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Reece Jones, *Violent Borders: Refugees and the Right to Move,* London: Verso: 2016. 224pp. ISBN: 978-1-78478-471-3

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Violent Borders: Refugees and the Right to Move, by Reece Jones is an engaging read, enriched by the personal experiences of the writer and filled with the most intricate of details. The author of the book makes a perfect combination of the literary flourishes of a fiction writer with academic rigour. This results in a text that is set apart from more mundane academic works. The introduction to the book opens with the author's trip to Morocco over a weekend in November 2014 leading a group of American students studying in Spain. The author evocatively depicts the melancholy at the borders of modern nation states. The book brings to light the dominant idea across the media of wealthy societies that "violence at borders is inevitable when less developed, less orderly countries rub against the rich, developed states of the world" (p.4). This book brings to the fore the dichotomies and inequalities between nations in a globalized world. The security that comes with belonging to a developed nation (Spain or the United States of America in this case) vis-à-vis the insecurity that is associated with comparatively less developed nations (Morocco or Mexico in this case) is symbolically depicted on various occasions throughout the book.

> As soon as our bus, with its EU license plates, arrived at the lot, fifteen or twenty Moroccan youths, roughly the same age as the American students, surrounded the vehicle, peering underneath it… For the study-abroad students, safely seated inside taking cell-phone videos, this was just part of the adventure (pp. 1–2)

Chapter 1 exposes the dual nature of European borders, where on the one hand there remains the dominant narrative of the removal of borders within Europe, and on the other hand there remains the reality of strict border controls and violence on the borders with non-European countries. "The reality is that EU borders were not removed in the 1990s, but were simply moved to different locations" (p. 17). In the wake of the recent migration crisis at the EU's borders, Jones poses the question of whom is to blame for deaths at Europe's frontiers. While the EU blames much of the crisis on smugglers and human traffickers, whose actions put the migrants' lives at grave risk, the author claims that such a claim "obscures the role that EU border policy and enforcement plays in increasing deaths" (p.26). Chapter 2 studies the U.S.-Mexico border. The progression of the world towards an era of hardened and securitized borders is aptly outlined by Jones through the case of the U.S.-Mexico border, where the distinction between security and policing, and militarization and war making are fast blurring (p.38). Jones skillfully steers the book from being trapped into the traditional

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Euro-American narratives by making mention of the border melancholies of the lesser-developed world in Chapter 3, entitled “The Global Border Regime”

> The wealthy Western states are not the only ones restricting movement at borders… Instead, states as diverse as Israel, India, Bangladesh, and Australia are engaging in similar practices, with similarly devastating consequences for people who want to move (p.48)

Chapter 4 again makes a case for the free movement of people through the example of the American billionaire, Andrew Carnegie. The Carnegies were undocumented immigrants from Scotland fleeing poverty and distress when they arrived at the docks of New York City back in the 1880s and eventually rose up to being one of the wealthiest families in the world (p.72). Drawing parallels, Jones claims that today’s migrants, just as the Carnegies a century and a half ago, are escaping poor living conditions and job prospects (p.73). But rather than being welcomed by an open border and access to opportunities, the potential Carnegies of today are barred by the overwhelming violence by the state. Chapter 5 discusses the tyranny of enclosures and the bounding of the global commons. The idea of territoriality and the attempt to influence or control people and resources by delimiting and asserting control over a geographical area has been a continuous phenomenon since the emergence of sedentary agriculture around 10,000 BC (p.91). But the irony of our times is that migrants from disorderly states, which are mostly creations of European colonialism, are denied the right to move to Europe and escape the very artificial borders left behind by Europe (p.118). Chapter 6 sheds light on the double standards of ideas such as globalization and free movement from a political-economic perspective. The so-called borderless world of globalization, while ensuring movement of capital and raw materials to the labour-surplus parts of the world, in fact restricts the free movement of workers. For Jones: “Free trade agreements probably make sense – if they are accompanied by the free movement of people” (p.139).

Chapter 7 takes the discourse on borders and mobility beyond mere human movements to animal habitats, river runoffs etc. Jones makes a persuasive case for the impact of borders on climate change and the environment. Arbitrary borders are “designed to prevent the movement of only one species, humans, but it inevitably also disrupts the habitats of all the other large animals” (p.140).

> By allowing each country to put the well-being of the people inside its borders before the well-being of the world as a whole, borders fracture the regulation of the environment and prevent meaningful action to combat climate change (p.10)

Without denying the sedentary nature of humans – being deeply attached to homelands and nations – movement has been an inextricable part of the human experience. The book reestablishes this fact by going back to a distant point in the past when “all humans were hunter-gatherers who moved with animal migrations and seasonal sources of food. The wealth and power of early European states were built on long-distance trade and movement, and globalization today is premised on goods

and services moving around the world, connecting producers and consumers in distant places" (p.162). The book presents the complex relationship between mobility and fixity. While mobility and movement are benchmarks of modernity on the one hand, on the other hand they have increasingly come to be associated with suspicion and fear. It is through this complex relationship that the book sheds light on the hypocrisies of the globalized world and the myth of a world without borders. The overwhelming restrictions to the movement of people by modern nation-states at their peripheries through strict border controls like barbed-wire fences, razor cables, walls, security cameras etc. are the order of the day in the richer parts of the world. Restrictions over mobility that prioritize citizens' rights over human rights give rise to violence, leading to death in certain cases. While there exists a wide array of literature focusing on the direct violence at the borders leading to death caused by excesses by border guards, Jones goes beyond this and brings to the fore the structural violence at borders. In short, the book is a fabulous and insightful read with a balanced perspective from both the developed and developing world.