

The author has also added poems that describe the very process of writing, especially his poetic musings during the time of the pandemic. Though these poems might initially seem detached from the book's overall content, they justify his poetic ideas which were influenced by the changes happening around the world. One can see a blend of personal and political in the poems of Sen, especially when he narrates how the pandemic has relinquished the existing structures and given rise to new forms. In 'Speaking in Silence', the poet speaks of how social distancing has defied concepts of state and statelessness. The imbalance at the political level coupled with the inadequacy of bureaucrats to work alongside the changing times is confronted through sharp, piercing expressions. The lines, "As the world pandemically wrestles with dry heat of disease and pestilence- profiteers pry, pilfer" (59) reckon with the insensitivity of humans in the age of a global crisis. Above all, the book is a reminder that all man-made structures ranging from social to political and economic are solely dependent on the sustenance of the earth. The author's dissatisfaction with the authorities' negligent attitude towards environmental issues is brought forth through images of uprooted trees, submerged cars, and soaked books floating on streets. The epilogue section serves as a genuine plea for humanity to reinstate hope and embrace healing.

In terms of theme and perspective, *Anthropocene* bears a striking resemblance to Amitav Ghosh's *The Great Derangement*, a brilliant piece of non-fiction that describes how the problem of climate change had been neglected for years. However, the distinctiveness of Sen's book lies in his style of employing poetry and creative non-fiction to address contemporary issues. A variety of poetic forms such as free verse, haiku, couplets, and prose poetry are used to illustrate issues of climate change, pandemic, and isolation. The photographs of landscapes and newspaper reports, added along with the poems, conjoin with his discussions on climate change adding a tinge of visual entreat to the narrative. In this regard, his book has gone a step ahead by showing its readers how stifling issues can be addressed through a creative piece of work. One need not always resort to naturalistic Artaudian inventions to stress the magnanimity of a cause. Rather, its seriousness can be effectively conveyed using surrealistic imagery or techniques of intertextuality which the author had profusely made use of. The rhetorics of narrative are impressive, but at the same time troublesome for readers who are not used to such literary conventions.

The entire book can be framed as a modernist narrative with its free-play of allusions and intertextual elements making the work a perfect combination of creative and critical thinking. In a way, *Anthropocene* is a testament to the power of fiction in addressing serious issues and also an affirmation of the imperishability of art. It bears testimony to the words of Brecht which the author himself has stated in his book- "In the dark times, will there also be singing? Yes, there will also be singing. About the dark times" (52).

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TRANSLATION OF CONTEMPORARY TAIWAN LITERATURE IN A CROSS-CULTURAL CONTEXT: A TRANSLATION STUDIES PERSPECTIVE. By Szu-Wen Kung. London, NY: Routledge, 2021. ix+137 pp.

Translation Studies has gained academic respectability and established itself a distinctive terrain of its own. During this process, it has advocated closer relations with related disciplines borrowing from some and in turn cross-fertilizing others. Far from being considered merely as a minor branch of comparative literary study, or a specific area of linguistics, translation studies is today

regarded as an independent field of study by right. As Holmes (1972/1988) asserts, “in response to the manifold trajectories of enquiry, translation studies have taken different approaches or turns by borrowing theoretical frame-works and concepts from other disciplines to study the sophisticated phenomenon of translating and translation”. Such moves toward interdisciplinarity allows translation studies to facilitate new angles of examining translation and have opened up a variety of research avenues in exploring translation as a cross-cultural activity.

It is against the backdrop of this interdisciplinarity that Szu-Wen Kung incorporates conceptual frameworks originating from linguistics, sociology and cultural studies to construe the translation activity of contemporary Taiwan literature. He provides an integrated discussion of both the descriptive account and analytical examination of the translation phenomenon of contemporary Taiwan literature in the Anglo-American context. Kung considers the English translation of Taiwan literature in the context of cross-cultural exchange not only as a linguistic act, but also as a complex cultural, ideological and political maneuver involving negotiations, interpretations, compromises and interactions between two cultures and among various translation players. Through thematic discussions of selected case studies, the four-chapter book uses four main theoretical approaches; sociological theories, cultural and rewriting theories, English as a lingua franca, and social and performative linguistics to uncover the world of Contemporary Taiwan literature translation.

In the introduction, Kung discusses the interdisciplinarity of Translation Studies from James Holmes’ (1972) seminal paper ‘Name and nature of Translation Studies’ where he proposed to treat Translation Studies as a discipline proper, to Bassnett (2002) who recognized translation studies for its great potential as ‘not merely a minor branch of comparative literary study, nor yet a specific area of linguistics, but a vastly complex field with many far-reaching ramifications’ (2002: 11). Kung argues that by accentuating the multi-faceted ramifications of the translation activity, the epistemological quest of translation phenomenon within the field has gone beyond the sterile debates of literal translation versus free translation. (p. 3)

The advent of the cultural turn has particularly unleashed interdisciplinary research interest in translation studies. This interdisciplinary approach is suitable for the study of the translation of Taiwan literature as it allows for the exploration of a range of interrelated yet distinct points of discussion, amounting to a redefinition of translation and its practice.

The translation of Chinese literature from Taiwan has been carried out for over half a century with two major trends; translations initiated by the source culture and commerce-based translations. The former was carried out with the purpose of promoting selected literary works from Taiwan in the global community, particularly in the Anglo-American cultural sphere, while the later was carried out by individuals for commercial purposes. Source culture-initiated translations faced several challenges both at the micro-level of textual transference and individual interference, and at the macro-level of socio-cultural influence since they were carried out largely by the less dominant culture and exported to the dominant one. Commerce-based translations faced the challenge of finding publishers partly because it is often costlier to publish a translated book than the indigenous book since the publishers need to pay for translation rights. (p. 6)

In Chapter one, Kung applies the sociological theories of prominent French sociologists, Pierre Bourdieu (Theory of Social Practice) and Bruno Latour’s (Action Network Theory ANT) to conceptualize the translation of Taiwan literature as a social practice that is inseparable from the translation agents’ mediation and integrally associated with the social context within which translation takes place. The chapter begins by defining various sociological approaches in translation studies over the last twenty-years and offers methodological concepts and descriptive strategies that illuminate the social nature of translation, including the composition of an open discourse on translation and the social profiles of translation players.

By conceptualizing translation as an act that is deeply rooted in the socio-cultural contexts in which it is performed, Kung seeks to bring to light a number of salient issues amongst which is the

role of translation in the production of cultural goods within a global context. The following sections explore the subsequent development of the field through significant case studies of the production of translated Taiwan literature by examining the pioneering efforts of individual players in translating and producing Taiwan literature. He shows how the solitary work of key translation actors like Mrs. Nancy Ing and Professor Pang-Yuan Chi (two of the pioneers who initiated the translation of Taiwan literature) was vital for the subsequent formation of a network for the translation of Taiwan literature and its construction as a field. The subsequent discussion shifts to more systematic projects entailing the translation and promotion of literature from Taiwan informed by Bourdieu's concepts of capital and field, and by Latour's ANT. The analysis focuses on the roles and social influences of different translation players within the translation process, especially on the process of network formation. Kung argues that the social standing of the individual translation agents, especially their cultural and social capital, were critical factors influencing the early development of translation work.

It is argued that a systematic approach for the production of translated Taiwan literature can be more effectively achieved via the consistent participation of actors with varying social power. Kung discusses cross-cultural networks in the production of translations through two exemplary case studies that illuminate the process of producing translations of Taiwan literature commencing from the 1990s and continuing to the present. These were; *Taiwan Literature: English Translation Series* a journal that translates and publishes Taiwan literature of various genres and *Modern Chinese Literature from Taiwan*. The case of *Taiwan Literature: English Translation Series* illustrates how a translation production process that involves actors with varying resources and degrees of social influence can operate more efficiently in achieving the founding objective of the key actor who initiated these activities.

Chapter Two explores the translation of Taiwan literature from the perspective of the cultural turn. It conceptualizes how the original text can be rewritten in a manner in which the embedded source culture is represented, particularly in the context of ideological and aesthetic factors that influence the translation production process. This chapter also presents an examination of the ideological and aesthetic expectations of the target culture towards translations. It simultaneously shows how translation functions as a form of rewriting that contributes to the generation of cultural initiatives for assimilating the translated literature into the poetics of the target culture. The case studies presented underscore the theoretical value of applying cultural approaches in translation research, which enables researchers to extend well beyond mere comparisons between the originals and the translations.

After theorizing the cultural turn and the relevance of paratexts (the sub-textual and textual elements within or around the key texts) to translation studies, Kung analyses how the ideological perspectives of the concerned translation actors can influence the selection of the source text to be translated and the image of the source text to be re-represented. In the next section, Kung examines translation as a rewriting process in the context of anthologization and paratext. Lefevere (1992b) considers 'anthologization as a form of rewriting like translation, one of the key methods through which translation players collect, edit, and repackage the original text as translations. After presenting the views of various writers, Kung states that anthologisation has been widely used to represent literary works from Taiwan in the form of English translations. The discussion provides a general overview of the process whereby the image associated with a particular literature is reshaped over time, which in turn reflects the social, cultural, and literary evolution of the source culture.

In Chapter three, Kung approaches the translation of Taiwan literature from the perspective of English as a lingua franca (ELF). He examines how the role of ELF can impact on the final presentation of a translated work with reference to a case study of the translation of the Taiwanese novel, *Wintry Night*. Characteristically neutral and with more variability in terms of its language functions, Kung argues that English evidences a strong tendency to be substantially negotiated, integrated, and adapted inter-lingually as well as inter-culturally, depending on the communicative purpose and context.

As the prevailing language and the most important lingua franca globally, English is a vehicular language that can be more broadly conceptualized. A textual analysis of translations enables a reconsideration of the paradoxical dual roles that English has been assumed to have. The fluent translation discourse revealed in the case studies seemingly confirms Venuti's argument relating to 'the violence of translation' (2008: 13), as the dominant discourse of domestication is evident in the translation of *Wintry Night*. The case study reveals, the source text is reconstituted in alignment with the beliefs, values, and representations entailed in the English language.

Chapter Four uses linguistic approaches to examine the translation of Taiwan literature which Kung describes as 'an act that is performed on the language in which the literary work, imbued with a cacophonous conversational chorus, is conveyed. (p. 103) The chapter begins with a dualist view on the linguistic approaches to translation studies. The debate centers on the challenging and inevitable complex relationship between translation and linguistics. On the one hand, linguistic scholars like Catford (1965/2000) have argued that a theory of language must be applied in any attempts to theorize translation; that is, only linguistic theories can adequately explain the phenomenon of translation while other scholars have consistently argued that linguistic activity is indeed a translation phenomenon, but only partially.

According to the first approach, only linguistic theories can elucidate translation phenomena. An examination of translation based on this approach entails recognition and delineation of language variations in different situations. According to the second approach, linguistic theories can be applied to examine translation itself, viewed as integral as opposed to highly limited elements confined within the text to be translated. The author goes on to present a comparison of performative linguistics and constative linguistics and their application to translation studies. In contrast to the formalistic and depersonalized approach of constative linguistics that focuses on the 'state of affairs' or a rule-based description of language, performative linguistics is concerned with how a language is used in real-world contexts. These contexts are inseparable from the interrelations among multiple language users as the speakers, writers, and receivers of a language, who interpret both spoken and written utterances. The contexts in which languages are used are among the most important considerations when examining language phenomena from the perspective of performative linguistics.

Kung uses *Rose, Rose, I Love You*, authored by ChenHo Wang, a nativist writer, and its English version translated by Howard Goldblatt as a case study for the investigation. This novel is known for its adroit application of multilingualism, spanning Chinese, Taiwanese, Japanese, and English, which are spoken by the characters in the novel. Overall, this chapter examines how the literary translator mediates linguistic and dialectical language features, revealing how the textual mediation of the originally performed source language is creatively reperformed in a cross-cultural context.

Through the lens of translation studies, Kung in this book demonstrates how the interdisciplinarity of translation studies offers substantial insights into fundamental and intricate issues concerning translation as a cross-cultural activity. The book represents one of the first endeavors to establish the overall conceptualization of the translation of Taiwan literature in the Western context and provides systematic insights into the translation phenomenon of Taiwan literature and its implications. It contributes to a clearer understanding of the translations of culture-specific literature as linguistic and cultural representations. It is a useful read to scholars and students working on translation and cultural studies, China/Taiwan literature studies, and literature studies in cross-cultural contexts.

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COMPARATIVE EVERYDAY AESTHETICS: EAST-WEST STUDIES IN CONTEMPORARY LIVING. By Eva Kit Wah Man and Jeffrey Petts (Eds). Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2023. 296 pp.

Does beauty reside in that which is exceptional and must aesthetics concern itself only with what gets labelled as “art”? A recent edited volume identifies newer ways of experiencing beauty and practising aesthetic theory by drawing attention to everydayness as the space of the beautiful. Edited by Eva Kit Wah Man and Jeffrey Petts, *Comparative Everyday Aesthetics: East-West Studies in Contemporary Living* expands the breadth of philosophical engagement to everyday life and thus breaks the distinction between the exceptional and the banal. The result is not just insights into the loosening up of the category of pleasure but an enhancement of hope for and meaning of pleasure by general readers who may not be grounded in aesthetics as a discipline. In the examples shared in the individual chapters of the volume, beauty becomes an all-pervasive thing, present in every detail of life as it is lived.

The six sections in the book speak of different aspects of everydayness that deserve a rich engagement from people as well as scholars. These are aspects that make abstract concepts of art or beauty concrete as manifested in Daoist pursuits, nature, food and drinking, technology, and relationships. A very dazzling instance is that of tea. Tea, in itself, might be of interest to connoisseurs who can identify the different types of taste of various kinds. But what makes tea a subject of inquiry from the lens of everyday aesthetics is the set of details that emerge in comparisons between cultures as they drink tea. For the English, inventing handles for their tea cups was a necessity because they wanted to avoid contact with the hot surface of the cup. However, for the Chinese, who never saw the need for one, a handle would interfere with the intimacy a drinker would experience with the cup when drinking tea. Similarly, tea easily fit into the idea of English breakfast while for the Chinese, tea time is a separate hour because tea tasting for them was “the pinnacle of the art of living” (162). The Japanese bring a different twist to the practice of tea drinking: they have tea houses where it becomes a matter of performance. The two chapters on tea (one by Yanping Gao and another by Tanehisa Otabe) and the art of using chopsticks (Richard Shusterman) relate the sophistication of consuming food to the sophistication involved in the hermeneutics of food and pleasure.

The lens of comparison brings a lot of insights into concepts at hand. For instance, one realises that the difference between Eastern and Western aesthetics does not lie in the heavy critical theory import that the latter is anchored in; it also lies in the way the cultures make sense of beauty. For instance, for the Japanese, art is about ways to beautify life as a whole and because modern European art is about separating art from life, this art has been on decline. While that is a very provocative statement or comparison to make, it must be seen in the context of relative perception of art that the author of the concerned chapter seeks to make. Another instance of comparativism is the observation that Eastern philosophies such as Buddhism and Confucianism do not see the everyday in opposition to the exceptional or the artistic for according to them, that which is mundane is actually “endowed with greatness” (175) and needs to be embraced. In other words, the idea of everyday