***Translation and Race*. Corine Tachtiris. Routledge, New York, 2024, 172 pages, Paperback, £39.99.**

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Focusing on the aspect of race and racism in the practice of literary translations, the book *Translation and Race* by Corine Tachtiris, Assistant Professor of Translation Studies at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, elaborates how racial discrimination has always been an integral part of translation practice throughout history till contemporary times, through its five main chapters and the significantly fitting introduction. The preface begins with the author's experience of disjuncture that she felt twenty-five years before writing the book, as an undergraduate student, being a part of a group of students and faculties translating a book by a Black author whose culture was not very familiar to them. That feeling of unfamiliarity guided her to the understanding that race is but a construct — a concept that she remembers throughout her life and uses meaningfully in her book. She then draws opinions of scholars on capitalising the 'b' in Black and how their perceptions shape their respective ideas of race. After considering all the opinions, she agrees with La Marr Jurelle Bruce in his statement, "I use a lowercase b because I want to emphasise an improper blackness […] a blackness that is ever-unfurling rather than rigidly fixed" (Bruce 6). She supports Bruce's opinion and discusses her opinion on "translation's potential to unfix language through linguistic and cultural disjunctures" (Tachtiris ix). The author rejects norms in translation theories that are normalised by the mainstream but are actually rooted in White supremacy and chooses to rely on the translators' joke of "it depends" by capitalising the 'b' only contextually. The preface, therefore, sets the tone of what the book primarily seeks to express later on.

The "Introduction" leaps straight into the Amanda Gorman controversy that gave rise to a moral panic in March 2021, when Gorman's poem "The Hill We Climb" was to be translated, and how race and racial identity suddenly became a matter of serious debate. The tumultuous uproar that arose from the Black women poets and journalists in the Netherlands after the declaration of Marieke Lucas Rijneveld's name as the translator selected for the Dutch edition and Rijneveld's stepping down from the project as a response to that illustrates the "(i)ssues addressed here: the marginalisation and exclusion of translators and translation scholars of colour; white privilege in translation; the misappropriation of the term identity politics; racial capitalism; the translation of racialised literary and linguistic forms; an idealised vision of translation that downplays its potential to perpetuate racism" (Tachtiris 2). The author repeatedly brings the example of this controversy throughout the book to elaborate on various points regarding the academic encroachment that comes as a byproduct of White supremacy, which is otherwise veiled with colour blindness and avoidance of active discussion. The intentional avoidance of discussion that further facilitates White supremacy in translation comes as an inevitable result of various reasons, such as "(t)he dearth of conversations around race and racism in translation, the dearth of translation studies scholars of colour, and the dearth of literary translators of colour and work of authors of colour in translation. In short: the unbearable whiteness of translation in the West" (Tachtiris 2). The very coinage of the brilliant term "unbearable whiteness of translation in the West" expresses volumes on how the colour-blind attitude in the field of translation, as well as in society, in general, is made visibly invisible to strengthen the centre of White supremacy. The author brings in the examples of The Authors Guild Survey, which, in 2017, published White-centric statistics after calculating the number of White translators with those of colour, and then the more racially diverse statistics of the Equity Advocates of ALTA (American Literary Translators Association) from 2020, which was still not enough to eradicate the over-representation of White translators and the under-representation of the Black ones. She further reminds us of how powerful racial inequality is through the statistical examples of translations of Japanese fiction listed in the Open Letter/ Publishers Weekly database in the years from 2017 through 2021 and the "data from the British Library for translations published in English from 2000 to 2012" (Tachtiris 3-

4). The "Introduction" ends with the author expressing that translation "needs to be part of larger feminist, queer, anti-capitalist, and anti-racist struggles" (Tachtiris 23).

The opening chapter titled "From Slavish Translation to Bridge Translation," underscores the evolution of the term 'slave' in the Oxford English Dictionary and how the term is deeply connected to race by reminding us of Torriano's description of 'literal' translation as 'slavish'. The author connects the idea of 'slavish' to the Africans by harking back to James H. Sweet's comment on how "sub-Saharan Africa were considered 'Negroes' and therefore enslaveable" (Sweet 143-166). This practice of a racialised 'other' later developed into 'bridge' translation, where a racialised native informant prepares a literal translation for a Western scholar to develop a creative work upon. This chapter calls for a systematic re-evaluation of translation norms in their traditional and historical ground of White supremacy. Historical debates on 'word for word' and 'sense for sense' translation between Augustine and Jerome laid the foundation of the Western mainstream. The author proceeds to mention Samuel Johnson's argument in 1795, where he said that "Arabs were the first nation who felt the ardour of translation" because "they found their captives wiser than themselves" (Johnson 204-205) and attacked Fitzgerald's translation of "The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam" which represented the Arabs as less civilised (a historical incident cited by many authors of translation studies, such as Susan Basnett, Harish Trivedi, et al). The belief of the 'slavish' translation being artless and dry only reinforces the racist belief that Blacks lack imagination and creativity and that they need White masters for their betterment. The author brings to our attention how a translator of colour is automatically seen as less 'fluent' compared to their White colleagues. The chapter ends with Tachtiris wishing to see relevant changes in race in translation by re-evaluating historical and contemporary norms in the field. She ends with a "re-evaluation of norms now taken unquestioningly — not to say slavishly — for granted," thus highlighting the necessity of slavishness to be driven out of the picture to make it more critical (Tachtiris 54).

The second chapter, "Translation and Racial Capitalism," is a direct blow to the White-centric translation industries in the UK and the USA, which eliminate translators of colour from the literary circle in light of the illusory racial diversity in International literary awards such as the Booker Prize. The author argues, "Race, however, does not always align with class differences, and class does not always account for differences in social status" (Tachtiris 67). By discussing the idea of copyright of the author and that of the translator of colour, she highlights how even the tug of war between who can own intellectual property becomes racialised. She laments through her lines that "(t)he work of White translators in the modern era is understood in the West as the work of imagination and originality, thus fulfilling the requisites for copyright status, whereas translators of colour are expected — both in terms of anticipated and demanded — to produce "mindless" literal translations, a work of labour rather than a work of genius. This dichotomy originated out of enslaved and colonised translators and interpreters of colour" (80). The author ends the second chapter with her valuable suggestion on how translation should be treated as a creative work more than as a battleground for ownership. She posits her valuable suggestion through the following line: "for racial justice in the field of literary translation, a long-term reimagining of the creative work of translation needs to occur, no matter how utopian" (Tachtiris 82). By this, the author stresses how the aspect of considering translation as an act of creativity should be focused more on than on that of the copyright in order to bring more justice to the field, even though it might initially seem somewhat utopian or impossible to achieve.

The next chapter, titled "Beyond Racial "Diversity:" Identity Politics in Translation," deals with Black women as translators, as well as with woke and cancelled cultures that gave birth to anti-anti-racism. In elaborating on Black women's enactment of their identity, the author harks back to "the concept of identity politics as first articulated in a 1977 statement by the Combahee River Collective, an organising group of Black socialist lesbian feminists. For the women of Combahee, identity is a position from which to launch politics in solidarity with other marginalised groups" (Tachtiris 93). She further reminds the readers of how Emily

Wilson's translation of *The Odyssey* in 2018 laid bare the ugly and racialised reception of Black feminist women as angry, revolting complainers, etc., while a White feminist receives admiring applause for the same vocal demand for human rights. The author again travels back to the Amanda Gorman controversy and the whole politics behind the publishing team's suggestion that Gorman keep quiet about the choice of Rijneveld as the translator of her poem since his recent Booker Prize achievement made him more of a 'fit' translator than any Black woman. Tachtiris refers to Meritt's argument on how Black-authored works radically reject the White framework and its negative attitude towards Black subjects, which extends the same colour blindness in the mainstream translation industry that she discussed previously in the book. She concludes the chapter by wondering what kind of sparks could possibly result from building an accessible and habitable arena of translation practice for women translators from all ethnicities.

Titled "Translation in Critical Race Studies," the fourth chapter calls for an improvement in the understanding of translation and translation studies by incorporating them into the field of critical race studies in order to overcome the manipulation of English texts by Western norms of academia and to prevent a US-centric perception of race in critical race studies. The author states that "this chapter focuses on the roles that translation does and could play in the various fields that might be said to comprise critical race studies" (Tachtiris 119). Tachtiris further makes an apt comparison between an anthropologist's translation of a culture of colour and a psychoanalyst's analysis of the human unconscious. Referring to Hartigan's opinion on how the English term "race" in the US is "principally a form of classification" (Hartigan 29-41) and is often connected with skin colour, the author reminds us of how translation has played a key role in colonisation as well. She analyses Mbembe's text *Critique of Black Reason* (2017), which popularised the concepts of 'n/Noir' and 'n/Negre' and concludes that, while 'n/Noir' is more of a neutral term, the latter is only a European stereotyping of the Blacks in order to maintain the vertical hierarchy of racialisation. Then she also mentions how Dubois shuns Franz Fanon's idea and reshapes it into a trinity of words **—** "Blacks," "Blackness," and the "Black Man" (Mbembe 2017); although without giving a clear demarcation between the differences in meanings and contexts of usage of the three. The convergence of the two scholars is drawn by the author towards the end of the chapter, with her remark, "Fanon and Mbembe both argue for recuperative moves in the discourse of racial formation" (Tachtiris 134). Since translation is, as believed by Tachtiris, a site for negotiating racial meanings, she expects more effectiveness in this struggle for the eradication of racism in translation.

The title of the closing chapter, "Translating Race," is self-explanatory as it discusses the multifaceted approaches and strategies to translating instances of racism toward a culture of colour from the source text. Amidst the plethora of books concerned with gender in translation, the author aptly points to the dearth of ones on translating racial identity and terminology. She then goes on to return to the example provided in the first chapter, that of Richard Burton's translation of "One Thousand and One Nights," which only helped intensify the racism in the original text. The instance of the queen's adultery becomes more of a problem when it is discovered that it was a Black man whom she slept with, and the embellishment of this racism by Burton in his translation gave way to the ethical question of whether or not the source text's intention was racist or if it was only the focus on the 'objective' reality of unfaithfulness. Now, Tachtiris poses a very relevant question: "What should the translator translate: the intent or the impact" (Tachtiris 142). This question of hers indeed has the potential for a long scholarly debate. She then talks of how the strategy of toning down or removing racist ideas in the re-issued edition of children's literature originally written by famed writers such as Dr. Seuss and Roald Dahl has now gained wide notoriety in the Anglophone societies of the UK and the US. Dahl had agreed to edit the racist characteristics of the Oompa Loompas in *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, where Willy Wonka found them "in the very deepest and darkest part of the African jungle where no white man had ever been before" (Dahl 148), and turned them into workers of his factory. This image was a clear instance of Wonka carrying the White man's burden of employing and thereby enlightening the 'savages'.

The trend of 'whitewashing' that focuses solely on the reputation of the author and publishing house, far more than actually removing racism in order to practice colour-blind racism, is criticised by the author. Along with this, she also criticises the use of the 'time trope' mechanism to avoid the active removal of racism from translations since she believes that "this way, not whitewashing the racism of historical texts, especially canonical ones, echoes the current public call for racism not to be whitewashed in history curriculums in education" (Tachtiris 153). She sides with the 1930s Negritude movement by Black Francophone African and Caribbean intellectuals — a movement that attempted to revert the pejorative connotation of the word 'Negre', a movement that she believes should never be deplatformed from the discussion of translating race.

Through the short "Conclusion," the author sums up how the entire book calls for adopting various means to deconstruct the "unbearable whiteness of translation" and establishes a more horizontal platform, out of the intellectual arena, too, for racial equity to dwell in the field of translation. The book, indeed, is a piece of testimony of the way racial inequality and White-centrism work in the field of translation in the West. Through various instances, the author draws a historical thread of race and racial discussions and disparities in translation as well as literature and life in general. In every way, this book qualifies as a brilliant handbook on the history and politics of race in translation for learners to follow. The intricate politics and diplomacy in the presentation of race and racial identity in the noble process of history-making of translation have very adeptly been talked about in this book, and the author holds her firm ground in depicting the true picture.

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