion in the present society is meant only for the fulfillment of human desires and precisely this "validates the credibility and competency of Gods", but 'verily, even this exists only in fancy, becoming so, nothing, but a travesty'. This realization haunts the poet, and haunts as a dark shadow of the mysterious rebirth failing to comprehend "whether the dead of the previous birth of the beggar was really bad".

Unfortunately , neither religion nor education shows us the right way. What is the purpose of education? To make a 'a human being complete and desirable'. In reality, not education but platitudinous rants are witnessed. We are using masks, live on a fake life and see "a clash of two lies, two cheaters with unmatched masks. But one knows not

how his true self "is perennially eclipsed by the mask". As a realistic poet, Dalip explores the truth: 'and the final naked truth, however, is the whole world survives and thrives on lies/that often hold their sway over the truth/that dismay even all Gods and heavens/but redeemable lies, acting as a panacea here/should dismay none'.

In *Is this all what life only and really is?* the poet elucidates how "From childhood, surreal to adolescent, material/To final old age, spiritual/We keep on moving throughout our life". Is meta-cognition and creativity fuelled only after facing loneliness, solitude and isolation? The poet asks who are you and answers, - "Aesthetic truth discovered by psychologists/seems to reside in findings aesthetically psychological/that split phenomenal self into three me's - material, social and spiritual.

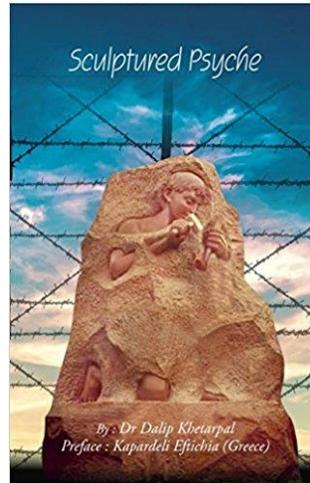
As a superb exponent of psycho - psychic flints, Dalip is more powerful than any of the contemporary poets in elucidating the Freudian concepts of the unconscious, preconscious and conscious, but from a different perspective. He views the topographical concept from socio-cultural and conventional backdrop of life both - Indian and Western to reveal - "Fascination and the ardent desire to enjoy the free/Unrestricted open lifestyle/By the Indian multitude/surely connotes their latent desire/To enjoy the same lifestyle'. But a pertinent question the poet raises is, should an Indian always

'maintain a façade of the interior western and the exterior Indian?'

In Dalip's poetry psychological spark sometimes mingles with metaphysical thoughts to cast and affect our mind so much so that we are prompted to think anew of our relationship as delineated by the poem, *Soul mate*. The poet makes us think how and why "no relationship is perfect/even soul mate relationships - a roller coaster/often face ups and downs."

Strewn thus, with novel, realistic, enlightening, philosophical and thought-provoking ideas, the anthology stands out distinguished in the realm of modern literature and will surely fertilize the psyche and widen the mental horizon of posterity of all ages to come.

Title: Sculptured Psyche
Author: Dr Dalip Khetarpal
Publisher: The Poetry Society of
India
Genre: Poetry
Language: English
ISBN-13: 978-9383888863
Paperback: 122 pages
Price: Rs. 240
Available: Amazon



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