

LIFE AND NATURE AS DEPICTED IN SELECT POEMS OF NIRALA

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ABSTRACT

Translation is rendering of meaning especially in writing, from one language into another. The word translation is derived from the Latin term translates. The prefix 'trans' means passing something, while the stem 'slate' means cover. The generic term translation has several implications such as alteration, change, conversion, interpretation, paraphrase, rendering, rephrasing, rewording, transcription, transformation, and transliteration, while the specific meanings of the word are translating, rephrasing, interpretation, decoding, etc. Translating poetry is a problematic process in which a mere change of words from source language to target language will not do. A poem contains words decorated in the form of verses, a mere style and metre and their order may not fulfil the essential aspects of poetry.

KEYWORDS: *Alteration, Change, Conversion, Interpretation, Paraphrase, Rendering, Rephrasing, Rewording, Transcription, Transformation and Transliteration*

INTRODUCTION

Translation of poetry is a great job as it requires a detailed research of the original text, but foremost, it expects the translator to have mastery over both the source language as well as the target language. David Rubin is one such great translator who had translated one of the great Hindi poets of all time, Shri Suryakant Tripathi 'Nirala'. David Rubin is a widely published writer who has translated not only Nirala's poetry but also Premchand's stories as well under the title, *Widows, Wives and Other Heroines: Twelve Stories* by Premchand and *The World of Premchand*.

Suryakant Tripathi 'Nirala' is one of the key figures in the history of Hindi literature. Though he hailed from Bengal and acquired his basic education in the Bengali medium, Suryakant Tripathi chose Hindi language when it came to writing down his thoughts through essays, novels, poems and stories. Suryakant Tripathi 'Nirala's' life was tragic and lonely and at every stage he had to come across misfortunes in life. However, that did not deter Suryakant Tripathi 'Nirala' from pursuing his interest in studying various Indian languages. At a very early age, Nirala became an expert in the Hindi, Bengali, Sanskrit and English languages, most of which he had to master sitting at home. Apart from penning down poems, essays and stories in Hindi, he was also known for his skills as a painter.

Suryakant Tripathi 'Nirala' was an important member of the Chhayavaad era of Hindi literature or the Neo-Romantic period of Hindi literature. Most of his writings were unconventional and differed from the styles of his contemporaries. As stated earlier, he liked to voice his ill feelings about the society through his writings and this led to various publishers dismissing his work and not publishing them. Therefore, even though he was a writer of high standards, his talent and depth of knowledge of the Hindi language were recognized only after his death. Though nationalism and revolution were the chief contents of his writing, he also liked to deal with the history of

languages, mythology and religion and nature. His writings often reflected his thorough study of the Puranas. It was because of the fact that his style of writing was totally different from his contemporaries that Suryakant Tripathi received the title of 'Nirala' which means 'unique' in the Hindi tongue.

David Rubin had mostly concentrated in translating the mythology and nature poems of Nirala. Though there is no particular mention about Nirala as a nature poet or a personal poet but through his great poems like *Saroj Smriti* and *Juli Ki Kali* he has brought about many shades of life and nature in his poetry. These two poems have been selected from the translated collections of David Rubin, to display the symbols of life and nature in his poetry. In his poem *Juhi Ki Kali*, as in *The Juhi Bud*, Nirala has personified the Juhi flower as a lady who is waiting for her lover, the wind who has taken refuge in the mountains it seems. The flower Juhi had been torn in the midst of night, the tender body was at the budding stage, it was to blossom in the arms of her lover, the wind.

“A spring night. Her lover, tormented by separation in a distant land, was that the wind they call, the southern sandal mountain breeze.” (70, *A Season On the Earth*)

“Vaasanti nisha thi. Virah vidhoor priyaa sang chod, kisi door desh me thaa pawan, jise kehte hain malayanil.”

And in *Saroj Smriti*, as in *Remembering Saroj*, Nirala had composed this poem on the death of his daughter, and the way she led her life with all the miserable circumstances. She was a widow and she died at the age of nineteen. *Saroj*, literally means lotus and the poem *Saroj Smriti*, is an elegy which not only commemorates the death of Nirala's daughter but it also takes the readers into the life of *Saroj* and how Nirala couldn't break the social norms and rules when it came to his daughter's life.

“The wedding ended. Of my own relations not one was there, nor had they been invited. No wedding music filled the house to keep us awake both day and night.”

“Ho gaya byah, aatmiya swajan, koi the nhi, na aamantran tha bheja gaya, vivah raag bhar raha na ghar nishi diwas jaag, priya maun ek sangeet bharaa, nava Jeevan ke swar par utara.”

The range of Nirala's poetry is far greater than that of any other twentieth-century Hindi poet. In the technical sphere he experimented with rhymed and unrhymed free verse, traditional meters, original stanza forms, ghazal, geet, bhajan, satire, long narrative, epic, elegy, and songs in folk style. The earliest of Nirala's poems to survive is “The Juhi Bud,” in free verse irregularly rhymed. Nirala attributes its creation to the year 1916 but it was very likely written three or four years later; in any case, it is fully developed Chhayavad and one of the earliest poems of the type. The bud is described as a girl— “pure tender slender”— sleeping, “chilly in the folded leaf.”

Her lover, the wind, longing for her while far away in the mountains of the South and on an impulse returns to her in the night and awakens her. She started up, stared all about her, astonished, and found her darling by her bed. She smiled, gratified in her desire, and blossomed in her lover's arms. The personifications are not presented as fantasies or as conventional similes; the charm of the manner lies precisely in the combination of extravagant imagination and naive realism in human, dramatic terms. Although the poem offended some by its sensuousness, the intention is metaphysical in the Chhayavad way.

As in the early *Upanishads* the daring of the analogy serves to underscore the belief in the fundamental unity of all things in the natural universe. Compared to the Absolute, nature may have only a qualified reality, but one that is not

without significance since it manifests the Absolute. This is not to say that Nirala does not revel in the physical beauties of the world for their own sake. He does, indeed, with a passion that makes the other Chhayavadins appear bloodless. His conception of the natural universe in these poems is fundamentally erotic. The holy surge of the seasons, the rise and decline of vegetation, the powers of wind and storm, even the fixed revolution of night and day, all testify to the sovereignty of Kama.

The basic metaphor is actually the technique itself, by means of which Nirala sports in the virtuosity of a liberated new poetic diction disciplined only by the intrinsic demands of the subject while he rides roughshod over all the traditional restraints of both prudish decorum and worn-out rules of conventional prosody. In this lies the real freedom of Nirala's free verse.

Saroj Smriti, the elegy Nirala wrote for his daughter in 1935, also evokes the late Shakespearean romances, for Saroj is a Perdita who is not recovered, a Marina who does not survive, but whose life nevertheless redeems her father's. The poem, embodying Nirala's grief and self-reproach at the death of his daughter at nineteen, moves far beyond the frontiers of Chhayavad. In one hundred and fifty-nine rhymed couplets Nirala sums up his life, his frustrations as a writer, his failure as a provider for his family, and his rebellion against orthodox society.

The emotional range of the poem is enormous, encompassing despair, hilarity, tenderness, exultation, bitter sarcasm, and resignation, all magnificently controlled by the rigorous discipline of the form. At the climax of the poem, at her wedding, Saroj appears to him as another Shakuntala, only with a different lesson, and a different art. The lesson and the art were to provide the basis for Nirala's own finest achievements. It is with the poignant directness of statement of Saroj Smriti that Nirala's art reaches its highest development.

On one side one can see that Nirala had put his efforts in personifying the nature as lovers and on the other hand he has described the ways of life itself as nature. The budding flower Juhi and Saroj were the two symbols of life and nature. The flower Juhi was personified whereas the girl Saroj was being considered as lotus according to its literal meaning and it was a poignant resonance to the evocation of Saroj's life. Nature and life were hand in hand in both the poems and apart from the technical aspects of the poems David Rubin has been successful in bringing out the essence of feelings carried by the original version. He has interpreted both the poems in a way which was quite similar as well unique in its own way. The Juhi Bud and Remembering Saroj, the translated versions of Juhi Ki Kali and Saroj Smriti have successfully denoted the relationship between life, love and nature, the latter ones were thus the most sought poems in Hindi Literature.

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