Orbis Idearum, Volume 13, Issue 1 (2025), Pages 43-64
ISSN: 2353-3900

PLANT-THINKING IN THE ANTHROPOCENE: MEDITATION, MEMORY, AND THE HISTORY OF ECOLOGICAL IDEAS

Queen Sarkar
Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology
queen.sarkarfcm@kiit.ac.in

Ananya Mishra
Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology
2481216@kiit.ac.in

ABSTRACT

Historians often focus on a specific period, tradition, or geographical region, yet the movement of ideas across time and space transcends such boundaries. In the contemporary world, dominated by ecological crisis and existential concerns, humanity's relationship with nature is redefined in literature, science, and spirituality. This article explores the intersection of these realms by tracing the evolution of ecological thought through the works of Sudeep Sen and Sumana Roy. In their writings—*Anthropocene: Climate Change, Contagion, Consolation* and *How I Became a Tree*—the authors provide profound meditative interventions, seeking introspective engagement with contemporary human challenges. Through a historiological lens, this paper reconstructs the intellectual genealogy of meditation, ecology, and humanity's evolving response to the Anthropocene, drawing on the interdisciplinary framework of plant humanities. The works of Sen and Roy are examined not as isolated literary creations, but as part of a broader intellectual tradition that explores human responses to ecological and psychological crises. This research traces how their reflections on meditation, rooted in ancient spiritual practices, contribute to the contemporary discourse on deep ecology, offering remedies for emotional desolation in a world increasingly marked by instability. This paper examines how ideas from diverse intellectual traditions have converged in these works, offering a deeper understanding of the human-nature relationship in the Anthropocene within the broader framework of the history of ideas.

KEYWORDS: Anthropocene; Meditation; History of Ideas; Plant Humanities; Deep Ecology; Metta

1. Introduction

The history of ideas offers a conceptual framework situated at the crossroads of multiple disciplines, capable of enriching every branch of historical inquiry. A foundational contribution to this approach can be found in Arthur Lovejoy's *Essays in the History of Ideas* (2019 [1948]), where he introduced the method of tracing 'unit ideas'—recurring conceptual elements that evolve across different historical and intellectual contexts. Lovejoy's work not only challenged disciplinary boundaries but also emphasised the continuity and transformation of ideas over time. Drawing from this interdisciplinary impulse, the current study traces the evolution of ecological consciousness through literary and philosophical traditions, examining how ideas about nature, humanity, and responsibility have moved across time and intellectual landscapes.

One such concept at the centre of contemporary ecological debates is the Anthropocene—the proposition that human activities have become a dominant geophysical force shaping the planet's systems. Initially formulated as a didactic tool to highlight the unpredictable and often irreversible consequences of human interventions in both human and non-human spheres, the idea of the Anthropocene has since evolved into a powerful, if paradoxical, symbol of human centrality and vulnerability. Its historiography can be traced back to early nineteenth-century 'Naturphilosophie', which reimagined plant life as dynamic and sentient, laying important groundwork for later developments in the natural sciences. Thinkers such as Schelling and Goethe challenged mechanistic models by proposing a vision of nature as inherently purposive and animated by internal principles of development and transformation (Cooper 2020). This conception not only laid the groundwork for subsequent advances in the natural sciences but also prefigured modern ecological thought by emphasising the deep interconnectedness of all life forms. By the early twentieth century, the discourse had shifted toward the philosophy of *deep ecology*, which emphasised the intrinsic worth of all living beings and moved beyond shallow, human-centred conservationist approaches. Yet, the very act of naming an epoch after humanity demands critical reflection. The concept of the Anthropocene, despite its intention to humble human self-conception, risks reaffirming anthropocentric narratives. Its etymology—derived from the Ancient Greek *anthropos* (human) and *kainos* (new)—serves as a reminder that the geological time scale itself is a human attempt to categorise and interpret the forces of nature (Pavid, 2023). Thus, the conceptual and terminological history of the Anthropocene is as much a part of intellectual history as it is of environmental science.

1.1. Emergence of the idea of the Anthropocene

The contemporary usage of the term 'Anthropocene' emerged in 2000, when Paul Crutzen and Eugene Stoermer introduced it in their article for the *Global Change Newsletter* titled "The Anthropocene." Building on this, Crutzen's influential piece in *Nature* (2002), "Geology of Mankind," brought wider attention to the concept. Crutzen (2002) argued that humanity's activities, particularly in climate change, deforestation, energy consumption, air pollution, and fisheries exploitation, have exerted such profound impacts on the Earth system that a new geological epoch may have begun. Strikingly, Crutzen also suggested the potential necessity of large-scale geoengineering to 'optimise' climate processes. His framing was rooted in Earth System Science (ESS), an interdisciplinary field that examines the Earth as an integrated, evolving system. ESS combines in situ and satellite-based monitoring with computational models to study the interactions between physical, biological, chemical, and human components.

1.2. Early Conceptual Foundations: Noösphere

Long before the formal articulation of the Anthropocene, early twentieth-century thinkers had begun to conceptualise humanity's increasing influence on the planet. In the 1920s, biogeochemist Vladimir Vernadsky and philosopher Teilhard de Chardin introduced the notion of the 'Noösphere,' proposing that human thought and action were becoming dominant forces shaping Earth's future. Teilhard writes:

> The idea is that of the Earth not only becoming covered by myriads of grains of thought but becoming enclosed in a single thinking envelope, to form, functionally, no more than a single vast grain of thought on the sidereal scale, the plurality of individual reflections grouping themselves together and reinforcing one another in the act of a single unanimous reflection (Teilhard de Chardin 1966, 251–252).

The concept of the Noösphere anticipated the intertwined nature of human consciousness, planetary dynamics, and geopolitical realities, a theme that resonates in contemporary environmental debates. Recent scholarship revisits this concept through the framework of 'Big History,' situating the Noösphere within a planetary and evolutionary perspective. Campa, Corbally, and Rappaport (2021) argue that the Noösphere is not a singular or static phenomenon but rather a dynamic interaction of multiple, converging spheres—technological, ecological, and cognitive—that collectively shape Earth's future. Their theory of 'merging noospheres' highlights the growing complexity of human

influence, suggesting that our cognitive and technological capacities must be understood in relation to their systemic impacts on planetary life and evolution. This contemporary rearticulation of the Noösphere offers a critical lens for examining human agency within the conceptual framework of the Anthropocene and the ethical dimensions of our role within Earth's unfolding history.

1.3. Conceptual Debates: Is the Anthropocene a New Idea?

Despite these early intimations, scholars such as Clive Hamilton and Jacques Grinevald (2015) have argued that the Anthropocene, as formulated in the early 2000s, has no true antecedents. In their paper "Was the Anthropocene Anticipated?" they assert that the concept arises from a novel, interdisciplinary understanding of the Earth as a dynamic, evolving planet. Although earlier ideas—such as those focusing on human impacts on land-based ecosystems—laid partial groundwork, they were often optimistic, emphasising human progress rather than planetary crisis. It was not until the late twentieth century, with advances in Earth System Science, that a systemic view of human-induced planetary change could emerge. At the same time, thinkers like Will Steffen, Jacques Geineval, and John McNeill (2011) have pointed out the significance of earlier frameworks, noting that the Industrial Revolution, around 1800, marks a plausible starting point for this new epoch. Thus, while the Anthropocene as a formal scientific concept is recent, its intellectual seeds were sown across centuries.

1.4. Critiques of the Anthropocene Discourse

However, the Anthropocene narrative is not without its critics. Some scholars caution that the very concept can unwittingly reinforce the anthropocentrism it seeks to critique. Audra Mitchell (2014), for example, observes that:

> The existing concept of the 'Anthropocene' magnifies and sometimes even valorises radical anthropocentrism, reverence for human agency, and the desire to gain mastery over nature. In fact, instead of calling for an end to the logic that has created potentially irreversible change, it expresses an anxiety that humans have not yet made the world in their image.

Such critiques suggest that the Anthropocene framework risks perpetuating the myth of human exceptionalism, framing the planet primarily as a space for human engineering and domination rather than coexistence and restraint. From the perspective of Earth System Science, the Anthropocene represents not a triumph of human agency but an era of profound uncertainty. As

the Earth transitions from the relative climatic stability of the Holocene to an epoch characterised by climatic volatility and socio-environmental transformations, ESS emphasises the planet's complex, nonlinear behaviour. Simon and Thomas (2022) argue that the Anthropocene reveals a form of 'non-knowledge'—a rational ignorance intertwined with uncertainty and ontological indeterminacy. Contrary to narratives of a 'good Anthropocene' promoted by techno-optimists, the emerging reality challenges the assumption that scientific knowledge alone can manage or master Earth systems. Instead, it confronts humanity with the limits of its foresight and control.

1.5. The Ecomodernist Perspective and Its Limits: A Critical Turn

The apolitical treatment of the Anthropocene, epitomised by ecomodernist perspectives, extols a techno-optimistic vision of human mastery over nature. Ecomodernists posit the notion of a 'Good Anthropocene' (Adjaye 2015), heralding it as "the beginning of a new geological era ripe with human-directed opportunity" (Ellis 2011, 43). However, in these uncertain times, such proclamations appear increasingly hollow, as they gloss over the profound consequences and risks associated with human-induced changes. The proposition of 'loving our monsters,' as suggested by some thinkers, becomes a precarious endeavour, one that acknowledges the perilous side effects of technological advancements.

Since its inception, the Anthropocene discourse has swung between two distinct domains: the first, a sanitised scientific debate focused on empirical analysis, and the second, a moral and ethical exploration of human responsibility. As the idea of the Anthropocene takes centre stage in contemporary cultural and philosophical discourse, it provokes a profound re-evaluation of humanity's relationship with the environment. This introspective exploration extends across a range of disciplines, from geology and climate science to philosophy, literature, and social theory. It underscores the far-reaching and global impact of human actions, which extend well beyond climate change to encompass the diminishment of biodiversity, shifts in biogeochemical cycles, and the extensive, unsustainable extraction of resources. The anchors of ecological degradation have sunk deep into the sea of civilisation, inextricably entwining human development with environmental decline.

While scholarly debate has not yet reached a consensus on the precise moment when the Anthropocene fully emerged as a distinct geological age, the environmental degradation that took root in the twentieth century is widely acknowledged as the trajectory leading toward ecological degradation. In considering the complexities of the Anthropocene, it becomes evident that humanity has arrived at a juncture marked by both discernible and metaphorical

boundaries. This pivotal moment challenges traditional narratives of progress and mastery, demanding a deliberate acknowledgement of our inherent limitations and the gaps in our understanding. In this critical context, the literary works of Sudeep Sen and Sumana Roy, specifically *Anthropocene: Climate Change, Contagion, Consolation* (2021) and *How I Became a Tree* (2017), assume scholarly significance. These works offer nuanced insights into humanity's position within the Anthropocene, prompting a deeper understanding of our role in shaping and responding to the challenges of this epoch. Amidst the looming threats of ecological collapse, war, and a persistent pandemic, the literary creations of Sen and Roy foster a more intimate communion with nature. Their intellectual inquiry into the Anthropocene extends beyond passive observation, inviting a scholarly examination of the complex interplay between human agency, ecological dynamics, and the broader implications for our collective future.

A literary titan of the Indian poetry world, Sudeep Sen, in his latest collection, *Anthropocene: Climate Change, Contagion, Consolation*, betokens the disappearance of the self amid widespread distress and clamour. Divided into nine striking sections titled Prologue, Anthropocene, Pandemic, Contagion, Atmosphere, Holocene, Consolation, Lockdown, and Epilogue, this multi-genre book of prose, poetry, and photography structurally bears a resemblance to a body's journey from illness to health. This journey, however, is not only restricted to one's physical well-being but also accentuates psychological and spiritual well-being. Sen's poems echo the anxieties of estrangement and alienation amidst a world that is slowly diminishing its distances. The collection, one could argue, is magnificent and notable in more ways than one. On one hand, the book addresses a diverse range of issues—the ravages of the climate crisis and the pandemic, racism and fascism, which demand our immediate attention today, on the other hand, it paints an honest fabric of the contemporary times—anxiety, depression, addictions, anger, fears and phobias, and serves as an emotional repository of these convoluted times. To quote Sen:

> What convoluted times we live in now –
> where being inhuman is human, where free-
> thinking is dissent, where being democratic is
> anti-national. Even the 'black box' of a crashed airplane
> storing facts cannot reveal the facts – everything is done in secrecy,
> everything is subterfuge to continue oppressing
> the subaltern, everything is about power or the lack thereof (Sen 2021, 69).

Sudeep Sen intricately intertwines contemplation and exploration of the entire cycle of human life and the afterlife with a profound connection to na-

ture. In Sen's depiction of the Anthropocene, nature unfolds as a captivating and immersive experience. Among the various elements, trees stand out as a recurring motif, taking on diverse and captivating forms. Sen vividly describes them, comparing them to a "banyan tree with tertiary trunks, and branches resembling fused stalactites and stalagmites," (Sen 2021, 162), painting a rich picture of their intricate structure. The imagery extends to the Neem tree branches, which Sen portrays as shrinking "like emaciated skeletal figures" in front of his study, creating a poignant and visually striking representation that mirrors the emotional depth he aims to convey (Sen 2021, 38). Furthermore, the leaves contribute to this descriptive narrative, with Sen noting how they "fold, curl, bleed, and wipe," capturing the nuanced and expressive essence of the natural world as an integral aspect of the Anthropocene experience (Sen 2021, 37).

Sumana Roy's *How I Became a Tree*, undertakes a profound exploration of the intricate relationship between green spaces and mental well-being, employing a distinctive form of meditation. Drawing inspiration from the expressed desire of the Polish poet-novelist Czesław Miłosz, who yearned "not that I want to be a god or a hero. Just to change into a tree, grow for ages, not hurt anyone," Roy's book stands as a testament to her meticulous craftsmanship and rhetorical finesse (Miłosz 1980). The narrative within *How I Became a Tree* examines the complexities of the human psyche, offering an insightful examination of what it entails to live according to 'tree time' in a world characterised by deadlines. Her text encapsulates the age-old traditions of the Indian landscape and articulates this temporal perspective, reminiscent of mindfulness, with the notion of living in the present moment: "I wandered aimlessly through philosophical discussions on time until it came to me one night, in my salty sleep: carpe diem, seize the moment, living in the present—that was tree time, a life without worries for the future or regret for the past" (Roy 2017, 6). This perspective echoes the concept of mindfulness and symbolises the idea of being firmly rooted in the present moment, analogous to a tree deeply entrenched in the soil. The notion of tree time serves as a poignant reminder of the significance of harmonising with nature, liberating oneself from human-imposed temporal constraints. As a freelance writer, poet, novelist, and professor based in Siliguri, Sumana Roy employs a multidisciplinary approach in probing urgent questions concerning human survival. Her engagement with philosophy, spiritual urgency, botanical research, literature, sociopolitical history, and tradition enriches the narrative, offering a nuanced perspective on the intricate relationship between humanity and the plant world.

Sudeep Sen's *Anthropocene* and Sumana Roy's *How I Became a Tree* converge at a critical crossroads, elucidating the profound concept of 'Plant Thinking.' Through their respective works, these authors embark on a philosophical exploration, mapping the ontological and ethically compelling mo-

dalities of life. Their inquiry resonates with the insights put forth by Professor Michael Marder in his seminal work, *Plant-Thinking: A Philosophy of Vegetal Life*, wherein he writes, "plant-thinking is the non-cognitive, non-ideational, and non-imagistic mode of thinking proper to plants, as much as the process of bringing human thought itself back to its roots and rendering it plantlike" (Marder 2013). Marder's assertion that plant-thinking involves bringing human thought back to its roots and rendering it plant-like resonates throughout the works of Sen and Roy. They adopt Marder's philosophical lens, exploring the implications of embracing a mode of thinking that transcends conventional cognitive and ideational frameworks. Emphasising the difference between plant and human agency, Marder draws attention to the anthropomorphising philosophy that had previously considered human life as superior. The two books under consideration explore the existence of plants as entities with a unique mode of being, challenging the anthropocentric worldview that often dominates philosophical discourse. By acknowledging the agency and vitality of plants, the authors open up a realm of understanding where the boundaries between human and non-human life blur, emphasising the interconnectedness of all living entities. Both works are seminal in the burgeoning field of plant humanities that highlight this marginalised section and turn towards a study of the arboreal. At the crux of both works lies the need to employ plant thinking that might enable one to be able to hear the distinct voice of plants.

Anthropocene and *How I Became a Tree* unfurl within a fertile terrain of ideas, folk narratives, and metaphoric depictions of trees, plants, and forests in literature, religion, and life. In their literary realm, the authors contemplate virtues such as kindness, consideration, tolerance, and silence, akin to the nuanced behaviours found within the arboreal domain—a resonance with the Buddhist concept of 'Maitri,' denoting the cultivation of benevolence. Readers and researchers, engaged in this exploration, encounter a subtle 'process of becoming' akin to a tree within the emergent Anthropocene epoch. This context prompts a deliberate focus on the theory of 'becoming' through 'Metta' meditation in the next section.

2. THE PROCESS OF BECOMING

Within the phenomenological framework of intentionality, it is posited that conscious awareness inherently carries intention. This theory aligns with certain aspects of Buddhist philosophy, particularly within 'Nichiren' Buddhism. In Nichiren Buddhism, for instance, the concept of *rebirth* reflects an interconnectedness with nature, and this idea dovetails with Western Enlightenment thought, where the *self* and *identity* were increasingly seen as fluid and malleable (Murti, 2013). Buddhist philosophy, especially in the teachings of

Buddhaghosa in the *Visuddhimagga*, presents Contact as the active transformation of consciousness through interaction with the external world, suggesting an interconnection between mind, body, and the environment (Buddhaghosa, 1999). This notion challenges the dualistic metaphysical views of the Enlightenment period, where thinkers like René Descartes famously separated mind and body, but also inadvertently laid the groundwork for a more fluid conception of selfhood in later philosophy.

While Descartes emphasised the separation of mind and body, the fluidity of selfhood emerged more clearly in the later works of philosophers such as John Locke. Locke, in his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (2008), proposed that personal identity is defined by the continuity of consciousness, a concept that allows for the possibility of transformation over time. This aligns with Buddhist ideas of impermanence and the cyclical nature of existence. However, unlike Locke, Buddhist thought rejects a static, permanent self and embraces the constant flux of identity. Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* (2003) further develops the notion that human perception and identity are shaped by structures of the mind, but without incorporating non-human elements such as the natural world, which Buddhism often emphasises. The phenomenological tradition, especially Edmund Husserl's work on intentionality, offers a paradigm in which consciousness is always directed toward an object. Husserl's *Ideas I* (1913) articulates this notion of intentionality, where human consciousness is not self-contained but always engaged with the world. This framework is particularly relevant when we juxtapose it with Buddhist teachings on *emptiness* (Śūnyatā). In both traditions, identity is understood as dynamic and relational, continually shaped by external forces.

Moreover, Buddhist philosophy's conception of rebirth moves beyond a simple religious or metaphysical framework; it functions as a metaphor for the constant process of self-transformation. This idea echoes the critiques of personal identity put forth by John Locke, particularly in his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690), where he argues that personal identity is grounded in memory and continuity of consciousness, not in the substance of the body. Locke's theory of the self as a fluid entity dependent on experience and memory challenges the fixed, static notion of identity that dominated earlier Christian metaphysics. The Buddhist notion of *non-self* (Anātman) posits that identity is not a permanent essence but rather a fluid and ever-changing condition, a view that is implicitly present in Locke's theory of personal identity but more explicitly articulated in Buddhist thought.

The concept of 'becoming' and the metaphors of 'growth' and 'decay' are also evident in the way trees have been used symbolically across cultures to represent personal transformation. In Buddhist texts, trees are often depicted as symbols of stability and interconnectedness, reinforcing the impermanence of all things. This metaphor finds a parallel in the Western literary tradition,

especially in the works of Romantic poets like William Wordsworth and Ralph Waldo Emerson. In *Lines Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey* (1798), Wordsworth uses the imagery of trees to express a form of spiritual renewal and a return to nature. For Emerson, in *Nature* (1836), the natural world—embodied in trees and landscapes—serves as a site of personal and philosophical regeneration. These writers draw on the tree as a symbol of continuity, growth, and interconnectedness, aligning with Buddhist teachings that emphasise impermanence and the cyclical nature of existence.

Building on earlier discussions of ecological consciousness and human-nature entanglement, this section explores the idea of the process of becoming, particularly in relation to the ontological parallels between human beings and trees. It poses questions such as: Can meaningful comparisons be drawn between the essence of human existence and arboreal life? Is it possible for humans to undergo a transformative journey analogous to becoming a tree? If so, what intricate pathways shape this ineffable process? Drawing on the phenomenological concept of intentionality and insights from Nichiren Buddhism, the analysis contributes to the broader discourse on the interconnectedness of human consciousness and the natural environment. The integration of Nichiren Buddhist practice with a history of ideas portrait implies the existence of a plant humanities centred in an ecological metta. The exploration of the transformative potential within the 'process of becoming' a tree not only extends our understanding of intentional consciousness but also opens avenues for contemplating the profound connections between humans. The contemplation of a potential symbiosis between human and tree extends beyond the literal, delving into the metaphorical richness inherent in such a convergence. In our exploration of the nuanced interplay between consciousness, intentionality, and metamorphosis, the examination into the potential convergence of human and tree emerges as a poignant contemplation of the intricate tapestry of existence within the Anthropocene epoch.

In addressing these inquiries, we delve into Sumana Roy's work, *How I Became a Tree*. The book, organised into 30 distinct sections, unravels a unique journey that encourages readers to perceive trees from a more humane perspective. Engaging with Buddhist thought, Roy explores the idea that human beings might be reborn as trees, a view that challenges conventional boundaries between human and plant life. Her account follows the Buddha's life in relation to trees and identifies five factors of conscious awareness that initiate what she terms the 'process of becoming.' This exploration draws further support from the writings of Buddhaghosa, a fifth-century Indian Theravāda Buddhist philosopher and commentator, translator, and philosopher. According to Buddhaghosa, "Contact means 'it touches.' Its characteristic is 'touching'; its function is 'impact'; its manifestation is 'coinciding'; and its proximate cause is the object coming into the field of experience" (Emmanuel

2015, 379–382). Roy skilfully employs the theoretical framework of 'Contact' to elucidate the intricate relationship existing between human beings and plants, revealing the multifaceted strands that define this connection. Within one of the chapters of her book, titled "Women as Flowers," Roy emphasises the concept of floral femininity and the idea of contact, exploring various types of touch. This examination brings to light how women and flowers have perennially been metaphysically intertwined. Roy cites real-world examples where women are named after flowers, such as Golapi, Juhi, Shiuli, Shefali, Henna, Madhobilata, and are culturally expected to embody characteristics associated with flowers—fragile, chaste, pure, and reproductive. A notable detail is the Hindi translation of her name, 'Sumana,' signifying a flower, which adds a layer of intrigue to her analysis. Juxtaposed to this is Joella Jacob's concept of 'Phytopoetics', which is "the impact of plants on the human imagination, which is then expressed and multiplied in myriad ways in language and other, often creative media" (Jacobs 2022). Jacob considers the discoveries of plant sexuality in the late eighteenth century, which subsequently impacted modern notions of sexuality. With the scientific advances in botanical sciences, the image of the 'chaste flower' slowly gave way to a 'promiscuous sexuality'.

Roy's integration of flowers and women suggests a phytopoetic dynamic wherein both the plant and human become sites of convergence. In the chapter entitled "The Silence of Trees," Sumana Roy introduces a unique interpretation of 'touch' as women engage in a poignant act of embracing trees, striving to shield them from the impending threat of felling. The conceptualisation of tree hugging, identified as yet another manifestation of touch, is vividly depicted through a poignant reference to Margaret Atwood's novel *Surfacing*, where she writes, "I lean against a tree, I am a tree leaning" (Atwood 2012). This exploration of the concept of contact or physical touch intensifies as Roy alludes to 'sexual touching' within the chapter titled "Having Sex with a Tree." Here, Roy unfolds a profoundly elaborate discourse on the nuanced dimensions of touch, presenting readers with a heightened awareness of the intricate and intimate relationship shared between human beings and nature. The narrative unfurls as a complex fabric, intricately woven with layers of meaning, inviting readers to contemplate the multifaceted and deeply resonant nature of these sensory connections within the broader context of the human-nature dynamic. She successfully translates meditative practices to ecological ethics without interpreting them through the selfish gaze of the Anthropocene.

Roy also strengthens her analysis by engaging with the works of distinguished authors, directors, and theorists, crafting a rich tapestry of references that illuminate the intricate nuances of the human-plant relationship. Among these notable references are Sharnya Manivannan's evocative prose poem "Boyfriend like a Banyan Tree," Nitoo Das's poignant collection *At Age 11*

and Other Poems, and Aparna Sen's cinematic masterpiece *Sati*. These references transcend mere citations; they become intricate tools of analysis, offering profound insights into the sexual dynamics between humans and nature. Plants have been sites of interpretation of love and desire for millennia. Human imagination has always symbolised particular flowers as souvenirs of an emotion, but beyond that, flowers have been interpreted as a language for female sexuality. But it has always been a passive sexuality linked with the traditional gender roles of women in the domestic sphere.

In the luminous prose of Sharanya Manivannan, titled *Boyfriend like a Banyan Tree*, the banyan tree transforms into a symbolic entity, emblematic of a lover. Roy adeptly navigates these psychological landscapes where trees are contemplated as potential partners. This conscious intention behind the transformation becomes a focal point for Roy's exploration. Roy's eloquent assertion resonates with profound depth: "Lovers are known to turn each other into versions of themselves—rubbing oneself with earth like a tree, becoming 'entangled' like the roots of a banyan, speaking in silences to a lover like we imagine trees doing. This is a woman who has been left exhausted by human lovers" (Roy 2017, 07). This poignant statement encapsulates the profound layers embedded within the human-plant relationship, portraying it not just as a metaphorical exploration but as an experiential and transformative journey. Her narrative paints a vivid picture of the intertwining of human and botanical essences, portraying a woman left fatigued by the complexities of human relationships but finding solace and connection in the symbiotic embrace of nature. This exploration, enriched by the nuanced references from literature, poetry, and cinema, signifies Roy's adept ability to weave together disparate threads into a profound narrative that illuminates the complexities of human experience and its intricate interweaving with the natural world.

Roy also references the case of Emma McCabe, a 31-year-old woman from the UK, who professes a deep romantic connection with a tree named Tim, asserting that their union constitutes the epitome of intimate fulfilment. In an interview with Jack White for the *Closer Magazine*, McCabe candidly expresses her genuine affection for the tree, unequivocally declaring her love and desire to formalise their bond through marriage. The warmth and devotion she articulates towards Tim are wholehearted, transcending societal norms. Within the context of this unconventional relationship, Emma McCabe attests that her emotional connection with Tim extends to the realm of physical intimacy, claiming to have experienced the most profound form of sexual satisfaction with the tree. This revelation adds a layer of complexity to the narrative, challenging conventional perceptions of human-nature relationships. Roy, in presenting this intricate and somewhat eccentric bond between humanity and nature, explores the relational dynamics that can exist between individuals and the vegetal realm. Her affinity for trees, plants, and vegetal

cells stems from personal experiences, where the fusion of "external object, sensory organs, and consciousness" shapes her understanding of the intricate concept of 'Coinciding.' In exploring these complexities, Roy sheds light on the multifaceted dimensions of human interactions with the natural world, inviting contemplation on the boundaries and possibilities of such relationships.

Unravelling the intricacies of the second factor, 'Feeling' (vedana), within the profound 'process of becoming,' Buddhaghosa articulates its characteristics, describing it as 'what is felt.' In the pages of the discussed work, Roy artfully shares a deep emotional connection with trees, articulating her desire to metamorphose into one. Femininity thus becomes a site of contact or Buddhaghosa and metta, where bodily desire and intention intersect. Her yearning transcends the confines of a world governed by stringent deadlines, seeking to immerse herself in the unhurried cadence of 'tree time.' Within this temporal realm, she engages in meditation, cultivating calmness, tranquillity, and peace not only for herself but also as a benevolent offering to the plants. Roy eloquently expresses the profound role that trees play in her life, serving as instructors in the school of patience and persistence. Through her arboreal companions, she discerns the true essence of these virtues. In this dynamic 'process of becoming,' she perceives the inherent kindness of trees towards those who nurture them, fostering a silent yet reciprocal connection that transcends human communication. The author reflects on the unique nature of tree communication, distinct from human interaction, and proposes a transformative solution—the creation of a meditation sanctuary through the deliberate cultivation of trees in a personal Zen Garden, akin to the concept of Metta Meditation. This suggestion resonates with the deeper philosophy embedded in the 'process of becoming,' offering a profound and contemplative avenue for individuals to forge a harmonious bond with nature.

3. Role of Metta Meditation in the 'Process of Becoming' and Plant Humanities

The practice of 'Metta' meditation, also known as the 'Meditation of loving kindness,' initiates by directing the focus towards oneself, recognising the common challenge of grappling with the concept of self-love. Following a period of familiarising oneself with the idea of self-love, meditators are guided to contemplate a person they hold affection for or someone who has played a significant caregiving role in their lives. This engagement in Metta meditation leads to an elevation in vagal tone, a physiological response correlated with heightened positive emotions. In the trajectory of the 'process of becoming,' Sumana Roy personally integrates Metta meditation into her routine, seeking solace in the transformative act of envisioning herself as a tree. This practice

not only serves as a personal refuge but also as a means of distancing herself from the psychological imbalances prevalent in society. Joella Jacob's 'Vegetal Delights' comments on a similar phytopoetic term where the eminent poet Ross Gay interprets water lilies as erotic interlocutors in his Book of Delights, who have shaped the narrative and thought on sexuality for humans; Roy shifts this narrative to the plant's perspective, which lets her question and transform her selfhood.

A noteworthy aspect of Metta meditation lies in its capacity to unveil and cultivate our inherent ability to love both ourselves and others. Acharya Buddharakkhita, a Buddhist monk, writer, and the esteemed founder of the Maha Bodhi Society, delves into the essence of Metta practice in his book, *Metta: The Philosophy and Practice of Universal Love*. He beautifully articulates the stages of Metta meditation, likening it to the growth of a majestic tree. The initial phases, mirroring the germination of a seed and the subsequent growth of the plant, lay the groundwork. The latter stages witness the tree reaching maturity, adorned with fragrant and beautiful flowers that captivate all who encounter it. As a behavioural paradigm, the initial facet of Metta moulds one's life into a tree, characterised by usefulness, generosity, and nobility, embodying the profound philosophy encapsulated in the practice. He writes:

> The practice of metta thus can be likened to bringing into being a great tree. The sprouting of the seed and the growth of the plant are, as it were, brought about by the first part of the sutta. In the second part the tree, robust and developed, is fully covered with fragrant and beautiful flowers, riveting all eyes upon it. As a pattern of behavior, the first aspect of metta makes one's life grow like a tree, useful, generous and noble. (Buddharakkhita 2021, 6).

Roy takes a step forward and dives into the concept of 'forest bathing', which involves solitary walking through a forest and reconnecting with nature. Another term for this is 'hermit stand' where one can pursue the path of liberation, of knowing the self and beguiling that complacency by standing in the forest without any distraction. Sumana writes, "In the middle of the forest there's an unexpected clearing that can only be found by those who have gotten lost." (Roy 2017, 151). To substantiate her observation, Roy quotes Bengali writer Bibhutibhushan Bandyopadhyay, who wrote, "there is a connection between forest life and creativity, whether spiritual or intellectual is no longer questioned" (Roy 2017, 152). Roy also calls herself 'a happy victim' being lost in the forest. To quote, "Losing oneself is a terribly romantic, even elitist, idea. Getting lost in the forest begins as an extension of this idea—I say this as a happy victim." (Roy 2017, 157)

These conceptual explorations involving embracing the role of a 'happy victim,' losing oneself, experiencing liberation, and subsequently rediscover-

ing the self are deeply intertwined with the notion of 'disidentification.' This term, defined as "a protective mechanism whereby one removes a potentially harmful characteristic or experience from one's self-identity as insulation from anxiety or failure" (Emmanuel 2015, 561), echoes in the realm of meditation as well. In meditation, 'disidentification' signifies a benign separation from one's sense of self to gain self-knowledge, representing a stepping away from self-identity to observe oneself objectively (Emmanuel 2015, 561). In Buddhist philosophy, it is envisioned as the prolonged outcome of meditation, where the sedation of all thoughts takes place. Drawing on these principles, Sumana Roy effectively 'disidentifies' herself in her pursuit of becoming a tree. The profound impact of her thoughts, aimed at this transformation, has enduring effects on her mind, resulting in a successful metamorphosis into a tree. This process, akin to opening a Pandora's Box, serves as a transformative mechanism that alleviates suffering and pain, diminishes anger, and augments her capacity for tolerance and endurance. Her reflections integrate metta narratives with broader conceptual frameworks, allowing the reader to engage with an ethics of empathy towards all life within the context of the Anthropocene. Examining the other three factors of conscious awareness—Conception, Intention, and Conscious Awareness—it becomes evident that Perception, as the manifestation of the self, is made possible through Intention. Roy's intentional germination of the desire to transform into a tree is a pivotal aspect of this process. Her surroundings, coupled with her reading experiences, have played a significant role in this intentional transformation. In an essay titled "The Silence of Trees," Roy reflects:

> I had, in frustration with industrial noise and human verbosity, mistaken trees as silent creatures. My experiments with the sound recorder had brought about a new realisation – that trees shared a natural sound with people. It is the sound of resistance – like protestors raising their voice,' trees produced a sound that held in it their fight against wind, water, rain, to tearing, cutting and breaking. Like everything else, about sound too, they were economical. Revolution. Rebellion. Resistance. All other sounds were noise. (Roy 2021)

How I Became a Tree is replete with such perplexing moments and observations. Roy identifies other individuals, real and imaginary, who she says also wanted to be trees. Regarding Rabindranath Tagore, she writes: "In Tagore, a man born to a life in the spotlight, I found an unlikely comrade and advocate for the utterly ordinary life, a near modernist urge to be an ordinary tree." Of the artist Nandalal Bose and his 'greed for light,' she writes, "There can be no doubt that Nandalal is speaking as a tree." She writes about people bonding with trees, marrying trees, and having sex with trees. Although she seeks out a community of others who believe they are trees, who want to be

trees, or have unconventional relationships with trees, Roy does not seek to persuade readers. Sumana Roy's journey into 'disidentification' and her intentional transformation into a tree unfold as intricate processes with far-reaching effects on her psyche. They serve as a testament to the transformative power of intentional thought, meditation, and the deep connection between artistic inspiration and personal evolution.

Sudeep Sen, in stark contrast, embarks on an exploration of nature's diverse shades and the contemplative essence of meditation. His book *Anthropocene* unfolds as a visual marvel, presenting nine photographs capturing the mesmerising metamorphosis of clouds, transitioning from 'ash-grey' to 'silver-white', then to 'aged white' (Sen 2021). Each image becomes a fleeting yet profound encapsulation of nature's ephemeral beauty, ranging from the sun's golden amber hues to the intricate silhouettes of neem trees. Sen's discerning artistic lens meticulously captures the intricate details of the natural world. Anthropocene, enriched by a deeply personal introduction, emerges as Sen's artistic response to the intricate interplay of realities, our interconnectedness with nature, and the fragility inherent in the human experience. Within the pages of this work, Sen's poignant portrayal of nature evokes a sense of contemplative melancholy. It serves as a compelling call for us to slow down, engage in introspection, and rekindle our respect for the environment. The book prompts us to ponder what actions we can take to change our trajectory and preserve the delicate balance of nature. Sen adeptly navigates themes of hopelessness, toxicity, emotions, and the morbidity intertwined with human lives, infusing the narrative with a maturity that resonates throughout. The idea of the Anthropocene has traditionally focused on the history of humans and delegated non-humans to the ubiquitous strata of natural history, their multidimensionality overlooked. Despite these challenges, Sudeep Sen has managed to capture that fleeting sense of urgency that all of us grapple with under the threat of mass extinction. Through a multi-faceted approach employing photographs, newspaper clippings, essays, ekphrastic poems, creative non-fiction, prose, and quotes from various artists, his book *Anthropocene* emerges as a nuanced inquiry into the depths of our psyche. It challenges us to confront our attitudes and behaviours towards the environment, provoking profound reflections on the changes necessary to safeguard and nurture the planet we call home.

In contrast to Roy, Sen employs a juxtaposition of antonyms to articulate the intricate relationship between nature and the world. Within his poetic expressions, Sen reveals his anguish, shedding light on the negligence of powerful nations and developed countries in preserving nature, thereby becoming major contributors to the emission of greenhouse gases. The resonance of his sentiments in this context brings to mind Amitabh Ghosh's *The Great Derangement*, a work that prophesies a potentially bleak future. It could be as-

serted that Sen's understanding of the Anthropocene serves as a response to the summons issued by *The Great Derangement*. Through this collection, Sen vividly portrays global crises and passionately implores for the conservation of the environment and the preservation of human emotions. Sen's poems exude a spiritual potency that seamlessly weaves together elements of ecology, history, science, mythology, revolution, elections, and climate crises with remarkable originality and efficiency. Each literary piece stands as a unique entity, illuminating a distinct facet. Sen employs micro-fiction and draws from mythologies, skillfully intertwining the vocabulary of spirituality and mysticism to cater to readers of various age groups. In a world grappling with climate change, atmospheric meltdowns, and collective sorrow, Sen's book radiates an arc of hope and positivity. *Anthropocene*, according to Sen, is not merely an artistic documentation of flora and fauna; it is his earnest prayer to rekindle positivity and hope.

As described at the beginning of the paper, the term Anthropocene holds an intriguing history. According to an article titled "Age of Man: Enter the Anthropocene" in the National Geographic resource library, as far back as the 1870s, geologist Antonio Stoppani proposed the term 'anthropozoic' to denote a new geological era. Sudeep Sen's work revolves around the acknowledgement that we have indeed entered this distinct epoch, the Anthropocene. The book serves as a poignant reminder of our connection to the natural world, inviting us to listen to the diatonic notes of airwaves, the "banalities of potatoes, animal farm, persistent rain," the "rustling florets of neem leaves," and the gentle sound of running water from clay. Sen, in his artistic expression, provides snippets from the natural world entwined with threads of nostalgia and occasionally satire. Sen's version of phytopoetics extends into literature to create both form and content. The book contemplates meditation through the lens of art, presenting the act of creating art as a form of meditation in itself. In a manner akin to mindfulness, the realm of art beckons individuals to enter the present moment and submerge themselves deeply. In this context, the artist assumes the role of a meditation coach, guiding individuals to effectively communicate and engage through their artistic tools. Sudeep Sen's *Anthropocene* stands out as a significant anthology that mirrors Sen's conscientious approach as an artist. Sen, the poet, acknowledges that poetry cannot serve as a panacea for economic crises or global warming, nor can it offer scientific solutions. Instead, he recognises the spiritual power inherent in poetry—a power that consoles and heals. Poetry, in Sen's view, can instill hope, provide comfort, and evoke positivity. The rhythmic and sonorous qualities of poetry possess therapeutic powers that aid individuals in confronting challenges. The spiritual healing prowess of poetry, accompanied by the profound silence it invokes, stirs our emotions, offering solace in the face of life's complexities.

4. THE PHYTOPOETICS OF PLANT HUMANITIES

The two literary works under consideration forge a novel intersection between philosophy and religion, delving into the realms of the supernatural and the mystical, utilising both language and imagery. This confluence gives rise to the emergent concept of Plant Humanities, grounded in the vegetal power of creation and re-creation. The concept intricately intertwines with the threads of phytopoetics and spiritual elevation. Moving seamlessly from the exploration of complex neural energies in our body and mind to the portrayal of a plant that replants and transforms itself, Sen and Roy intricately craft a captivating human narrative intertwined with the essence of plants. Their semantic choices are phytopoetic because they attune their writings to 'Tree Time', thus forcing the reader to absorb the palimpsest of meanings put on top of one another. Each segment within Sudeep Sen's *Anthropocene* resonates deeply with nature, imbued with an urgency that mirrors the poet's profound concern for both the natural environment and the human psyche. In the growing discontent and distractions of a digital world, it is crucial to focus on the world around us. The fusion of philosophy and religion, the supernatural and the mystical, serves as a rich tapestry, weaving together a narrative that not only explores the intricate relationships between humanity and the plant kingdom but also prompts contemplation on the broader existential connections within the universe. This intersection resonates with the discourse of ecotheology, which investigates how spiritual and theological traditions engage with nature, ecological ethics, and human responsibility toward the Earth. As Campa, Corbally, and Rappaport (2022) demonstrate, early Western ecotheological perspectives—found in the works of figures such as Pliny the Elder, Paul the Apostle, and Boethius—sought to reconcile natural philosophy, divine creation, and moral duty, thereby laying conceptual groundwork for contemporary ecological reflection. The concept of Plant Humanities, rooted in this exploration, becomes a vessel for understanding and appreciating the profound interplay between the physical and the metaphysical, creating a space where the essence of plants is both a mirror and a catalyst for human existence. To quote a few lines from Sen's poem Black Box: Etymology of a Crisis:

> There is agreement and contradiction in this duality – a bipolar tension of ego/ alter ego, of fulfilment and vacuity in our unstable psyche. The graph is not constant or regular like sine or cosine curves – the mathematical grid in exact, unsure and asymptomatic like the contagion surrounding us – as we try to resuscitate every molecule of breathable air under our masked pretences. (Sen 2021, 69)

We can locate a similar affection with numbers in Sumana Roy's *How I Became a Tree*. The distinctive use of numbers reveals not just a literary technique but an integral aspect of her unique narrative identity. Her profound affection for numbers and the utilisation of mathematics as a language of expression set her apart in the literary circle, offering readers a novel and enriched experience. Numbers, in Roy's hands, transcend their conventional role and become a foundational element through which she articulates observations, emotions, and reflections. This integration of mathematics and literature goes beyond mere stylistic choice; it becomes a vehicle for nuanced expression, navigating the intricacies of the human experience and inviting readers to perceive the world through a distinctive lens that combines the precision of numbers with the richness of literary expression, showcasing Roy's innovative and multidimensional storytelling approach.

The emerging interdisciplinary field of 'Plant Humanities' is relatively a recent coinage. The term 'Plant Humanities' was coined to "to emphasize the importance of humanistic modes of interpretation in the scholarly investigation of plants and their entanglement with humans" (Batsaki). The roots of this interdisciplinary field lie in a 2013 symposium, "The Botany of Empire in the Long 18th Century," which highlighted the rare book collections of Dumbarton Oaks and brought plants to centre stage. The Plant Humanities Lab was developed by Dumbarton Oaks and JSTOR Labs with support from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and was launched in beta form on March 9 2021, to support the interdisciplinary study of plants from the perspectives of the arts, sciences, and humanities, to examine their extraordinary significance to human culture. Sumana Roy herself is a plant thinker and is currently working on the Indian Plant Humanities Project with the Centre for Climate Change and Sustainability, Ashoka University.

Folklores, myths, children's literature, and Panchtantra stories about hybrid plants, talking trees, trees of life, and man-eating trees have already been a part of popular genres like mystery, horror and science fiction. The authors under consideration took a step forward and explored the contour of feminist plant writing and vegetal sentience to achieve a yogic sense of centeredness. Plant humanities, as explored in Sumana Roy's *How I Became a Tree* and Sudeep Sen's *Anthropocene*, engage with the intricate connections between human existence and the botanical realm. Roy's narrative unfolds as a captivating exploration of the human-plant relationship, offering profound insights into the transformative journey of identifying with trees. Her meticulous observations, enriched by references from literature, poetry, and cinema, illustrate the symbiotic embrace of nature and the solace found amid human complexities. On the other hand, Sen's *Anthropocene* propels readers into a contemplation of the broader context of humanity's impact on the Earth. Through a lens that intertwines science, literature, and spirituality, Sen addresses con-

temporary challenges like climate change and contagion. Both authors contribute to the emerging interdisciplinary field of plant humanities, transcending conventional boundaries and inviting readers to ponder the intricate threads that connect humanity with the natural world, whether through personal introspection in Roy's case or a global ecological perspective in Sen's work.

CONCLUSION

In *Anthropocene* by Sudeep Sen and *How I Became a Tree* by Sumana Roy, the intersection of ecological consciousness, plant-thinking, and sustainability emerges through a sustained engagement with both literary form and philosophical reflection. These works do more than narrate environmental concern; they situate contemporary ecological anxieties within a longer intellectual history of human-nature relations. By drawing upon meditative practices, ecological ethics, and vegetal metaphors, they contribute to a lineage of thought that connects ancient philosophies, Buddhist traditions, and modern ecological discourse.

At the core of this exploration is the idea of the Anthropocene, not simply as a geological epoch but as a conceptual framework for rethinking human agency and responsibility. Both Sen and Roy reflect critically on human exceptionalism, proposing alternative models of coexistence rooted in slowness, care, and symbiotic awareness. Roy's engagement with meditation and plant life reactivates earlier spiritual and philosophical traditions that envisioned nature as both teacher and mirror, aligning with intellectual currents from Romanticism to Buddhist ecology. Sen's poetry, in turn, frames ecological crisis as an ethical imperative, calling for collective memory and imaginative reparation.

Together, their works embody the history of ecological ideas in literary form, drawing upon diverse traditions to articulate new modes of plant-thinking—a way of understanding and inhabiting the world that foregrounds interdependence, temporal depth, and ethical mindfulness. In confronting the challenges of the Anthropocene, these texts suggest that literature, rooted in philosophical inquiry and meditative practice, can foster a deeper ecological consciousness, offering both critique and hope for more sustainable futures.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Asafu-Adjaye, J. et al. 2015. *An Ecomodernist Manifesto*. Squarespace.com.
Atwood, M. 2012. *Surfacing*. Simon and Schuster.

Buddharakkhita. 2021. *Mettā: The Philosophy and Practice of Universal Love*. BPS Pariyatti Editions.

Campa, R., Corbally, C., & Rappaport, M. B. 2021. "A Theory of the Merging Noospheres: Teilhard and Big History." *Theology and Science* 20(1): 85–98.

Campa, R., Corbally, C., & Rappaport, M. B. 2022. "Searching for the Roots of Western Ecotheology: Pliny the Elder, Paul the Apostle, Boethius." *Gregorianum* 103(4): 833–856.

Cooper, A. 2020. "Naturphilosophie." In *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, edited by Edward Craig. Taylor and Francis. https://www.rep.routledge.com/articles/thematic/naturphilosophie/v-2.

Crutzen, P. & Stoermer, E. 2013. "The 'Anthropocene' (2000)." In *The Future of Nature: Documents of Global Change*, edited by L. Robin, S. Sörlin & P. Warde. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Crutzen, P. 2002. "Geology of mankind." *Nature* 415(6867): 23–23.

Das. N. 2012. "At Age Eleven and Other Poems." *Northeast Review*. https://northeastreview.wordpress.com/2013/01/01/nitoo-das/.

Ellis, E. C. 2012. *The Planet of No Return*. The Breakthrough Institute. https://thebreakthrough.org/journal/issue-2/the-planet-of-no-return.

Emmanuel, S. M. 2015. *A companion to Buddhist philosophy*. John Wiley & Sons.

Ghosh, A. 2017. *The Great Derangement: Climate Change and the Unthinkable.* University of Chicago Press.

Hamilton, C., Grinevald, J. 2015. "Was the Anthropocene anticipated?" *The Anthropocene Review* 2(1): 59–72.

Jacobs, J. 2024. "Vegetal Delights: The Phytopoetics of Ross Gay." *Philosophies* 9(6): 185.

Kant, I. 2003. *Critique of Pure Reason* (translated by N. K. Smith). Palgrave Macmillan.

Kolbert, E. 2011. "Age of man: enter the anthropocene." *National Geographic/the National Geographic Magazine 219*(3): 60–85.

Locke, J. 2008. *An Essay concerning Human Understanding* (edited by P. Phemister). Oxford University Press.

Lovejoy, A. O. 2019. *Essays in the History of Ideas*. Johns Hopkins University Press.

Marder, M. 2013. *Plant-thinking: A philosophy of vegetal life*. Columbia University Press.

Miłosz, C. 1980. *Bells in Winter*. Littlehampton Book Services.

Mitchell, A. 2014. "Tag Archives: Paul Crutzen." *Worldly*. https://worldlyir.wordpress.com/tag/paul-crutzen/.

Murti, T. R. V. 1998. *The Central Philosophy of Buddhism: A Study of Madhyamika System.* Routledge.

Pavid, K. 2023. "What is the Anthropocene and why does it matter?" https://www.nhm.ac.uk/discover/what-is-the-anthropocene.html.

Ramos, A., Castellanos, M., & Ganuza, E. 2024. "Other Intelligences: Investigating the Plant-Human Relationship in Domestic Spaces." *Philosophies* 9(6): 176.

Ronfeldt, D., Arquilla, J. 2020. "Origins and Attributes of the Noosphere Concept." In *Whose Story Wins: Rise of the Noosphere, Noopolitik, and Information-Age Statecraft*, edited by David Ronfeldt & John Arquilla. CA: RAND Corporation.

Roy, S. 2017. *How I Became a Tree*. Rupa Publications.

Roy, S. 2021. "The Silence of Trees." In *How I Became a Tree* (pp. 23–28). New Haven: Yale University Press.

Sen, S. 2021. *Anthropocene: Climate change, Contagion, Consolation*. Salt Desert Media Group.

Manivannan, S. 2016. *The High Priestess Never Marries: Stories of Love and Consequence*. HarperCollins.

Sharma, P. V. 2015. *Panchatantra* (translated by G. L. Chandiramani). Rupa.

Simon, Z. B., Thomas, J. A. 2022. "Earth System Science, Anthropocene Historiography, and Three Forms of Human Agency." *Isis: Journal of the History of Science Society* 113(2): 396–406.

Steffen, W., Grinevald, J., Crutzen, P., & McNeill, J. 2011. "The Anthropocene: conceptual and historical perspectives." *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society A Mathematical Physical and Engineering Sciences 369*(1938): 842–867.

Steinhart, E. 2008. "Teilhard de Chardin and Transhumanism." *Journal of Evolution and Technology* 20(1): 1–22.

Teilhard de Chardin, P. 1966. *Man's Place in Nature.* New York: Harper & Row.

White, J. 2017. "Real life story: '*I'm in love with a tree – it's the best sex I've ever had*.'" *Closer*. https://closeronline.co.uk/real-life/news/reactions-closer-magazine-s-m-love-tree-s-best-sex-ve-ever/.