

Echoes of Silence:

Translating Kedarnath Singh's Poetry into English

Abstract

In an age of networks, where paradoxically, we are living in a world torn asunder, translation has emerged as the new cultural space that has the potential to unlock the political differences and bring together the scattered communities in their existential quest of meaning making. In its praxial field, translation allows the 'text' to travel widely across time and space without letting lose its urgency and specificity. Poetry translation is no different from it. To translate poetry is to write it, to live, and experience the creative act, which later results in recreating a poem in a different linguistic milieu, which is at once same in shape and spirit and yet different in its skin and colour. Employing unique linguistic patterns, varying moods and melodies, shifting rhymes and rhythm, poetry, in its dynamic and composite whole, conveys a more nuanced world of semantics and semiotics. Reading poetry, thus, is a deep engagement with the human mind and consciousness; and hence, poetry translation becomes a kinetic process worth investigating. It is in this context that the thesis intends to translate Kedarnath Singh's poetry into English. A recipient of the Jnanpith award in 2013, and the Sahitya Akademi award in 1989, Kedarnath Singh is widely acknowledged as one of the proponents of the Experimental and New Poetry movement in Hindi poetry. Subtle, economical, and allusive, his poetry is replete with polysemic and dialogic elements. Despite the fecundity of his creative oeuvre and his eminent position in Hindi poetry, regrettably, translations of his poems are quite a few and far between. The thesis, therefore, is a modest, yet comprehensive and systematic attempt at translating Kedarnath Singh's poetry into English. Along with the translation, this research also focuses on the stylistic, cultural, and aesthetic challenges involved in the translation of his poems. In the process, the thesis also compares and analyzes the 'shifts of expression' in the available English versions of his poetry.

Keywords: Kedarnath Singh, Hindi Poetry, English Translation, Poetry Translation