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**Tripathi, Suryakant “Nirala” (1899? - 1961)**

Suryakant Tripathi, better known as “Nirala,” was a poet, novelist, essayist, translator, and participant in the *Chhayavad* movement of the 1920s and 1930s. He is remembered for innovations in *khari boli*, evident in poems such as राम की शक्ति पूजा (“Ram Ki Shakti Puja”) and his socially conscious commentary, exemplified by poems such as जागो फिर एक बार (“Jago Phir Ek Bar”). Born Suraj Kumar Tevari in Mahishadal, West Bengal, he would later change his name to Suryakant Tripathi and write under the pseudonym “Nirala,” meaning “strange one.” In his childhood, Nirala learned Bengali, which would later open him to the influence of Rabindranath Tagore, while speaking a variant of Hindi at home. Nirala spent his mature years in Calcutta (West Bengal) and Lucknow (Uttar Pradesh), where he found opportunities to work as editor, translator and poet, and spent his last years in Allahabad. Disregarded, poor, and often burdened with tragedy, Nirala wrote on personal problems and social turmoil in a body of work that spanned the pre-independence and post-independence periods.



Suryakant Tripathy, “Nirala”

URL: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Suryakant\_Tripathi\_%27Nirala%27.jpg

The *Chhayavad* movement was in equal parts a departure from *Braj* poetry, which was written in a formerly predominant dialect of Hindi, and the *khari boli* of the *Bharatendu* and *Dwivedi* eras, which was arguably less figurative**.** *Chhayavad* poets delighted in high symbolism and literary artifice in a manner reminiscent of English Romantics. While this movement was heralded for its development of a literary Hindi vocabulary, it was also criticized for its detached and apolitical character, and because it was a product of foreign influence. However, Nirala’s symbolic poetry seems to have been pointedly metaphysical in nature, and he is distinguished among other *Chhayavadi* poets in maintaining a concern for social circumstances. Economic injustice, Brahman hypocrisy and political leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru and Mahatma Gandhi were often the targets of his satire.

अनामिका (1922, *Anamika*) was Nirala’s first volume, but all its poems were republished in the expanded परिमल (1930, *Parimal*), so the latter is considered his first major work. A later volume called अनामिका (1938, *Anamika*) collected an entirely new set of poems, including the notable सरोज स्मृति (“Saroj-smriti”) and “Ram ki Shakti Puja,” the former an elegy for his deceased daughter and the latter an epic fragment based on an episode found in *Devi-Bhagavata Purana*. Later work evinced a transition to simpler, idiomatic Hindi that dealt succinctly with sophisticated concepts, a style first seen in कुकुरमुत्ता (1942, *Kukurmutta*) and perfected in नये पत्ते (1946, *Naye Patte*). During his lifetime, Nirala worked at such journals as *Matvala* and *Samanvay*, the latter a monthly published by the Ramakrishna Mission; and translated work by Vivekananda, Tagore, and others.

**Selected list of works**

**Collected Works**

निराला रचनावली (8 vols., 1983, *Nirala Rachanavali*)

**Poetry**

अनामिका (1922, *Anamika*)

परिमल(1930, *Parimal*)

गीतिका (1936, *Gitika*)

अनामिका (1938, *Anamika*)

तुलसीदास (1938, *Tulsi Das*)

कुकुरमुत्ता (1942, *Kukurmutta*)

अणिमा (1943, *Aṇima*)

बेला (1946, *Bela*)

नये पत्ते (1946, *Naye Patte*)

अर्चना (1950, *Archna*)

आराधना (1953, *Aradhna*)

गीतगुंज (1954, *Gitkunj*)

सांध्य काकली (1969, *Sandhya Kakli*)

**Fiction**

अपसरा (1931, *Apsara*)

अलका (1933, *Alaka*)

निरुपमा (1936, *Nirupma*)

प्रभावती (1936, *Prabhavati*)

कुल्लीभाँट (1939, *Khulibhat*)

बिल्लेसुर बकरिहा (1941, *Billesur Bakriha*)

चोटी की पकड़ (1947, *Choti ki Pakar*)

काले कारनामें (1950, *Kale Karname*)

**Story Collections**

लिली (1933, *Lily*)

सखी (1935, *Sakhi*)

सुकुल की बीवी (1941, *Sukul ki Biwi*)

चतुरी चमार (1945, *Chaturi Chamar*)

देवी (1948, *Devi*)

**Translations**

*A Season of the Earth: Selected Poems of Nirala* (1976)

**References and further reading**

Ramvilas Sharma (1969), Nirala ki Sahitya Sadhana, New Dehli: Rajkamal Prakashan.

David Rubin (1971), “Nirala and the Renaissance of Hindi Poetry,” *The Journal of Asian Studies* 31.1: 111-126.

Heidi Pauwels (2001), “Diptych in Verse: Gender Hybridity, Language Consciousness, and National Identity in Nirala’s Jago Phir Ek Bar,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 121.3: 449-481.