

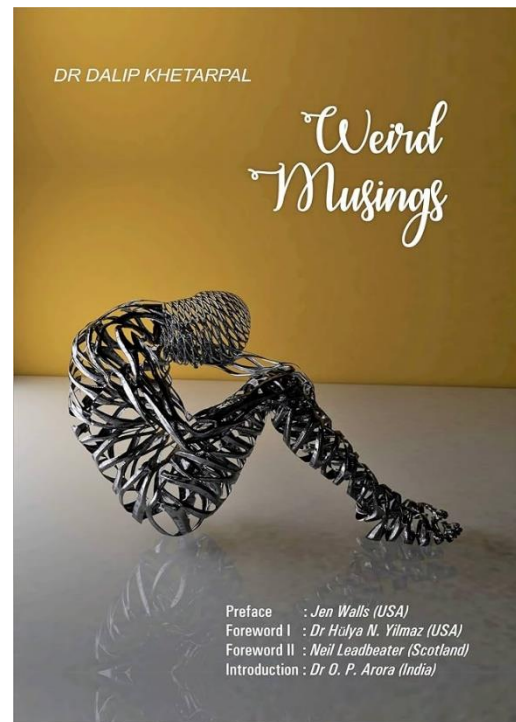
***Weird Musings* by Dalip Khetarpal, Global Fraternity of Poets: Hisar,  
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**Reviewed by**

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Dalip Khetarpal is one of the greatest intellectual poets of contemporary Indian English literary world. He is a sane voice, a rational thinker, and analyses the hypocritical society and its camouflaged myths inside out. His new offering, *Weird Musings*, is a collection of extremely thoughtful, meditative and logical poems. It is the duty of every intellectual to explode the myths and show the mirror of realism to the people. Khetarpal does his job superbly and his poems in this collection will certainly enrich the reader's thought-process and help him in washing away some of the garbage and trash from his mind. They are enjoyable too.



In his second last poem, 'Inscrutable?????', Khetarpal challenges the metaphysical concepts of heaven and hell and the divine punishment. If Adam could face such a severe punishment for a "simple disobedience", what would be the fate of today's degenerated man who remorselessly commits rape and murder and indulges in unpardonable corrupt practices. As the poet is a man of reason, he cannot repose his faith blindly in the scriptures. Whatever it be, the faith of the people in the conventional religion is infirm, and so, the entire concept of guilt and punishment is inscrutable. In fact, the poet thinks that "inscrutability reigns supreme." The last line, though a question, sums up the essence: "No way to induce clarity of vision on issues/Abstract, mystical and abstrusive?" These metaphysical questions are so puzzling and inscrutable to a man of reason that he remains in eternal confusion. Dilemmas galore even for a theist, though an atheist is in a far worse state.

Khetarpal excels when he uses his great gift of wit and sense of humour for a serious subject. 'Death and Resurrection—Ultra-modern Style' should be, for any other poet, a gloomy deliberation, but Khetarpal turns it into an enjoyable and humorous poem. And his instrument is the craziest of all inventions, the cell phone and its ramifications. He is bewildered to find a patient with a ventilator and suddenly on seeing an FB post with laudatory comments, he throws away his ventilator and resurrects himself. And a young girl, because of her obsession with a cell phone, jumps the red light and gets killed. The poet humorously remarks that where medical science and gods or destiny failed, cell phone succeeds. Google thus helps in "resurrecting" many "impious souls" today and also fills one's "emotional and intellectual vacuum." It has in fact taken over the divine role too. The poet is pained to find FB addiction going to the level of mania which even psychiatry has failed to treat. FB has urged the people with superficial activity and made their life petty and mundane. The emptiness of the modern life forces the starved people to try "to enrich their empty impoverished famished life/And inflate their deflated ego." The poet lastly takes a dig at the cybernetic man who performs deeds "holy and miraculous/With greater speed, precision and efficiency/Than all Gods and angels." At the same time, he castigates all the addicts who perform all those deeds, "evil and malicious/With greater velocity, intensity and competency/Than all demons and evil spirits." This poem is a great indictment of all those who are addicted to the cell phone, FB, WhatsApp, etc. It is in fact, a wake-up call.

Another poem, 'Thunder and Plunder Face-Book C/o Narcissists' opens your eyes to the maddening passion with which people, particularly the youth, indulge in the crazy world of Face-Book. The poet rightly pinpoints the word, narcissism, for all those who squander their precious lives on extracting 'likes' and "empty praises". Both "the ugly and the beautiful,/the stupid and the intelligent" get an equal number of praises which are all false. But they certainly trap the credulous people into a make-believe world who easily become victims of the designs of the malicious and wicked people. So, beware of narcissists! Don't fool yourself by inflating your ego through falsehood.

In the beautiful poem, 'Spurious Rise Leads to Real Fall', the poet warns against running after glitter and glamour which may captivate your imagination, but they certainly are traps. You are bound to suffer and fail in the end. One should always live a life rooted in reality and not run after spurious gods, gurus or Mahatmas who are out there to destroy you completely, sooner or later: "There's always a fall in rising through something fake." If you try only to become "a good human being", the "mysterious God" would certainly be pleased and shower

blessings on you because His “sole goal to create good humans/Will be attained” through you. Continuing his argument in the next poem, ‘Big Pseudo Gods among Little Blockheads’, the poet wonders why and how demi-gods or fakes are flourishing and multiplying in our society. The poet rightly attributes the seed of this disease to the people who are mentally incapable of discerning between right and wrong. In their craze for satisfying their desires or attaining some kind of status, they are ready to become ‘doormats’ of even the fake and spurious demi-gods. In this process, he surrenders all his dignity, judgment and discretion to the dictates of the self-seeking, degenerated demi-god, and becomes a “mule”. These mules and blockheads in the society are mainly responsible for providing respectability and strength to these parasitic demi-gods.

In yet another analytical poem, ‘How the Fake Emanates from the Real’, Khetarpal reiterates his painful realization that fake “theatrical God-men exist/ Because a belief in one true original God is strong.” As the original one is not physically available to people, they, in their stupidity and craziness glorify any fake replica of God who satisfies their lust for material gains. When the political leaders and other celebrities too fall on their feet, the stupid masses are further encouraged to imitate them. The poet points out that these fake-gods are able to “generate an unprecedented amount of wealth,/Exploiting religious sentiments” and thus, religion has become a big industry. The poet bewails the fact that the destiny of the nation has been hijacked by such demi-gods. God spare the nation!

Khetarpal seems to be a true apostle of love, romance and sex as is evident from his lovely poem, ‘Consummation of Love’. But he is not taken in by the airy propaganda of spiritual love. For him, the beauty of the beloved, her “lusciously loquacious eyes”, and her mischievous smile, and the “thunderous invitation” of her “lascivious body/ -- burning with the fire of love” are as important as her body enched in the fragrance of the “ethereal essence of heaven.” The poet wants to enjoy full and complete love which is “a blend of flesh and spirit.” Khetarpal has the courage to confess that “spiritual love is inconceivable sans physical.”

‘Re-calibrating monogamy and polygamy’ is a beautiful, thoughtful and exciting poem. As the title indicates, the poet has analyzed here the concepts of monogamy and polygamy and has done so after an amazing amount of research. He compares today’s man with that of the past, and also with the animal kingdom and finds that man today is at a great disadvantage. In a hypocritical society it is difficult to say that everybody would agree with him, but at heart, everyone knows the truth. Man by nature is polygamous if you go by his “basic instincts and

impulses.” Despite the socio-cultural norms and stringent laws, man enjoys playing with the beauties, as many as he can get. Woman too equally relishes having more and more charming men in her closet.

The poet rightly points out that love and emotions, most of the time, do not recognize the legal and cultural limitations. You cannot imprison the heart. Even rationally, how can you live with and enjoy the same body mechanically every day? Monotony and boredom! You are sapped of all interest and vitality, above all creativity. Variety is the law of nature. The poet brings in the animal world and also the old custom of having ‘keeps’ and the harems. It is very interesting to see the poet quoting an economist counting the advantages of having two wives. If man gives up on ‘pseudo-moral standards’ and ‘free sex’ is given a free go, life would be far more truthful and honest and enjoyable without those feelings of guilt involved in polygamy. But the poet also knows that if such a situation develops, society would run amok and unreal peace would be replaced by real chaos. A really enjoyable poem indeed!

Khetarpal is a very ingenious and inspired poet who poses scientific, psychological and psychic challenges to himself and then deliberates on them in a very convincing way. Here is a poem, ‘Cataclysm: The Reverse motion of the earth or Human brain?’ that compares the rotation of the earth and the sun to the spinning of the human brain. For millions of years, the natural rotation has gone unhindered. And yet the poet surmises, maybe, someday this rotation is reversed. Certain changes would occur like deserts would disappear from their present location while they might appear somewhere in North America. Similarly, “freezing winters” would go to some of the hotter regions. Certain “temperature changes” may happen in the world besides the change in the direction of the oceanic currents. The poet feels that these changes apart, nothing very unusual would happen to the topography of the world and these changes are of no consequence when compared to what happens when the human mind spins in the reverse: A “complete split” between “thought and emotion”, all “relations owning in delusion and fantasy” leading to “a total mental and emotional fragmentation.” In that state there will be a total “loss of contact with the environment, with nature”, resulting in lunacy or insanity. Such a state of the mind ives man to craziness and absurdity. The poet then looks at the world and finds that it is only crazy and neurotic people who are ruling the planet today and thus concludes that man’s brain is spinning in the reverse order. It is only these maniacs who have brought the world to the brink of “a whopping holocaust.” Thus, the poet warns that nothing in nature would ever cause the destruction while power in the hands of the sadists and crazy war-mongers would certainly bring about the complete annihilation of the world.

‘Is Reality Real?’ analyses the real and abstract aspects of reality in a very logical and convincing way. It may seem a simple subject but it is indeed very complex. Reality of one person may not be real for the other because reality depends on perception which again depends upon the attitude, conditions and beliefs of the person. Thus, it would be a folly or only egotistical not to give credence to other’s views or condemning them as unreal. The world is changing very fast, and hence reality of the situation changes every day, nay, every moment. The society is very “volatile and dynamic”, and your mind must keep pace with the ever-changing reality. Only those who have a sharp mind and are able to grasp the shift in the reality can talk authoritatively about the truth. In such a situation, the poet feels that life “becomes weird, but exquisite,/Cause of the elusive and mysterious/ Façade of reality.” Only a great mind can comprehend beauty even in such a fluid situation, beyond the capability of ordinary mortals.

Exploding the myths and false beliefs is one of the pious tasks of a great poet and Khetarpal has been trying his best to enlighten the masses through his poems. Stars influence the destiny of man; success or failure even small things depend on the movement of different stars, this is a widely-held belief among the Hindus. Astrology is a science or not has been debated for a long time, and even in the 21st century Hindus go to pundits to find out auspicious days or time for performing certain activities or ceremonies, etc. The poet as a rationalist debunks these superstitions and asserts that Nature neither interferes in man’s activities nor influences their outcome. It only performs its job indifferently, according to the its laws. He mocks at the idea how only Hindus are vulnerable to the effects of the stars while mankind includes other faiths too, like Sikhs, Christians, Muslims, Buddhists, etc. Do they mean stars discriminate against Hindus? It is stupid to think that nature and God have a discriminatory attitude. Luck and chance do play their role in man’s life, but that is not exclusive for Hindus, and beyond the prediction of pundits. This enslavement of Hindus turns them fatalists and instead of working hard for their growth, they become indolent and blame the stars for their misery and failure. The astrologers and pundits become the beneficiary and roll in wealth. The backwardness of the nation can easily be attributed to the fact that instead of depending upon their strength of character, their diligence and capability, they surrender to the easier course of ‘destiny’ and go on blaming their stars. No doubt, we are at the bottom in every field in the comity of nations.

In ‘Futile Queries and Epical Shrieks of Few Anguished Souls’, the word futile is an understatement, for the poem raises questions that are not futile, rather, of far-reaching

importance. They are truly the ‘epical shrieks’ of the “anguished souls” who share Khetarpal’s view of the sick society that he has painted in this very moving poem. It is an epic poem which subjects the entire globe to its critical lens. ‘The fractured age’ has turned topsy-turvy all the human canons and destroyed all the values which humanity cherished. We live in a world where all the virtues are discredited and vices are glorified, where life has lost the warmth and has become robotic, where worthy and meritorious people have to hide themselves in dark corners and the demonic and wealthy have become popular role models. Means are not important at all. It is the bitch goddess success that is worshipped even if it is Satanic. Poverty, hunger, violence and wars have demonized the century and man hardly cares for the sufferings of his fellow beings or even Nature. He in fact, rapes Nature and destroys the ecological balance. Education does not educate in the real sense, and religions preach only blind faith. The poet asks in agony: “Why should we impart such a bright sheen/To the mean and unclean?” Isn’t that the question every sane man is asking today? The poet painfully bewails that it is “the collapse/Of this civilization”, but urges the leaders to “save the world/From its cataclysmic end”. It is for this lofty reason that poets are called prophets.

In a lighter vein, though not in vain, Khetarpal, in his very interesting poem, ‘Vodka vis-à-vis India’, gives the reader a taste of Vodka, the famous Russian ink, when he asserts that “in some way, Vodka also represents India.” As Vodka is “the most mixable ink”, India too has become a grand mixture of many races and communities, turning her into “a feuding melting pot.” The phrase, ‘melting pot’, comes from America and Canada which too have failed to become melting pots in reality, whatever be the pretensions. But in India’s case, the poet believes, it has melted India into “a chaotic nation”. That is Khetarpal’s view of the oft-touted phrase, ‘unity in diversity’.

The poems in this collection are fresh, fragrant and captivating, like the beautiful flowers in a garden in the early morning. The reader is bound to get struck by the newness and originality of the thoughts and the feelings. They would stimulate his neurons and stir his soul. His consciousness will see a new light flickering at the end of the tunnel.