

ANTHROPOCENE: CLIMATE CHANGE, CONTAGION AND CONSOLATION. By Sudeep Sen. London: Pippa Rann Books and Media, 2021. 176 pp.

Poet, critic, and translator, Sudeep Sen's latest collection *Anthropocene: Climate Change, Contagion, Consolation* is a creative response to the issues of climate change, pandemic recuperation, and the role of a poet in global crisis. As an author with multifaceted talents, Sen's poetic craftsmanship along with his photographic skills have combined to produce an aesthetic commentary on the effects of climate change; an issue that demands immediate redressal. Written in the backdrop of a raging pandemic, the book catalogues the issues threatening the natural world, including climate change, pollution, geological cataclysm, and above all, the stoic attitude of people amid a global catastrophe, through a range of poems, photographs, and creative non-fiction.

Reminiscent of an anthology's sectarian divide, the poems in the collection are divided into nine sections that deal with the repercussions of climate change, the zeitgeist of the pandemic, and the creative process behind the art of writing. In the section 'Anthropocene: climate change', Sen describes the effects of rising temperatures "desiccating our throats, parched lungs heaving, breathless, killing us" (39). The sharp, cutting-edge imagery, with a blend of realism and imagination, exhorts one to realise the seriousness of the present scenario. In 'Heat Sand', the poet speaks of the "deathly touch" of weather, invoked by man's callousness (40). The privileging of technology and luxury over nature is mocked in 'Concrete Graves' where "skeletal skyscrapers, unfinished flyovers collapse prematurely" (43). In 'Love in the Time of Corona', the poet brings our attention to the condition of migrant workers during the pandemic whose "hungry footsteps on empty highways accentuate an irony- social distancing a privilege only powerful can afford" (52). Here, the poem mocks the exasperating laws brought in by the authorities, such as 'social distancing' and 'work from home' which is unthinkable for people who work in fields and live in ghettos. It seems that the poet is quite taken aback by the segregating aspect of these laws that turn a blind eye to the marginalised. The ironic response of humans to a disease that shows no distinction, killing rich and poor alike, is brought forth through crude, painstaking imagery.

In addition to his response to climate change and the pandemic, the book also encapsulates the author's ruminations on the art of writing. In the section 'Lockdown: Reading, Writing', the poet speaks of his confinement to the world of papers, pens, and books. This 'self-imposed quarantine', as mentioned by the poet, served as an ideal ground for his poetic creation. At the same time, the problems outside adversely affected his health, which he tries to combat through his poems. The poem 'Asthma' recounts his troubles with asthma, which appears as a synecdoche for humanity grappled by pollution. In 'Fever Pitch' a creative piece of non-fiction, Sen narrates with scientific precision the body's mechanism to cope with the rising temperature including a fantastic detailing of the working of vaccines and thermometers; a symbolic expression of his philosophy on art and life. As a keen observer of life and objects, Sen's poems capture every aspect of change taking place in the natural world such as the changes happening to the sea, soil, forests, and flowers as a result of rising temperatures.

Apart from the changes happening in the outside world, the poet also ponders upon the inner turmoil faced by humans in the vent of a grave pandemic. The psychological trauma inflicted due to man's inability to adapt to such abrupt changes is intertwined with the poet's own experience of living in quarantine. According to the poet, isolation is a blissful experience when it is voluntarily chosen. Seeking solitude by oneself and its imposition by an external agency are two different things that the author has demarcated through his own experience. While the former is welcoming and blissful, the latter is a stifling and gruesome experience.

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