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**Matthew Reynolds, ed. *Prismatic Translation*.
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What does it mean to read a translation and feel – not necessarily all the way, perhaps only at certain moments – that it is inadequate? I dare say anyone who has worked much with translations has had this feeling, a bristling of the senses, at some time or another. Sometimes the tingling might be aesthetic at root, a series of moments that jar on the ear, pinpricks that build up to a sense of the translator's tone-deafness: inelegant phrasing or odd lexical choices that we find it hard to imagine in a work celebrated in its original language. Maybe we suspect the translator's timidity, or not daring to turn away from their source. Or perhaps our suspicion is an intellectual one, of concepts being misrepresented: ambiguities resolved, the complex being rendered simple, or vice versa? In these instances, a gap has opened up between the text we have in front of us and the one we expected to read, and we have adjudged the translator-responsible. (346)

Dennis Duncan thus begins his critical reading of “pseudotranslations,” or translations that do not have an original, in “Less than Paper-Thin: Pseudotranslations, Absent Fathers and Harry Mathew's Armenian Papers” (Chapter 18). Duncan's reading resonates with Stefan Willer, who hones in on the “subtle relationships that exist between an original, a copy, and a translation, as well as those between originality, authenticity, imitation, and deception – all relationships that are particularly relevant in terms of prismatic translation” in “Original-esque: Diderot and Goethe in Back-Translation” (Chapter 19, 359). “Prismatic Translation,” the title of the edited volume containing Duncan and Willer, is a term

Matthew Reynolds coins for his research in translation and translation studies and, more particularly, for his strand within the AHRC funded OWRI Creative Multilingualism Project (2016–2020).

The nineteen chapters that give shape and substance to the volume respond to the challenges posed by the clues inherent in “prism” and take translation studies beyond strategies of “domestication” and “foreignization” current in lingual discussions of the relationship between the “original” and “target” text, and away from notions of “translatability” or “untranslatability” that have stifled recent debates on world literature in which translation serves as a catalyst of  culation. Instead, translations are seen as refractions, not only of written texts but also of imagined ones, whose multiplicity in turn offers a kaleidoscopic vision of literary works conversing with one another across languages around the globe in and between the past and present. Prism, as a theoretical impulse, opens out translation studies to cultural, historical and literary analysis but without insisting on or giving up the kind of relationships connecting different parts of the globe that underpin comparative literature. Bringing together divergent translations of one text in one language under scrutiny may be equally rewarding as comparative analysis of works that have generated multiple translations in different languages. At the same time, it privileges the creative potentials of translation, audible and visible in the shadows of intelligibility between, let us say, two languages, literary traditions and cultures. *Prismatic Translation* is a journey in the creative processes theorists, historians, practitioners and critical readers of texts-in-translation devise and implement in exploring the various challenges in cross-cultural –lingual and –literary understanding and expression.

Part V, “Readings,” to which Duncan and Willer contribute the last two chapters (19 and 20), comprises critical analyses of translation practices that test “the metaphor of translation as prism” (312), including Patrick Hersant on “Coleridge Diffracted: on the Opening Lines of *Kubla Khan*” (Chapter 15), Péter Hajdu on “The Hungarian Spectrum of Petronius’s *Satyricon*” (Chapter 16), and Alexandra Lukes on “The Schizophrenic Prism: Louis Wolfson’s Translation Practice” (Chapter 17). Rich with contextual and textual analysis, “Readings” is the conceptual and methodological culmination of the volume. It combines the keen practice-based theorization in Part IV, “Practices,” the intriguing contemplations on cultural difference in translation practices in Part III, “Cultures,” and imaginative reflections on conceptualizations of language in Part II, “Languages.” Freeing conceptualizations of language from the

prison-houses of “word” and “nation-state,” as Reynolds urges in his “Introduction” and demonstrates in his lead chapter in Part I (“Frames”) entitled “Prismatic Agon, Prismatic Harmony: Translation, Literature, Language,” expands our theoretical horizon and brings under our critical purview the messy, untidy details of translation practices, so richly explored in the five chapters of Part IV. Jean Anderson’s “The Literary Translator as Dispersive Prism: Refracting and Recomposing Cultures” is an essay on the ways in which things and food are loci of intercultural investigation of identity (Chapter 10). Supplementing rather literal lingual translation with visual expression in Pari Azarm Motamedi’s “In Words and Colours: Lingo-Visual Translations of the Poetry of Shafi Kadkani” (Chapter 11) is a way of bridging cultural and aesthetic gaps between Persian poetry and attempts at making it meaningful to readers and, here, viewers steeped in other languages. Agency of the translator is further highlighted in Audrey Coussy’s “T is for Translation(s): Translating Nonsense Alphabets into French” (Chapter 12), Eran Hadas’s “Algorithmic Translation: New Challenges for Translation in the Age of Algorithms” (Chapter 13), and Philip Terry’s “Du Bellay in the Modern University” (Chapter 14).

“Incommensurability” is precisely the translator’s free space for puzzling out aesthetics across cultural and linguistic divides and perhaps even vicariously asserting political and ethical positions (see in particular Chapter 9 by Jernej Habjan, “Cultural Translation, or, the Political Logic of Prismatic Translation”). Translations are born in the creative choices made by translators who necessarily grapple with issues of cultural difference, whether this is located in the individual comprehending it in a set of particularized circumstances and expressing it for a targeted audience, or in politics, ethics or aesthetics, as we have seen above, or more generally in cultural practices and literary trends and in thinking of language as more than just word, as we read in Part III, “Cultures” and Part II, “Languages.” Language and culture overlap in these two parts that cover an expansive geography, from ancient Egypt, to Germany, Russia, and Taiwan to a global blogosphere, and a wide range of languages, from Indian languages, to European, East Asian, even Pharaonic Egyptian, and global Anglophone. Parts II and III together rewrite local histories of translation and reconceptualize both language and translation.

Francesca Orsini locates translation in multilingual practices in India and recovers a rich history of practices against a backdrop of assertions to the contrary in “Poetic Traffic in a Multilingual Literature

Culture: Equivalence, Parallel Aesthetics, and Language-Stretching” (Chapter 2). Yvonne Howell presents a history of Russian translation practices moving beyond considerations of “fidelity” despite theoretical condemnations of *ostebyatina*, of insertion of something “from oneself” into a translation (121), in “Through a Prism, Translated: Culture and Change in Russia” (Chapter 5). More importantly, “translation multiples,” as Kazia Szymanska and Adraina X. Jacobs respectively show in “Literary Metatranslations: when Translation Multiples Tell their own Story” (Chapter 6) and “Extreme Translation” (Chapter 7), which rely on “bad practices” in translation, including inventions of “original” texts, concepts and even intentions, afford us the opportunity to reimagine the history of translation as creative solutions to the challenges of translation, translation being “an extreme, a space where pressure is applied to push a word and its meaning toward and beyond a breaking point” (156). Image, sound, even noise, and the senses come to the fore in these creative solutions, and by extension must be taken into consideration in how we conceptualize language and read translation.

The visual dimension of Pharoanic Egyptian is an essential component of hieroglyphic languages, Hany Rashwan argues in “‘Annihilation is atop the lake’; the Visual Untranslatability of an Ancient Egyptian Short Story” (Chapter 3), and noise is integral to poetics, as Cosima Bruno shows in “Translation Poetry: the Poetics of Noise in Hsia Yu’s *Pink Noise*” (Chapter 8). “Grammalepsis,” or “the process and the moment when a material and formal gesture of (potential, virtual) affect and significance shifts and moves” (99), as John Cayley demonstrates in “[Mirroring] Events at the Sense Horizon: Translation over Time,” can inform reading translation as the “movement form gestural to readable” (99) that relies on reading (words), hearing (sounds), and visualizing (images). Here, language is understood as multilingual in two principal ways. In the first instance, languages interact and shape each other even within the current imagined monolingualism of each language. Multilingualism describes both the co-existence of languages in a common environment and the ways in which they mingle, interact and shape each other outside the machinery of translation. In the second, language is more than just word; rather, it encompasses image, sound and even embodiment. Such imaginings of language, the mission of *Creative Multilingualism*, are the gifts of *Prismatic Translation*. They transform translation studies and make them immediately relevant to comparative literature by carving out a space for identifying untidy details, insertions, inventions, and anxieties

which are initially felt in “a bristling of sense” but are now instrumental in the articulation of the various reading processes involving intercultural dialogues and exchanges.