

CENTERING THE OTHER: MAKING THE NATIVE VISIBLE

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ABSTRACT: *Constructs of Othering, is a construct of Western colonialism discourse constituting the ideologies of imperialism and the motivations to “civilize” the East. Since discourse by nature is rule-govern, it will define, describe what is possible to say or what is not possible or not say in a particular situation and its conventions will determine what to write, how to write and how to represent the Self in the writing. In the process of Othering, the Self is centred, glorified and made visible while the Other is vilified, silenced and made invisible. The strategies of Othering are manifold and include the use if binary oppositions, unvoicing and dehumanizing. The fundamental element in the project of Othering is the provision of positive features to the Occident and negative ones to the Orient. The paper engages the construct of Othering using an Orientalist reading position in demonstrating the absurdities of representations in western colonialist discourse. The object of the paper is to dismantle the cloak of “invisibility” shrouding the Other so that true representations may be enabled. The paper exemplifies the above notions using William Somerset Maugham’s short story *The Yellow Streak*.*

Keywords: *othering, ideology, colonialism discourse.*

This paper examines to what extent representations of ‘Othering’ in W.S. Maugham's narratives a colonialist writer, is a construct of colonial and imperial ideology. This paper particularly focuses on British colonialism in South East Asia since most of Maugham’s short fiction is set in this region during the nineteenth century. Apart from providing the historical background, this paper will also discuss issues pertaining to colonialism, with reference to the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized in colonial societies, in South East Asia, with special focus on Malaya (Malaysia). Colonialism extended to every part of the world, including Malaya. It could not have occurred without the existence of a set of beliefs and ideologies that helped to justify the possession, occupation and ruling of other people and their lands.

A discussion on colonialism is significant to this study, as Maugham's literary works are set in the colonial period and expands the colonialist ideology and authority. If we begin with a basic

definition of colonialism, we can say that "Colonialism is the name given to the method used by the industrially developed Western nations. The entire Western colonial enterprise, began by the Spanish and Portuguese, continued by the French, the British, the Dutch, the Germans, and the Italians and fortified in its last phase by the Americans, was a venture that reshaped geography and history in almost all of Asia, Africa and Latin America" (Murat Sayym, 2004: 3).

Nevertheless, the boundaries of colonialism, like those of many literary eras, are difficult to draw. The history of colonialism as a policy or practice goes back to centuries and I believe the story of colonialism is not over yet. Literature of that period often reflected the concerns of colonialism through the depiction of native peoples and foreign landscapes or the vague allusions to distant plantations. As colonial activity gained momentum in the late nineteenth century, the reflection of that activity- as a celebration of Europe's might or perhaps because of the fear of what lay in the wilderness – grew in intensity. Thus roughly, one can say that the literary movement supporting colonialism began around 1875, through World War I and up to World War II. Around 1945 colonialism was a primarily feature of British literature, given that the British dominated the East.

The ideology of depicting European identity as superior in comparison to all the non-European peoples and their cultures is sustained on their ideology. These representations were perpetuated by the English expatriates in the overseas colonies, where they considered the 'Other' as 'inferior'. In order to legitimize imperialism, the idea that there was a clear racial and cultural divide between the white or the European races and the Other or the natives was planted in the minds of people. This idea of dividing the races into two opposing groups stemmed from Eurocentric beliefs. These two groups, the native and the European, were separated not just in terms of natural, physical differences but also in terms of specific traits, traits that were significant to culture (Wodak cited in Coulthard 1996: 113). Moreover, the particular traits that were singled out, based on casual personal observation, were attributed to the whole race and assumed to be hereditary or acquired from birth. This was done to create the construct of the

‘Other’ as different from the ‘Self’. The ‘Other’ is negatively represented, while everything about the ‘Self’ is positive.

Scholarly interest in colonialism arose when colonial empires began to lose their international legitimacy and ceased to be viable forms of political organizations. Earlier, when colonialism was an object of mobilization, scholars and intellectuals were most captivated by its liberation and the possibilities of "modernization" and "development" for the colonized peoples.

This research paper based on Said’s notion of *Orientalism*, the imperial idea that fundamental cultural differences between the European and non European world was profoundly important to the civilizing mission in a number of ways. For example, the characterization of non-European societies as backward and primitive legitimized conquest of these societies and justified the measures colonial powers used to control and transform these peoples. Antony Anghie tries to show the role of international law in legitimizing colonialism: the civilizing mission’s hidden agenda (Anghie, 2005: 5-6).

Therefore, we see that the relationship between the Occident and the Orient is based on binary oppositions. Europeans were categorized as superior, civilized, advanced, sophisticated, brave, rational, and intelligent, while the natives were portrayed to be blood-thirsty, stupid, slave of customs, irrational, lazy et cetera. This ‘created’ an urgent need to put everything in order; imperial intervention was considered an absolute necessity. In accordance, it was the most natural thing for the European race to intervene, dominate, control and rule the Orient. More than that, since the natives, depicted as devoid of natural intelligence, were incapable of utilizing fully their natural environment for their benefit, Europeans had to carry out the job for them. These binary opposites were broadcasted to legitimize their presence in the East.

The West employed its power of discourse over the East, and it did not permit the Orientals to represent themselves and their culture. This illustrates Said's notion of power: in *Orientalism*

as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient (Said, 1995: 3).

This analysis here will discuss the relationship between Maugham's narrative, which is rooted in colonial ideology, and the textual product as an agent of dominance. This process will link the text to its social and cultural origins. Doing so, will reveal how colonialist assumptions are reinforced through imperialist literature.

‘Othering’ as a Colonialist Construct

This section aims to demonstrate the Western constructs of the "Self" and the "Other". It needs to be emphasized here that the stereotypical representations of the Other not only originated from travel writings or made popular by adventure fiction but also were driven from scientific theories and the discourses of imperial politics. In other words, literature science and politics worked hand in hand to construct the "Orient". This is what Said terms “Manifest Orientalism” (1995: 206). Manifest orientalism refers to the innumerable examples of Orientalist knowledge produced in different texts, essays, images, cartoons and movies, in order to emphasize the connection between the imaginative assumptions of Orientalism and its material effects.

Othering, or to construct the ‘other’, resulted from Western colonialism. This section will attempt to examine the processes involved in the construction of the ‘Other’, and also the various ways in which the Other has been constituted in travel writings and in popular adventure fiction.

Discourse is by nature governed by the ruling power: the ruling power determines what is to be narrated and how to narrate an event. Therefore, it is vital that the researcher identify these hegemonic elements and their impact on Maugham’s narrative, which will be carried out in Chapter Four.

The Orient is seen as uncivilized and backward by Western writers. Said's argument reveals this clearly:

Writers as Carl Peters, Leopold de Saussure, and Charles Temple draw on the advanced/backward binarism so centrally advocated in late nineteenth-century Orientalism. Along with all other peoples variously designated as backward, degenerated, uncivilized, and retarded, the Orientals were viewed in a framework constructed out of biological determinism and moral-political admonishment (1995: 207).

Orientalism constructs binary opposition: division between the Orient and the Occident; each one assumes an opposite position to the other (McLeod 2000: 40). The positive features always associated with the Occident while the negative ones attributed to the Orient.

Western civilization, during colonization, became the way of identifying the order of value throughout the globe. This produced discourses of difference: the Westerner developed a particular hegemonic way of identifying the 'Self' as opposed to the 'Other'.

This hegemonic form of 'Othering' is one of the colonial strategies - there were many strategies that travel writings and adventure fiction employed – used to distinguish the 'Self' from the 'Other'. First of all is the construction of "we", which aims to define the Self as a group sharing similar positive characteristics. This is the starting point towards the construction of a discourse of difference in order for the 'Self' to manifest this notion and distinguish itself from the negative 'Other'. Thus, the 'we' in discourse evoked a sense of 'imagined community' in colonialist texts, which was perpetuated by Western travelogues and adventure books. Thus, "we" also forged a sense of community and camaraderie among the peoples of the West in justifying its domination over the 'Other'.

We shall look at this colonialist social identity theory according to Festinger's (1954) notion of social comparison. Basically, a positive self-concept is a part of the normal psychological functioning. There is a reasonable amount of evidence which shows that to deal

effectively with the world we need to feel good about ourselves. The idea of social comparison is to create oneself against what the other lacks.

Colonialism used this idea of social comparison, highlighting what was lacking in the Other in comparison to the ‘Self’. This constructed the Other as deficient, when looked at from the viewpoint of European standards and norms of behaviour. The Other is seen as lacking in culture, civilization, history, intelligence, discipline, morals and so on. Perceiving the East as this lacking Other instilled in the minds of the West a sense of racial, cultural and intellectual superiority. With this sense of superiority notions like ‘the white man’s burden’ were born, which then became the basis to civilize the Other.

As pointed out by Rana Kabbani (1986: 42), Egyptians are seen the uncivilized Other by Lane, who claims that this nation, with the character of its inhabitants so heavily plagued by faults, had only one hope for improvement - the enlightenment -that could be brought to it through contact with the West. Lane adds:

We may hope for, and, indeed, reasonably expect, a very great improvement in the intellectual and moral state of this people, in consequence of the introduction of European science, by which Mohammad’ Alee, in some degree, made amends for his oppressive sway (1986: 42).

In the statement above, Lane associates the Egyptians with negative representations. Lane depicts them as intellectually different (inferior) from the Europeans and with this gives reasons for Egypt to be colonized. Another example is Alfred Russell Wallace, who in his book *The Malay Archipelago*, asserts that the Malay race is rather deficient in intellect because “they are incapable of anything beyond the simplest combinations of ideas, and have little taste or energy for the requirement of knowledge” (1983: 448). Thus the colonialist writers, we see, had the same belief system of representing the Other as inferior, which was very much in accordance to imperial ideology.

We must bear in mind that travel writers have their own world view and therefore will automatically tend to look at anything that differs from their culture as negative or inferior. Collin Abraham explains that during the heyday of the empire, travel writers used to report about the native peoples' lack of discipline and industry in the tropics. The natives were perceived and depicted by Western observers as lazy. Indolence was considered a natural characteristic of the Other: something that is in the genes of these people and inherited from birth. These kinds of depictions of the East justified colonial rule. The picture given was that these natives were themselves a hindrance to their own development. With this, the colonizer made it seem as if it was the duty of the West to help these people with their progress. Thus the colonialist myth of the 'lazy native' made way for British imperialism (Abraham 2004: 51).

Savage (1984: 114) remarks that the Malays refused to provide the necessary labour force to the Anglo Saxon, as they were essentially a non-productive race, to the extent that they were not even willing to obey their colonial masters. This representation of the Malays had behind it a hidden agenda. The Malays had to be represented as lazy to justify the British policy of bringing in labour force from China and India.

The Other's lack of culture was another colonialist construct. The Other was projected as the opposite to the civilized colonial Self. The Other was labeled backward, savage, childlike, immature, et cetera and described as living in a time and manner that was very distant from the Self, who on the other hand was portrayed as cultured, matured and so on. This hegemonic form of difference was a construct that conformed to Western ideology.

According to Street (1975: 51), 'the Great Chain of Being' provided a useful model for those nineteenth century scientists who were keen to "examine, classify and arrange the whole order of nature in a national pattern". This pattern meant placing every aspect of nature, from the highest to the lowest, into a universal hierarchy. Scientists proceeded to incorporate Man into this hierarchy and went about searching for criteria to classify Man. If Man could be classified scientifically, this knowledge could then be harnessed for social, political, economic and religious

gain. It was Carl Linn, or, in Latin, Linnaeus, the Swedish naturalist, who provided the basis for all future classificatory systems in his book *Systema naturae* (1735). The contents of this book left a lasting impression not only on travel writing but on the ways Europeans made sense of their place in this world (Pratt 1992: 24).

The observing and cataloguing of the flora and fauna in the colonies was frequently churned into travelogues with a dash of adventure. Travel accounts of the Far East were reconstructed into travelogues with a story line. Boehmer explains that:

When humans were incorporated into this universal framework they were put on the same scale (though much higher) than the animals. In the system of classification involving humans, peoples from other cultures were ranked on the basis of their differences to the European man. As such, peoples from other cultures were ranked lower in the hierarchy than the European resulting in the former being categorized as either the degenerates or the evolving types, the in-betweens, the ones who filled the gap between the human and animal world (1995: 84).

There is another fundamental issue that needs to be addressed here. One cannot simply ‘decode the Other’, and translate the symbols and signs of their world and culture into a set of accessible analogues that ensures a continuum of ‘our and their’, ‘us and ‘them’. The very grid of intelligibility that would make such a reading possible is grounded in a cultural location that cannot but read what is outside through its own values. Otherness would hence be ‘individualized’ as the discovery of our own assumptions. This otherness will outstrip even the most advanced translation of terms (Hook 2005: 4).

The last decades of the nineteenth century was a time of mounting self-doubts and apprehension towards imperialism and British overseas military expenditure. The Empire was threatened both within and outside Britain. Growing Irish nationalism and socialism in the imperial centre, and the outbreak of wars such as the Anglo-Boer War, all fueled doubts towards British expansion policies. This was also a time when the effect of miscegenation in the colonies, or a regression towards a barbaric or savage state as a result of close cultural contact between the

white man and the native, took place (Boehmer 1995: 34). These fears were ignited by the theories of degeneration and atavism.

The discourse of degeneration and atavism, to some extent, influenced the representation of the European in some popular adventure stories that were written around this time. Drawn by the dialectics between “primitive” and “civilized” cultures, some of these writers chose to write about the psychological dilemma faced by those Europeans who were stuck in the colonies. The principle characters of these stories were no longer considered to be heroes but degenerates who had a string of failures to their credit (Shakila 2000: 153). The protagonist, Philip Carry, in Maugham’s *Of Human Bondage* (1915) fails in many of his ventures and become isolated and alienated in his own world. The European characters in Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* (1902) too are depicted as though they lost their cultural identity and purpose. All this depicts the colonial ideology.

Ambivalence in Representation

The binary opposition between the colonizer and the colonized is dismantled by revealing ambivalence in the colonialist representation of its subject.

Ideology and identity is not fixed but fluid. According to Jacques Derrida, the two members of the opposition are not completely opposite (2008: 2). Thus, examined carefully, we shall see that the depiction of the colonizer-colonized relationship in Maugham's short stories is also fluid. In this manner Bhabha's view of colonialist discourse differs from Said's *Orientalism*. Said outlines fixed binaries between the East (colonized) and the West (colonizer) in colonialist writings. Bhabha confutes these neat categories of binariness. Bhabha shows how the colonizer is affected by the colonized. In other words, the colonial ‘Self’ needs the colonized ‘Other’ to reaffirm its own identity. Hence, Bhabha asserts that colonial discourse is ambivalent because it does not show absolute opposition.

The representation of the colonized peoples in colonialist literature is paradoxical in nature. The representation contradicts imperial ideology. This is what Bhabha calls ‘ambivalence’. As discussed in Chapter Three, ambivalence refers to the coexistence and interdependence of two contrary impulses or affects. There are times when the colonized is not seen as the ‘Other’. Bhabha illustrates that the “Other... Not the Other, the same but not quite” (Bhabha 1994: 86). Peter Hulmes states that instead of succumbing to the traditional history that represents the native as the monolithic “Other”, there are other discourses of civilized other and discourse of savagery (Hulme, 1986: 21). This is relevant to his observation of the natives of the Caribbean, who are divided into two categories: the Arawaks, who accepted colonization; and the Caribs, those who rebelled against colonial rule. In a later stage, Edward Said too noted this ambiguity in the works of ideology, and thus suggested that the archaic epistemology of the separation set on the notion of the differences should be reevaluated.

Homi Bhabha brings into attention the complexities of the relationship between the colonized and the colonizer. The imperial master needs to maintain his superiority, hence the colonized will have to be maintained as subservient and loyal to the colonizing government. To ensure this binary separation, stereotypes were deployed. According to Bhabha, these stereotypes were constantly repeated by the colonizer in discourse so that the hierarchal strata of cultural identity could be maintained.

In Maugham’s short stories, readers clearly see repeated attempts of the colonizer’s agenda of superiority and control. However, attentive readers will notice the shaky grounds on which colonialist writers try to depict colonial superiority: authority slides unconsciously between the colonizers and the natives. The character, Izzart, in Maugham’s *The Yellow Streak*, is one example of the ambivalent relationship between the colonizer and the colonized: Izzart is neither white nor native; he is in control yet he loses control; he is in charge yet unable to fully take charge. It seems as if the writer, in this case Maugham, cannot cover the artificiality of politics in literature.

Literature is a representation and imitation of life, while, in colonial politics, success is based on emphasizing imperial views, which is based on sharp distinctions between the colonizer and the colonized. However, it seems that the colonialist writer gets trapped when trying to convey imperial ideology in works of art, especially literature, as art does not allow artificiality to remain covered simply because literature imitates life. Politics and journalism, two fields that can be manipulated by those in power, remain artificial and are full of ideology compared to literature, which ultimately unveils all gaps and silences through slippages.

Returning to the discussion on ambivalence, colonialist writings portray the native as a mimic man who reproduces the colonialist's assumptions, habits and values. Bhabha in his essay, *Of Mimicry and Man; the ambivalence of colonial discourse*, states that mimicry is "one of the most elusive and effective strategies of colonial power and knowledge" (Bhabha 1994: 85). It is here that ambivalence can be seen. In the next section, we take a look at the gaps and slippages in Maugham's narrative, which reveal ambivalence in colonial discourse.

This section focuses on ambivalence in colonialist writers' (in this case Maugham's) representation - racial and physical differences - of the other. As discussed, colonial mimicry is evident in colonialist texts. The discourse of mimicry consolidates the recognizable 'Other' in signifying the subject of a difference. Bhabha defines mimicry as "almost the same yet not quite" (Bhabha 1994: 86).

In Maugham's short stories, we come across European characters, who cannot escape a complex and paradoxical relationship with the native peoples. We see the native characters mimicking the ways of the colonizer. Yet these characters cannot exactly imitate the Europeans - "almost the same but not quite". As a result, though Maugham tries to show Western influence and authority on colonized natives, these characters, at the same time, mock the colonizer as their mimicking is comical. This creates ambivalence in the representation of the Other: the colonial

writer wishes to show colonial superiority, but the end product, the narration, ridicules the Western influence on the colonized peoples.

For instance, in Maugham's *The Yellow Streak*, the half-caste character is despised by the so-called pure European breed.

He was a tall, powerful man, over six feet high, and had a neat black moustache and neat black hair. He was a good-looking fellow and he knew it, and he dressed well, shabbily when shabbiness was good form, and smartly when the occasion demanded. He had loved the army...go to parties and wear a uniform. He hankered after London (Maugham 1986: 213-214).

In the excerpt above, we see Izzart, a half-cast, who tries very hard to fit in the European way of life. The double consciousness of living in-between disturbs him, and as a result, he lives in confusion. This point is a negative effect of Western influence. Instead of encouraging Western influence, the story unconsciously discourages it. In the excerpt below, we see how this half-caste is uncomfortable with his European superior.

He was very sensitive to the impression he made on others, and behind Champion's joviality he had felt a certain coolness; those shining blue eyes had summed him up; and it vaguely irritated Izzart that Champion had formed an opinion of him, and he did not quite know what it was. He was exasperated by the possibility that this common little man did not think entirely well of him (Bhabha 1986: 207).

Despite the fact that the Europeans in the story accept Izzart as a colleague, yet they feel distanced from him. They are uneasy about Izzart, who looks like them but still different from them. Here, colonial superiority is challenged: mimicry takes the form of threat.

"By God, Izzart, you're looking green about the gills", he said. "I never saw such a filthy colour". Izzart flushed. His swarthinness was always a sensitive point with him. But he forced himself to give a cheery laugh" (1926: 217) ... What difference could it make, that drop of native blood in his vein, and yet because of it they would always be on the watch for the expected failure at the critical moment. Everyone knew that you couldn't rely on Eurasians, sooner or later they would let you down; he knew it too, but now he asked

himself whether they didn't fail because failure was expected of them. They were never given a chance, poor devils (Maugham 1986: 216).

The quotation above reveals contradiction. For example, the phrase "what difference could it make" contradicts with Izzart's regret that his mother is a native. He blames his failure on the native blood in him. This is parallel to the claim made by Morrison that "such adulteration and cross breeding must inevitably bring with it the degradation and death of the white race (2003: 55). Izzart is one example of the union between the European and native in colonialist texts that supposedly causes the downfall of the European race. Here, we also see that the non-European is stereotyped as 'lacking': the native skin colour is upon at as filthy. Thus, the half-caste Izzart, though he does his best to assimilate into the colonial race, is never successful. As such, the two entities – the civilized native and the savage native – are seen as one. This shows ambivalence in colonialist discourse - the civilizing mission is seen as a failure. Izzart is civilized but still inferior, "though he had done everything to develop the calves, his legs were like broomstick."

Half-castes are just like mimic men. They challenge the power of structure of colonialism. Ambivalence, according to Bhabha, is a source of anti-colonial resistance in that it presents an unconquerable challenge to the entire structure of the discourse of colonialism (McLeod 2000: 55). This notion of ambivalence is similar to Macherey's term 'slippage'. Homi Bhabha states:

the discourse of mimicry is constructed around an ambivalence; in order to be effective, mimicry must continually produce its slippage, its excess, its difference (Bhabha 1994: 86).

Colonialism produces subjects that are recognizably the same as the colonizer yet different. The 'civilizing' mission is thus a failure. Ambivalence in colonialist discourse becomes evident through contradiction in representation. For instance, Izzart, a half-caste mimic man, is seen as a split subject. Maugham's portrays the half-caste as lacking, but, on the other hand, the narrative reveals how the colonizer fails to make the subject an image of the colonizer. This kind of slippages in colonialist discourse reveals ambivalence. As Macherey (1998) states, narratives, many a times, reveal the unintended.

Maugham's narration is ambivalent. There are slippages in the social representation of the colonized peoples. This supports Butcher's statement:

What seems to be forgotten in this preoccupation with the dignity of the white race is that the natives too are a community with its own social codes of conduct and therefore its own way of looking at the issue. It never occurred to any of those who wrote the natives might look liaisons with natives might look upon liaison with native girls as sexual exploitation or harassment of their womenfolk (Butcher 1979: 212).

According to Pierre Macherey, it is the silences and gaps in a text that are significant to an understanding of the ideological background of the writing subject. However, resistance is always an effect of the contradictory representation of power in political ideology. As a text does not record what we see and failed to record what lies outside our field of vision; rather, we see all the elements of reality about which we write, but the written text cannot always make the right connections between them. A text thus tends to present reality partially or leaving gaps (Macherey 1978: 19). And it is through these gaps, the informed reader sees what the writer tries to conceal. Gaps therefore act as a kind of resistance towards Maugham's text.

In *The Yellow Streak*, Campian, the European character, seeks the help of Izzart, the half caste, when he is caught in the Bore. Even though he knows that Izzart is a half caste, he does not have any choice but to depend on him. "Izzart, Izzart. Help. Help. It was Campion's voice. It was a scream of agony (1926: 225)." Izzart did not feel like helping him. "Campion, Campion. What did he care for Campion? Fear seized him, a blind, animal fear and it gave him a new strength. He did not answer (1986: 225)." Here, we see Izzart's silent resistance. "At that moment two dug-outs, with Malays in them riding the Bore, passed swiftly by them. They shouted for help, but the Malays averted their faces and went on (1986: 224)." This is another example of the native people's resistance

Though these narrations attempt to portray the natives as cold-blooded revengeful people, the outcome is paradoxical. The European now seems depended on the native instead of vice versa: the native becomes the savior and hero.

These excerpts show that the colonizers needed the colonized and not the other way round. This ambivalence in social representation in colonialist discourse contradicts the colonist ideology where the European is deemed the hero. The text deconstructs itself in the process of literary production, revealing gaps, silences and slippages, which challenge the power structures of colonialism as well as disrupt the binary oppositions upon which imperial ideology is built.

There are psychological contradictions in Maugham's representation of the natives. Maugham's stories, like most colonialist texts, place the Western character as hero and savior of mankind. But in Maugham's *The Yellow Streak*, Campion admits that he owes his life to the natives who save him, "I owe my life to these two sportsmen here" (1926: 130). This is a slippage which positions the native at the centre and the European at the margin of events - the native is hero. Ambivalence in representing the native, therefore, dismantles the psychological bondage of representation.

Ambivalence according to Bhabha is where "the native is derided at one hand but they are desired at the same time" (1944: 186).

Maugham's narratives depict the colonized people in the state of self-bondage. For example, Izzart is depicted as mesmerized by all that is European. Then suddenly it dons on him that he cannot run away from the native blood in him.

And then a thought came to him which made him go hot and cold; he knew that secret which he had guarded so long was a secret. He was on a sudden certain of it. Why should he have those bright eyes and that swarthy skin? Why should he speak Malay with such ease and have learned Dyak so quickly? Of course they knew. What a fool he was ever to think that they believed that story of his, about the Spanish grandmother! They must have

laughed up their sleeves when he told it, and behind his back they had called him a *damned nigger* (Maugham 1986: 240).

The above excerpt shows how colonialist discourse spreads the myth of the lazy native and instills white supremacy. Intelligence is associated only with the Europeans. Izzart's acceptance of himself as inferior in the narrative perpetuates colonial supremacy. This is how the native is made to look inferior in colonialist discourse.

This paper has brought into attention examples of physical, social and psychological ambivalence in Maugham's narratives. These examples, thus, show how literature speaks its own truth and disrupts power relations.

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