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Translated Interview of Uday Prakash by Rakesh Kumar Mishra

Introduction and translation from Hindi into English by

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Uday Prakash

(Small introduction about author)

Birth—1952, Anuppur (M.P.)

Education—Sagar University, Sagar and J.N.U, New Delhi.

Main works—*Suno Kaarigar, Abutar-Kabutar, Raat Me Harmonium, Ek Bhasha Huaa Karti Hai* (Poetry collections), *Dariyaae Ghoraa, Tirichch, Aur Ant Me Praathnaa, Paul Gomraa Kaa Scooter, Pili Chatri Wali Ladki, Dttatre Kaa Dukh, Mohandas, Areba Preba, Mangosil* (Short-stories collections), *Ishwar Kee Aankh, Apni Unki Baat and Nai Sadi Kaa Panchtantra* (Essays, criticism and collection of interviews).

Books translated into another languages—*Short Shorts Long Shots, Rage Revelry and Romance, A Girl with Golden Parasol* (Awarded PEN Grant, USA, 2005) (English), *Goldene Gruentel* (German).

Translations by Uday Prakash:

Laal Ghaas Par Nile Ghore (Translation of Mikhel Saatrov's play), *Klaa Anubhav* (Translation of Prof. Hariyanaa book on aesthetics), *Indra Gandhi Kee Akhari Ladai* (Hindi translation of Mark Tally and Satish Jacob's book.)

Awards:

Bhaart Bhushan Agrawal Puraskar (1980), Shrikant Verma Smriti Puraskar (1992), Muktibodh Puraskar (1996), Kathaakram Samman (2005), Vanmaali Samman (2008).

Source of this introduction:

(From flap of Kavi Ne Khaa: Chuni Hui Kavitayen by Uday Prakash, Kitabghar, New Delhi. 2008.)

Crop of words on the paper

(Uday Prakash is 'misfit' writer of Hindi. He is a man with many hats. He was lecturer, journalist, administrator, filmmaker, translator, poet and short-story writer. He calls himself poet. Recently, he was in news for returning his Sahitya Akademi Award on September 4, 2015 to show his protest for 'growing intolerance' in present India and largely to oppose silence of Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi on murder of Kannad writer and scholar Dr. M.M. Kulburgi.

Why this specific interview has become crucial to read now because in this interview, which is almost eight years old, he clearly marked what it is to being a writer in India, and how still a devoted and honest Hindi writer or largely any Indian writer is writing, 'within a cruel and immoral power structure of our present time'. It's a historical moment in Hindi and largely in Indian literature when one of its writers stands at FIRST, in award returning movement. But there are many threads of this short interview, which readers will unfold in their own way.

This interview was conducted by **Dr. Dushyant** (young Hindi poet and short-story writer). It was first published in Hindi daily news paper *Rajasthan Patrikaa* (*Ravivaariy*, 20 January, 2008), Page-2.)

Q. What are you writing in these days?

Ans. Preparing for a novel called *Chinaa Baba*. Almost from last two years, I am travelling and taking notes related to this novel. If it would be converted into a story, then it would be a different insight and perception to look at time and reality within all kind of power structures. But there are creative obstacles. It is a kind of challenge. Soon, Kitabghar is going to publish my fourth poems collection with title, *Ek Bhasha Hua Karti Hai*. In these days, I was writing mostly poems. Two other books—*Nayi Sadi Kaa Panchtantra* and *Apni Unki Baat* are going to publish next month. I have also started a fortnightly column in *Jansatta*. My life is

unsystematic and many times debates emerged with powerful ‘writers and intellectuals’. Let us see how long this column will run.

Q. In your short-stories city is as alive as village, how you have managed this?

Ans. I have spent my childhood in a village, a small backward village in Madhya Pradesh. Yes, there were some circumstances which did not allow me to disconnect from my village. Still, I frequently go to my village. I have spent larger part of my life while travelling among villages, cities, small towns and mega cities. Perhaps, in my memories and experiences village and city have occupied equal space. Still my roots are not uprooted anywhere. We all get heat, sunshine, happiness and sorrow and then they become our memories or we can say our life experiences. Perhaps, this is a reason that is why you are saying this. Yes, this is also a notable thing that my readers are scattered everywhere. You can find them in city, village, town or megacities. We cannot separate them in any categorization. I am fortunate.

Q. You write in many genres of verse and prose, which is your favorite genre and why?

Ans. I love all genres. But poetry is very close to me. My stories are extension of my poems. You will not find absence of poetry in them. But sometimes, I like to say something only in stories. From a long time, I am trying to write a play. While writing scripts for films, I felt this desire deeply. May be I will write a play soon. Yes, this is also an interesting thing that my most of stories are converted into plays by young theatre artists and directors and they have performed also. In recent days, performance of *Mohandas* is happening in Punjabi, Hindi, and Marathi and in many other languages also. I got surprised but have deep satisfaction also that I am not part of literary ‘pop and shows’ beside that I am not disconnected with youth of our time and present time circumstances.

Q. What do you think about writer and publisher relationship? What is your personal experience about this?

Ans. I have mixed experiences about writer and publisher relationship. I got those publishers also who did not give me royalty for years and years, they send false statement by overwriting, and they also gave small amount like twenty five hundred to three thousand after a lot of enquire and struggle. They sold editions after editions but always printed first edition on them. But I got such publishers also who gave decent royalty. Sometime they provided advance money also. They stand with me in my difficult days. They acted like my relatives.

Q. What the other thing a writer need?

Ans. What a writer should desire, he is a farmer of our time, a farmer of a language. He is not a professor or an officer, also not controller of any writers' organization. He sow crop of words on the blank paper. There are many forces who want to destroy his crops. There are many aristocrats and *Haakim* (landlords) who want to grab his crops. He is a labor with a pen. If he will not get his labor charges then he will starved. Then he will lose his physical abilities. He will lose his memories. Just believe me, still a devoted and honest Hindi writer is writing within a cruel and immoral power structure.

Q. Today what is position of Hindi short-story and novel?

Ans. Now Hindi short-story is in centre of creative surroundings. The most positive thing is that new short-story writers and new readers of these stories are coming from the different parts of the society. On level of style and structure these young writers are doing lot of experiments. They are not suffering from backwardness of thoughts. They are result of our time and reality and they have their own new insight. The context of their memories and experiences are different. These short-story writers are writers of changing time. But large numbers of these writers are not writing short-story or poetry with any big creative or social responsibility, and they are writing just as time-pass career. You can see there is huge rush in short-story writing. The senior writers are competitive to own tag of representative of these writers. But again the problem is the same. Good, notable and appealing short-story writers are again in a backyard.

Q. What are your experiences as freelance writer?

Ans. From last seventeen years I am living as freelance writer. I have some land in my village, I take care of it. Largely, I am dependent on writing. *Pili Chatri Wali Ladki* was first book for which I got good royalty, it was turning point. Now situations are more in favor after contract for three books with Penguin.

Q. Don't you see the crisis of Hindi readership?

Ans. Absolutely not, I think readers have increased but we should not forget that reading habit of readers has also changed. The new media structure of 80's and 90's has changed the position of the readers. I think according to challenges of new communication mediums writers of our time should try to connect with these mediums. Writings on new situations or

writings which are close to the mass will definitely survive. On my personal level I didn't find crisis of readers.

Q. From Uday Prakash as a writer to a filmmaker, how do you see this transition?

Ans. I think that all these things emerged from the same source, if a writer does not have a visual, musical or verbal sense then how he will become a good writer just by his good and sound language. Interestingly, world does not recognize very good writers as writers but as film directors, for example Ritwik Ghatak or Ingmar Bergman. For me a good movie is as important as a good novel or poetry. If you are able to express your life, your experiences then it does not matter that you are a painter or a writer or a filmmaker. Finally, medium is just medium.