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***Violent Phenomena: 21 Essays on Translation*, Kavita Bhanot and Jeremy Tiang (eds). London: Tilted Axis Press, 2022. £12. ISBN 978-1-911284-78-9.**

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Translation has a vital role in contributing to—and perhaps even leading—the increasingly prevalent conversation of decolonisation. There is now a consensus among scholars on the violent and colonial history of translation across millennia, as well as the neo-colonising tendencies within translation today. Most of these discussions, however, remain in the academic context of theorising decolonisation, whilst praxis is discussed in ostensibly informal—or rather unpublished—settings like Twitter, translation workshops, or collectives. At the 2020 British Centre for Literary Translation summer school—a space that may act as a bridge between the practical publishing field and academia—the multilingual workshop group presented problems in the translation industry that upheld colonial ideologies.

The group went on to publish their panel discussion, 'Who is the Mythical English Reader?' and continue their work through interviews and essays on platforms such as *Words Without Borders* and now, as a collection of ideas in our present text, *Violent Phenomena*. The editors, Kavita Bhanot and Jeremy Tiang, explain in the introduction that this collection emerges in a context where the means for decolonisation increasingly require violence. The essays in this collection look at a variety of aspects of literary translation, including the industry itself and the various streams we engage with that can, and do, uphold colonial practices. The collection features twenty-one thought-provoking essays, with a great variety of language combinations and issues explored. It would therefore require a significantly longer text that is beyond the scope of this review to cover each essay individually.

The collection begins with a discussion between Gitanjali Patel and Nariman Youssef, 'All the Violence It May Carry on its Back'. The writers explain that this essay follows a conversation they previously had about their shared feelings and experiences as professionals in the field of literary translation, and features quotes interspersed from many other literary translators of colour they had spoken to. These discussions are stamped along the margin with key facts, figures, and notes that elaborate on (and maybe serve to further validate) the individuals' experiences in the profession. Collectively, this almost functions as an additional introduction, highlighting how literary translation is a field in dire need of decolonising, particularly with how white Western colonialism feeds into the daily interactions that translators of colour experience within the profession.

Across the essays, a number of themes arise which are problematised in varying ways according to their specific context, including the concept of bridge translations (meaning those that act as a 'source text' where some translators may not have knowledge of the source language), collaboration, 'un'-translatability and L2 (second-language) translation. Amid these questions is also what Anton Hur titles as the 'Mythical English Reader'. Hur's essay explores the problem of the 'English reader' that frequently turns up as a mythical judge of literature. The depiction of this mythical individual provides a helpful image of a barrier in translation. It gives a name and an imaginary face to a reader whom all translators are expected to please.

Accordingly, as echoed in many of the other essays, translators, particularly when working from a non-European language or text, come up against the idea that their work—often perceived as representing the source culture as a whole—isn't 'palatable' or 'understandable' to the English reader. This repeatedly comes up in linguistic choices and representations of specific cultural terms. Kaiama L. Glover, for example, draws on Haitian

vodou practice and how it is frequently misappropriated to 'voodoo' in order to fulfil ideologies of exoticism. Haitian writers, Glover explains, encounter the question of how they write themselves to be consumed by a global audience. Further on this note, Sawad Hussain explores this idea—of making one culture palatable and comprehensible to a Western audience—going beyond linguistic choices and how it affects paratextual elements including book covers, making design choices that may exoticise the source culture. The stories told by these translators throughout their essays are thought-provoking yet upsetting examples of how the translation and publishing industries perpetuate Western and Anglocentric values. Considering these issues in a theoretical context, it is clear that the common translation debate of 'domestication' versus 'foreignisation' is reductive, as it does not take into account the layers of colonialism and orientalism embedded within each strategy.

Lúcia Collischonn and Sandra Tamele address in their respective essays the circumstances of working with languages that may not be 'their own', that is to say second languages or colonially enforced languages. In their case, this has largely impacted the relationship they developed with their working languages, but also generated assumptions from agents and publishers on their linguistic ability. The meaning and possibility of terms such as 'native language' or 'mother tongue' differ across varied geographical and historical contexts, and there appears to be a recurring problem of assigning languages to the translator based on a perceived ability, depending on ethnicity and accent. In a similar vein, both Collischonn and Sawad Hussain allude to being referred to as emerging translators despite years of experience and success; similarly, Mona Kareem addresses the approach of 'guardianship' in which Western translators filter and adapt the Arab writer, guiding them to be more 'appealing'. For example, they may use a native speaker's literal translation and then heavily workshop it under the guise of collaboration, but what is produced might instead be considered a rendition or 'loose adaptation' as opposed to a translation. Tamele's essay specifically draws on her knowledge of Portuguese as a necessary bridge to bring literature into Mozambique—without her work of translating into her adopted Portuguese, literature outside Mozambique would not be translated to the local languages, creating a problem of accessibility.

Tamele's view of the necessity for bridges is echoed in Elisa Taber's essay on bringing Guaraní writing into English, which, she argues, requires the Spanish interference to create a sequence of translations (not equivalences) to fully demonstrate from where the English meaning originates. In a different context, however, Kareem problematises the use of bridge translations resulting in a Western rendition that domesticates and loosely adapts the text from its source text/first version to a target language after a series of metamorphoses. These essays do not contradict but build upon one another as a crucial reminder to readers and producers of Western Anglocentric writing that it is not the US/UK *and then* the World, but individual cultures and contexts versus colonising systems of power—historically and presently.

Such is the view presented in *Violent Phenomena*. Other essays in the collection bring even more to the conversation, including debates around disability and accessibility (Khairani Barrokka), the contradiction of living as both coloniser and colonised like in Wales (Eluned Gramich), gender in religion across translation (Sofia Rehman), and whether we have a right to translation in the first place (M. NourbeSe Philip). In summary, this is a generous collection of essays from many key names in the world of literary translation, putting their extensive thoughts and experiences into writing with real-world stories and examples of a problematic profession. This book will, hopefully, trigger active decolonisation work from all those involved and contribute to the translation industry—from the production line to consumption, for practising translators, academics, and all readers alike.