

# THE UNTRANSLATABILITY OF THE COLONIAL OTHER IN LATE-VICTORIAN GOTHIC: RICHARD MARSH'S *THE BEETLE* (1897)

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## 1. Introduction

The Victorian writer Richard Marsh published his gothic novel *The Beetle* in September 1897, just two months after Bram Stoker published *Dracula*. In opposition to Stoker's canonical vampire narration, *The Beetle* has been ignored by critics and readers alike for over a century, despite having outpaced in popularity and selling to Bram Stoker's masterpiece, being qualified at its time as "a very ingenious book of horrors, on which Mr. Richard Marsh is to be congratulated" (Anonymous 1897: 99) and reaching its twentieth impression within the ten years after its first edition.<sup>1</sup> The last two decades have witnessed a renewed critical interest in Marsh's long-forgotten novel as a key text to analyse manifold aspects of the Victorian fin de siècle, such as late-Victorian Gothic, degeneration, feminism, Decadentism and sexuality (Halberstam 2002; Hurley 2004; Harris and Vernoooy 2012).

Aligned with similar traditional readings of Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, all critical analyses have delved into Richard Marsh's *The Beetle* as a novel of reverse colonisation. The plot of the narration indeed facilitates that reading: the novel deals with an Egyptian priestess who infiltrates late-Victorian London seeking revenge on a Liberal politician for an encounter they had years before the narration opens. The rationality of the British characters is put under threat as the Egyptian character exhibits metamorphic abilities (changing from human to animal and from woman to man) and she also exercises mesmeric and telepathic powers.

This contribution seeks to complement the growing scholarship on the novel by situating the narration in closer interaction with the colonial context in which it was

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<sup>1</sup> It is quite significant that Richard Marsh's *The Beetle* was translated into Spanish for the first time in 2018 (Ediciones Valdemar).

published. I will argue that the novel is an expression of fin de siècle anxiety over gender identity, as it has already been argued, but additionally I will point out that the xenophobic discourse which permeates the narration is an expression of the untranslatability of the colonial Other which resulted from the growing presence of colonial collectives in Victorian Britain and the British occupation of Egypt in the late-Victorian period. For this purposes, I use translation theory and its intersections with postcolonial thought as a theoretical framework to analyse self-Other encounters in Richard Marsh's novel. Among other concerns, I draw upon Sarat Maharaj (1994) and his views on cultural untranslatability to argue that the racist discourses which over-inhabit Marsh's novel illustrate late-Victorian Britons' inability to cope with difference at a time of intense colonial circulation in the metropolis.

## **2. Cultural Untranslatability, Colonial Otherness and the Victorian Fin-de-Siècle**

In her essay "The Politics of Translation", the postcolonial critic Gayatri C. Spivak (1993) stated that "translation is the most intimate act of reading" (183). Spivak's suggestive remark anticipates a fully established notion in translation studies, namely that the act of translation exceeds a text-to-text transition to touch upon issues of identity and difference. Indeed, drawing on Spivak's essay again, "one of the ways to get around the confines of one's 'identity' . . . is to work at someone else's title, as one works with a language that belongs to many others. This, after all, is one of the seductions of translating. It is a simple miming of the responsibility to the trace of the other in the self" (1993: 179). The increasing consideration of self/other relations and larger ethical issues of cultural difference in critical theory has led the field of translation to a widening of its epistemological horizons and interdisciplinary ambitions in which the politics and ethics of translation practice have become a pressing issue and have triggered, Sousa Ribeiro (2004) argues, "a dislocation from the axis of applied linguistics to the axis of cultural studies" (186).

Out of the increasing interdisciplinarity that translation studies have been undergoing in the last decades, postcolonial thought have provided the theory of translation with a fertile ground on which to rethink and reconfigure its ethical corollaries. Patrick Corcoran (2016) has significantly referred to a "postcolonial turn in translation studies" (274) in the 1990s in which translation practitioners and postcolonial thinkers and writers came to realise that they shared key concerns and preoccupations. Indeed, it can be argued that both translators and postcolonial scholars engage in establishing avenues of communication across languages and cultures, often among asymmetrical power relations. This entails making the 'other' culture 'readable', reducing its alterity to make it fit in the epistemological frames of the target culture. From a postcolonial point of view, translation practice can be seen to eliminate the signifiers of difference for the sake of sameness and transparency.

The affinities between translation and postcolonial thought have also found their way through critical insights into identity. Such was the concern of Homi K. Bhabha in his influential series of essays *The Location of Culture* (1994). In this work, Bhabha also employs translation as a metaphor for cross-cultural communication and its impact upon the

identity of the self. For Bhabha, “translation is the performative nature of cultural communication” (1994: 326). It can be argued in turn that in identity construction, translation is a performative act which necessarily involves actively listening and interpreting the other. In other words, the construction of the self always relies on the translation of the other for its configuration. This notion has become one of the cardinal ideas in postcolonial thought and was already suggested in Edward Said’s groundbreaking *Orientalism* (1978), a work which, Sousa Ribeiro (2004) cleverly points out, “to a great extent, even if not explicitly, is about translation” (191). Actually, Bhabha follows Said in stating that colonisers defined and cemented their identity in opposition to the native by building a structure of differences “between the familiar (Europe, the West, ‘us’) and the strange (the Orient, the East, ‘them’)” (Said 1978: 42). Nevertheless, Bhabha abandons the Saidian conception of coloniser/colonised relations as non-fluid and monolithic to lay bare the flowing transactions operating in the construction of the coloniser’s identity, or in Necati Polat’s words (2011), “Bhabha departs in his reading of the colonial situation from the earlier and better known take by Edward Said by replacing an essentialised dichotomy of the coloniser and the colonised with one that is transversal and differentialising” (1259).

An analogous take on translation was put forward by the cultural theorist Stuart Hall in his analysis of diasporic identity. Hall focuses his analysis on “identity formations which cut across and intersect natural frontiers, and which are composed of people who have been dispersed forever from their homelands” (1992: 310). In Hall’s view, these diasporic collectives are “irrevocably translated” (1992: 310; original emphasis) and their hybridity, it can be added, compels them to forever navigate and negotiate between two identities. In this sense, translation works as a trope for the transitional character of diasporic identity, perpetually navigating between home and host cultures. Hence, drawing on Stuart Hall again, diaspora experience is characterised “not by essence and purity, but by the recognition of a necessary heterogeneity and diversity; by a conception of ‘identity’ that lives with and through, not despite, difference; by hybridity (1994: 396).

The South-African art critic Sarat Maharaj has also delved into the practice of translation as a lens to analyse issues of hybridity and difference. He also makes a metaphorical appropriation of translation to explore issues of the negotiation of difference, but his own take on the topic focuses on untranslatability. Maharaj’s point of departure lies in asserting that occasionally the product of translation is something hybrid, something that does not belong either to the source or target cultures but it is actually “a product of translation’s failure . . . that falls short of the dream-ideal of translation as a ‘transparent’ passage from one idiom to another, from self to other” (2003: 299). The critic is obviously approaching translation by considering the discipline’s impasses and limitations and acknowledging those products of translation that might be deemed ‘untranslatable’. However, Maharaj proposes to look at that ‘untranslatability’ in a positive light, particularly as an opportunity to accept and cope with difference.

Maharaj articulates his discussion of untranslatability around the politics of racial segregation of Apartheid.<sup>2</sup> In the author’s view, the Apartheid regime grounded its doctrine of racial segregation on the basis that some cultures are *untranslatable* and unbridgeable

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<sup>2</sup> As he has stated in an interview, Sarat Maharaj grew up in South Africa at the peak of the Apartheid regime. He went to a university for non-whites of Indian origin, among several segregated universities for different ethnic groups created by the regime’s racial segregation laws (2002: para. 18)

and therefore deemed to be ethnically and culturally separated. Such a bleak notion of cultural exchange, Maharaj argues, “served to underpin [Apartheid’s] doctrine of an absolute ‘epistemic barrier’ . . . for institutionalising a radical sense of ethnic and cultural difference and separateness” (2003: 299) and to keep self and other, one might add, radically opaque and excluded from each other.

As Maharaj himself has pointed out in an interview, what he suggests is to construct an “ethics of difference” in order to “deal with alterity and otherness without always translating it into an epistemological frame of your own in which the Other is entirely present to you and accepted through the filter of your mental categories” (2002: no pages). To put it simply, different cultures can co-exist and communicate to each other without translating and reducing their differences to sameness and by accepting heterogeneity, difference and plurality instead.

In light of the aforementioned, I contend that translation can be deployed as a powerful and productive metaphor in order to explore the problems arising in the negotiation of difference. This is the spirit in which I undertake my analysis of Richard Marsh’s *The Beetle* (1897). The context of its publication – the Victorian fin de siècle – truly facilitates such reading. The Victorian period – particularly the period historically known as ‘New Imperialism’ between 1870 and the First World War – witnessed an intense colonial activity which led to the zenith of the British Empire. As Edward Said artfully outlined in *Orientalism*, the highly successful British imperial project not only relied on military force and aggression but it was also supported by a unified corpus of stereotypes, assumptions and representations fabricated by European colonial powers in order to justify and perpetuate their domination over the East. Said (1978) cites a ‘colonial discourse’ to refer to “the enormously systematic discipline by which European culture was able to manage – and even produce – the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically, and imaginatively during the post-Enlightenment period” (3).

The agents in charge of translating the Orient for the West were linguists, ethnographers, explorers, anthropologists, naturalists, museum curators, among other specialists. All of them engaged in an academic and scientific endeavour to examine and peruse almost every aspect of the Orient which ultimately justified the European domination over the latter. Considering this context, it is striking that Marsh’s novel features a plethora of encounters in which the colonial Other is untranslatable, undecidable, precisely in a period in which the Orientalist project compiled extensive imperial knowledge about the colonial Other to make him/her readable for the West. In my ensuing analysis I aim to demonstrate that translation can be a fruitful metaphor to analyse Marsh’s representation of the colonial Other. Among other concerns, I will contend that the novel’s narration of irrational encounters in which the colonial other is rendered untranslatable ultimately reveals the inconsistencies both of the Orientalist project and Victorian xenophobic thinking.

### **3. ‘This is London, not a Doghole in the Desert’: Richard Marsh’s *The Beetle* (1897)**

Richard Marsh’s *The Beetle* is a shining example of late-Victorian Gothic fiction. The narration is divided into four sections narrated by four different narrators: Robert Holt (an unemployed clerk who becomes homeless), Sidney Atherton (a post-Darwinist scientist),

Marjorie Lindon (representative of the figure of the New Woman) and Augustus Champnell (a confidential agent and detective). These characters' narrations revolve around two other characters that do not have any narration of their own but whose dark relationship lies at the heart of the novel: The titular Beetle – an Egyptian creature with metamorphic and telepathic abilities – and the Liberal politician Paul Lessingham, both of whom had a violent encounter in Cairo twenty years before the narration opens. This variety of narrators parallels the author's take on fin-de-siècle genres which can be appreciated in the novel: social-realism, parody of New Woman fiction, science fiction, and pastiche of detective fiction. This fragmentation in terms of genre and characterization coalesces with the fluctuation of identity which is characteristic of this novel in particular and of late-Victorian Gothic and fin de siècle culture in general, and seems an apt starting point for the idea of the untranslatability of the Other that I pursue in this contribution.

Throughout the novel, several encounters are narrated between the titular Oriental creature – which is alternatively referred to as the Beetle, the Arab and the Woman of the Songs – and the different characters in the novel. These encounters and the identity confusion arising out of them typify Edward Said's main thesis in *Orientalism*, namely that the European self constructed its self-image in opposition to the Oriental Other. When the knowledge of the Other fails to be pinned down, the identity of the self becomes permeable. The different encounters between the British characters and the Beetle are characterised by a high degree of sexual violence, horror and aggression. This paves the way for analysing those encounters as a backdrop for codifying gender issues, which were materialized in the late-Victorian age through the blurring of gender roles in general and the anxieties towards feminism and homosexuality in particular.

The character of Marjorie Lindon represents the late-Victorian figure of the New Woman. An obvious materialization of fin-de-siècle feminism, New Women challenged the pillars of Victorian patriarchy in their pursuit of intellectual ambitions, their fluctuating perspectives on motherhood, their fierce defence of female suffrage and their ambivalent support of free love. In the 1880s, Elaine Showalter (1991) has claimed, "feminism, the women's movement, and what was called 'the Woman Question' challenged the traditional institutions of marriage, work and the family" (7). Additionally, so-called New Woman writers portrayed straightforwardly sexual topics (Ledger 1995: 23-24). This explains that New Women were typically ridiculed in the satirical press as manly and betraying the Victorian female ideal. Richard Marsh raises clearly the late-Victorian Woman Question through the character of Marjorie. She is a product of "the age of feminine advancement", claims Atherton (Marsh 2004: 129), who defies her conservative father, Mr Lindon, by getting engaged with a radical politician, Lessingham. Her intellectual inquisitiveness is exteriorized by her attendance to parliamentary speeches or Working Women's Clubs and by her personal considerations on social issues of the age (187-89). Marjorie, as a New Woman, is "a transgressive social element" (Wolfreys 2004: 28). Her intellectual ambitions and her insubordination both to her father and the remaining male characters turn her into a figure that circumvents domination from patriarchy and Victorian society. Significantly, Marjorie is cross-dressed as a man after being kidnapped by the Oriental creature:

Miss Lindon, at this moment, is . . . attired in a rotten, dirty pair of boots; a filthy, tattered pair of trousers; a ragged, unwashed apology for a shirt; a greasy, ancient, shapeless coat; and a frowsy peaked cloth cap (p. 285)

Agent Champnell ventures accurately that the Arab has disguised Marjorie like this to camouflage her into the London crowd. It is that very camouflage what horrified late-Victorians: the possibility that genders could be intertwined and confused.<sup>3</sup> The image of Marjorie being dressed like a man triggers Atherton to state “what on earth should make her do a thing like that? Marjorie, the most retiring, modest girl on all God’s earth, walk about in broad daylight, in such a costume” (285). Atherton and Lessingham are horrified in the same measure at Marjorie’s manly dressing as well as her *manly* behaviour.

In the late-Victorian Western imagination, the Oriental woman was a highly sexualized figure associated to wantonness, carnality and lasciviousness. In light of this, the Orient materialized in the Western male’s psyche as a locus of unrepressed desire where sexual excesses could be unleashed, liberated from European moral codes, this way establishing a connection with a recurrent vocabulary in Orientalist discourse by which the Orient is ‘penetrated’ by the Westerner (McLeod 2000: 45-46). It seems plausible to suggest that Lessingham and Atherton’s panic over Marjorie being in contact with a dangerous Eastern woman is actually veiling a deeper fear that Marjorie might become an Eastern woman, distancing herself from the British ideal of the chaste and passive Victorian female.

Late-Victorian fears of homosexuality and decadence are also brought to the fore in *The Beetle*. The Decadent movement refers to a European group of late-Victorian artists related to the Aesthetic movement, among which we may cite distinguished male authors such as Oscar Wilde or Charles Baudelaire. Just like the New Woman, the Decadent also posed threats to mid-Victorian values. Among other concerns, Decadents embraced the *Carpe Diem* aphorism up to dangerous limits, rejected reject the natural in favour of the artificial or undervalued the status of love or religion (Showalter 1991: 169; Marvick 1992: 4). Elaine Showalter likewise claims that the term decadence was appropriated derogatorily by late-Victorians to describe anything that seemed unnatural or perverse and also as a euphemism for homosexuality (Showalter 1991: 169, 171). That the oriental creature subdues its victims to an undefined sexual torture is quite clear. What must have been truly unnerving in fin-de-siècle readership was the gender transmigration potential which, in the characters’ perception, the Oriental creature exhibits when assaulting her victims. In the opening of the novel, Robert Holt, homeless and out of desperation, breaks into a seemingly deserted house. However, the house is dwelled by the Egyptian creature, who mesmerises, undresses and sexually abuses Holt. The sexual connotations between Holt and the Arab in their encounter are remarkable, as it is exhibited in Holt’s report:

A look came on [The Beetle’s] face, as I stood naked in front of him, which, if it was meant for a smile, was a satyr’s smile [. . .] ‘What a white skin you have, – how white!’ [. . .] He paused, devouring me with his glances (p. 55)

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<sup>3</sup> As an additional illustration, note the following 1895 anonymous poem called “Sexomania”: “... a new fear my bosom vexes / Tomorrow there may be no sexes! /Unless, as an end to all pother / Each one in fact becomes the other /Woman was woman, man was man / When Adam delved and Eve span / Now he can’t dig and she won’t spin / Unless ‘tis tales all slang and sin!” (*Punch* 1895: 203).

The homoerotic connotations of the previous passage are absolutely confirmed further on when the Oriental creature kisses Holt:

Fingers were pressed into my cheeks, they were thrust into my mouth, they touched my staring eyes, shut my eyelids, then opened them again, and – horror of horrors! – the blubber lips were pressed to mine – the soul of something evil entered into me in the guise of a kiss (p. 57)

It is important to highlight that at this point in the novel Holt (and by extension, the reader) truly believes the creature to be a man, “for this reason, if for no other, that it was impossible such a creature could be feminine” (53). Accordingly, the horror endured by Holt because of the sexual abuse to which he is being subjugated is aimed at suggesting abhorrence as much as to homosexuality as to sexual intercourse between different races and miscegenation.

Atherton’s scientific and authoritative gaze, clearly posited in a superior stand to Holt’s according to the novel’s power relations, provides a further U-turn in the plot when Atherton identifies the Arab to be not a man, but a woman (152). His post-Darwinist classificatory and analytical knowledge is perceived when he states that “the face is a man’s . . . and the voice is a man’s . . . but the body . . . is a woman’s” (180-81). Significantly, immediately after the reader is led to think that the Oriental creature is female, it is Marjorie who is bodily violated:

When it reached the head of the bed, what I feared – with what a fear! – would happen, did happen. It began to find its way inside, – to creep between the sheets . . . I felt it coming nearer and nearer, inch by inch; I knew that it was upon me . . . I felt something touch my hair. And then oblivion did come to my aid. For the first time in my life I swooned (p. 207)

Lessingham’s eventual report of the events in Cairo twenty years before finally neutralizes the ambiguity on the creature’s gender by making clear it is female. But remarkably by that point, the novel has already featured two homoerotic situations, between two males and between two females respectively, and both involving an Eastern subject with penetrating abilities. Consequently, the novel craves to forge an alliance between the oriental/exotic element and the perversity attributed both to miscegenation and homosexuality in late-Victorian culture.

As it can be observed, the novel articulates its plot around a series of moments of gender mistranslation and confusion in which the horror engendered by the inscrutable Other serves to put in relieve fin de siècle anxieties over gender and sexuality. I want now to delve more explicitly into the encounter between Victorian self and colonial Other metaphorically as an act of translation. It has been repeatedly argued that the British imperial project relied to a great extent on the procurement of colonial knowledge about the colonised which sought to justify and perpetuate the domination over colonial subjects. This thirst for knowledge gave rise to the rise of anthropology and ethnology in the 19th century in the wake of Darwinism, together with a plethora of pseudosciences which craved

to demonstrate the arguable superiority of the white race. Significantly, Richard Marsh's narration features Orientalist knowledge as incomplete or inadequate, what entails Victorian characters' inability to translate the colonial Other for the Western psyche.

In the novel, Sidney Atherton is one of those late-Victorian scientists who are heir to Darwinism. The first encounter between Atherton and the Beetle illustrates the untranslatability of the colonial Other which the narration seems to cement in order to justify Victorian xenophobic thinking. This encounter takes place in Atherton's laboratory, in which the scientist exhibits the classificatory drives which characterised the Orientalist project. His analytical perspective is applied to gestures, when he describes the Beetle's head inclination as "particularly Oriental" (104) as well as to the evolution of races, when he states that "negroes, and especially negresses, are apt to age with extreme rapidity" (140). Atherton's Orientalist background, however, falters when scrutinizing the Oriental, to whom he is not capable of locating in "the exact part of the east from which he came" (140). This impossibility of reaching the origin of the Beetle equates with the characters' inability to read its/his/her traces, making evident the British's inaptitude to translate and control the colonial Other.

This undecidability of the colonial Other in terms of origin, gender and identity is significantly at odds with the rising presence of racialised collectives in Victorian London. Cultural historians have repeatedly pointed out the multicultural character of the Victorian metropolis due to the rising influx of colonials. For example, Dickerson (2008) has pointed out a rise in African-American immigration into nineteenth-century Britain in the decades preceding the American Civil War (53) and Judith Bryan (2004) has identified a sizeable presence of non-white subjects in Victorian London records all over the nineteenth century (66-68). In light of this, the narration can be read, not only and simply as an expression of Victorian xenophobic discourse, but also as a temporary ethical response by Victorian Britons faced with a changing multicultural society which, in their mind, compromised their national identity. This entails that Victorian Britain's xenophobic feelings as are articulated in the novel should not be seen only as a negative ahistorical reaction to all things foreign but they ought to be placed in closer relation to the historical context of the novel.

Together with the aforementioned growing hybridization of Victorian Britain, a historical event that has been often ignored in the criticism of the novel is the occupation of Egypt in 1882 and the ensuing bittering of Anglo-Egyptian relations in the nineteenth century. The occupation of Egypt was the political manifestation of the all-encompassing Victorian fascination with ancient Egypt and the unravelling of its archaic knowledge as the epitome of the Orientalist project – the Rosseta Stone being a material symbol today of Western scientific control over Ancient Egypt.<sup>4</sup> Britain's decision to govern unilaterally the Egyptian territory rekindled old French resentments, traced back to the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century. Anglo-French rivalry for power arose when Napoleon invaded Egypt in a military and scientific expedition in 1798 and recrudesced during the Napoleonic Wars (1803-15). In this light, the novel can be analysed as a cultural response to a period of heightened military activity in Egypt at the time.

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<sup>4</sup> Wolfreys (2004) has cleverly suggested that Detective Champnell's name "may echo that of Jean François Champollion, the French linguist and decoder of the Rosetta Stone" (27).

A quite interesting reading following this line of thought has been provided by Julian Wolfreys (2007), who points out anti-imperialist traces in the narrative by suggesting that the Beetle's inhuman actions on the Westerners come determined "out of a sense of injustice for the 'barbaric' English defilement of ancient Egypt's sacred locations, where tomb and temple have become effaced as a result of colonial and imperial intrusion" (21). Although Marsh's text is ostensibly pro-imperialist and jingoistic, the voice of the subaltern can be argued to slip through in the narrative when the Beetle asks rhetorically "who, at any time, has shown mercy unto me, that I should show mercy unto any?" (66). The Egyptian creature's words points to a long traumatic history of colonial aggression for which she is seeking retaliation. This is further reinforced when it is revealed that the origin of Paul Lessingham's conflict with the Egyptian character – and the politician's phobic revulsion towards beetles – was a violent encounter both had in Egypt when Lessingham ventured into the native quarter in Cairo. The last volume of the novel, narrated by the secret agent and detective Augustus Champnell, ends with a train wreck in which the Egyptian creature arguably dies. However, detective Champnell, the character who should bring resolution to the mystery in the tradition of detection fiction, cannot fully affirm that the organic traces left in the train compartment belong either to an animal or a human. Western science and ontology therefore fail to 'know' the colonial Other, what points again to the high degree of untranslatability that characterises self-other encounters as narrated in the novel.

#### **4. Conclusion**

Throughout this chapter I have argued that Richard Marsh's Gothic novel *The Beetle* provides a shape-shifting narration whose titular metamorphosing creature codifies late-Victorian concerns over the instability of gender roles, specifically fin-de-siècle anxieties over feminism and homosexuality. Additionally, I have pointed out that Victorian characters' inability to metaphorically translate the colonial Other's sexual and cultural identity results in xenophobic and racist feelings.

By applying the notion of untranslatability as derived from postcolonial insights into translation theory, this contribution has argued that Marsh's novel does not merely reproduce a formulaic narrative of reverse colonisation. Instead, the novel facilitates a reading of Victorian xenophobia as a symptom of the arguable inability of nineteenth century society to cope with difference – an inability no doubt exacerbated by the intense colonial activity in the Victorian fin de siècle, the traumatic traces of the occupation of Egypt and the arcane knowledge of ancient Egyptians which seriously compromised the Orientalist project.

Marsh contradictorily renders the colonial Other as untranslatable and unfixed at the crux of the British Imperialism, just when the Orient had been already subjected to the classificatory frenzy exercised by post-Darwinism. This wavering between colonial knowledge and colonial untranslatability reveals the inconsistencies of the Orientalist project – a project which sought to scientifically and academically know the colonial other while simultaneously rendering him/her untranslatable.

Delving into the complexities of self-Other relations in a text published in “the golden age of British racism” (Fryar 1984: 165) might shed light on the perpetuation of racist discourses today. As anti-refugee and far-right politics increasingly proliferate and the imminent Brexit has unveiled deep-seated fears on the impact of immigration over national identity, Marsh’s text might serve as a powerful reminder of the necessity of accepting seemingly untranslatable differences in order to overcome racist attitudes.

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