

2003

Revising the Lessons of the Masters

Ken Bolick

Grand Valley State University

Follow this and additional works at: <http://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/mcnair>

Recommended Citation

Bolick, Ken (2003) "Revising the Lessons of the Masters," *McNair Scholars Journal*: Vol. 7: Iss. 1, Article 4.

Available at: <http://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/mcnair/vol7/iss1/4>

Revising the Lessons of the Masters



Ken Bolick
McNair Scholar

Victoria Brehm, Ph.D.
Faculty Mentor

Avis Hewitt, Ph.D.
Faculty Mentor

ABSTRACT

Themes of authentication and displacement explored by Henry James in The Portrait of a Lady, a novel later refigured by W. Somerset Maugham in his The Razor's Edge, have been adapted by V.S. Naipaul in Half a Life. The novels combine to produce an intertextual discourse concerning the post-colonial product of England's imperialistic appetite that dominated much of the world over the past three centuries. The tangled links between the three books, and particularly Naipaul's examination of the imbricated layers of self-authentication and imperialism that inform James and Maugham, are the focus of my study.

V. S. Naipaul has remarked:

[the] idea of the pursuit of happiness [is]... an elastic idea; it fits all men. It implies a certain kind of society, a certain kind of awakened spirit.... So much is contained within it: the idea of the individual, responsibility, choice, the life of the intellect, the idea of vocation and perfectibility and achievement. It's an immense human idea."¹

This quote could serve to preface his novel, *Half a Life*, wherein his protagonist, Willie Chandran, looks for happiness while trying to come to terms with his family lineage and the post-colonial realities of his native country. The quotation could serve as well to introduce Henry James's *The Portrait of a Lady* or W. Somerset Maugham's *The Razor's Edge* since the characters' concerns are principally the same in all three novels.² The authors' repetitions of this theme are not merely a coincidence; however, they are canonical counter-discourses³ that result in an intertextual discourse among the three novels concerning the pursuit of happiness and authenticity that spans four continents over 120 years. The international prejudices and assumptions contained in each tale not only comment upon each other, but in doing so they provide dialogues that are fundamentally concerned with post-colonialism and imperialism.

Readers will recognize the connection between these three novels when they trace the allusions in *Half a Life*. In this text, Naipaul names his protagonist after the British author William Somerset Maugham and opens the novel with "Willie"⁴ inquiring about the origin of his middle name. He is called, his father tells him, after "a great English writer" befriended when [t]he author came to India to get material for a novel about

spirituality” (Naipaul 1). The novel he is speaking of is Maugham’s *The Razor’s Edge* and the story Naipaul tells in *Half a Life* is a canonical counter-discourse of Maugham’s theme: a quest for self-authentication within the realm of the Other. The characters sent on this thematic journey are Willie Chandran in *Half a Life* and Laurence (Larry) Darrell in *The Razor’s Edge*, but they owe the inspiration for their travels to the character of Isabel Archer in Henry James’s *The Portrait of a Lady*. The connection between Maugham and James is made in the first chapter of *The Razor’s Edge*, which can be read as a preface, wherein he justifies the production of his novel and mentions James by name as one who, like himself, has tried to delineate the cultural characteristics of a foreign people. In addition to this reference, Maugham names one of his characters Isabel and creates her in the physical and socioeconomic likenesses of James’s Isabel.⁵ Thus, all three novels are associated thematically, and the latter two exist as refigurements of their predecessors.

The thread that binds these novels together, besides their comments on their antecedents, is the protagonist’s search for happiness embodied as the authentic self. Having identified a discontinuity between their desires and their indigenous resources, Isabel, Larry, and Willie look to foreign lands to remedy their deficiencies. By setting themselves against their Otherness, which is nineteenth-century Europe for Isabel, twentieth-century India for Larry, and twenty-first-century England and Mozambique for Willie, the characters are able to see themselves in relief, which gives them ownership over the colloquial traits they have acquired by what James calls “mutual social attrition.”⁶ The characters use these traits to define themselves and therefore authenticate individuality.

Henry James begins this discussion by placing American and European societies in contrast, setting his protagonist, Isabel Archer, in Europe, and figuring her surroundings as the antithetical representation of her character. In doing so, he is at once criticizing Europe and idealizing America. James’s critical take on European society is evidenced in a letter he wrote to W. D. Howells concerning the production of *Portrait*: “My novel is to be an Americana – the adventures in Europe of a female Newman, who of course equally triumphs over the insolent foreigner” (Edel 72). He chastises European society for its reliance on traditions and manners because such impositions disregard individuality in favor of capitulation to the contrived while valorizing the freshness and ingenuousness of the American spirit. Further, James laments the American inclination to consider Europe as a cultural model for sophistication without regard for the peculiarities that characterize its aristocracy. By modeling Isabel as a mimic of American culture and romanticizing her characteristics, James allows for a more dramatic juxtaposition of her against her Other.⁷ This difference is most directly perceived by observing the changes that occur in Isabel’s character in relation to the duration of her time spent on European soil. Early sketches of Isabel reveal a radiance that, when it is confronted with European company, fades by wear and constriction into a lackluster impression hardly reminiscent of its original design. The point that James illustrates with Isabel’s decline is that Americans, by idealizing the projected superiority of European society, ultimately subjugate themselves. James’s dogged pursuit of his international theme is an attempt to foster an American identity that eschews any dependence upon European protocols. Such politically motivated

inclinations establish him as an early postcolonial writer.

Having identified this tension, Maugham responds to James’s position from an interesting angle. In his canonical counter-discourse to *Portrait*, Maugham takes on the challenge of writing back from the center to the periphery in order to answer some of James’s assertions. But rather than trying to defend Europe, he sought to deconstruct the “myth of America” that James had helped to create.⁸ By the 1940s when Maugham began to write *The Razor’s Edge*, he was considering an American consciousness that was drastically different from that which James had known. Over the preceding sixty years, America had made an immense fortune, placed itself at the forefront of the scientific frontier, amassed the third largest navy in the world, played a definitive role in the outcome of World War I, and had been called upon to do the same in World War II, all of which contributed to what Maugham perceived as an American arrogance. This attitude is expressed in a passage where Isabel tells Larry her take on international affairs. “Europe’s finished,” she says. “We’re the greatest, the most powerful people in the world. We’re going forward by leaps and bounds. We’ve got everything” (Maugham 73). With this passage, Maugham fills an American mouth with an imperialistic notion, thus aligning the two cultures and dispelling any ideas that one may be more honorable than the other.

Throughout the novel, Maugham employs Isabel Bradley as Isabel Archer’s moral opposite in order to express the differences he saw between James’s America and his own. While Archer is drawn as faultless and pristine, Bradley is presented as materialistic and arrogant. Bradley is concerned with artifice but not at all with experience or wisdom or tenderness. Instead, she gravitates

towards the pleasures afforded by money and social position and indulgence, things that James would consider European preoccupations. To Isabel Bradley even love is secondary to money, an opinion she shares with her uncle, Elliot Templeton,⁹ who believes that “a marriage arranged with proper regard to position, fortune, and community of circumstance has every advantage over a love match” (Maugham 34). The reader knows this when Isabel breaks off her engagement with Larry to marry Gray Marutin,¹⁰ even though besides Larry she had “never loved anyone else in all [her] life” (Maugham 163). When James’s heroine considers a similar choice, she has this to say:

[p]ray, would you wish me to make a mercenary marriage – what they call a marriage of ambition? I’ve only one ambition – to be free to follow out a good feeling... Do you complain of Mr. Osmond because he is not rich? That’s just what I like him for. I’ve fortunately money enough; I’ve never felt so thankful for it as to-day” (James 331).

This parallel construction dramatically contrasts Archer’s and Bradley’s desires; Archer is moved to act for love, Bradley for money.

Maugham’s cynical evaluation of American society is further portrayed by Bradley’s persistent jealousy when she is confronted with Larry’s engagement to Sophie MacDonald. More than ten years after her union with Gray, having duped herself out of the chance for love, Isabel still harbors such strong feelings for Larry that she cannot tolerate the idea of his being with another woman. Her regret causes her so much anguish that she undertakes the sabotaging of Larry’s relationship, an act that results in Sophie’s death.¹¹ This scene also finds its equivalent in *Portrait* when Isabel is offered the opportunity to run away

with Caspar Goodwood after she has learned that her husband had only married her for her money. She is broken-hearted and realizes that “she had never been loved” (James 562). Despite her anguish, Isabel once more makes a decision that her selfish successor would be incapable of; she honors her commitment by leaving Goodwood and returning to her husband.

By juxtaposing Isabel Archer with Isabel Bradley, Maugham proclaims the reproachful lack of rectitude in the American consciousness and thus aligns the cultures James had thought opposed. This being done, Maugham turns his attention to replacing the idealistic void that he had created by destroying James’s mythical America. For this he turns to the East. In 1943 and 1944 when Maugham was writing *The Razor’s Edge*, the British Empire was dissolving and India was preparing to become an independent nation. In this way, twentieth-century India resembled nineteenth-century America, a nation looking for an authenticity that would allow it to break free from the grip of imperialism. And as James had contributed to the myth of America, so did Maugham contribute to the Orientalization of India. Through the experiences of Larry Darrell, Maugham presents an image of India that is idealistic and majestic, and by using an Occidental to promote the subcontinent as a land of ready salvation, Maugham is attempting to salvage some of the legitimacy of Western values that Isabel Bradley had deflated. Larry represents Maugham’s hope for both the Western and Eastern worlds, and he has been endowed with the purity and inquisitiveness that found its origins in Isabel Archer. He is, like her, a seeker of happiness and authentication, but with one fundamental difference: while Archer’s happiness is primarily concerned with cultural matters, Darrell’s is concerned with the spiritual.

Larry is first sent to Europe to seek authenticity, but what he finds there is disappointing to him. Unlike Isabel Archer who is able to capitalize on her American traits, Larry finds that he is much less of a novelty in Europe than he is an overabundant commodity; he is not able to see himself in relief and eventually gives up and plans his return to America. But when his ship makes a stop in India, he decides to stay and study its exoticism. Here he finds with great ease the enlightenment he has sought, which is ironic because the religious experience he has at the ashram so closely resembles the one that he had had at a monastery in Alsace. In each he had simple shelter, ample reading time and materials, instruction upon request, and hours of meditation at his disposal; but in the West he found his labors futile and did not accept the religion available because he had the means to question it, whereas in the East he embraced the teachings of the Brahmins, in part because he could not understand them. Larry explains to Maugham that his misgivings with Christianity are grounded in his refusal to believe in a God that would condemn a man for his sins, which Larry believed to be the result of heredity and environment, yet he praises Hinduism because each person’s condition is a result of his previous life’s misdeeds. The distinction between what he condemns and praises is so fine as to not be relevant at all. Larry admits that as an Occidental he cannot “believe in [the teachings of the Hindu religion] as implicitly as [the] Orientals do” and states that he can “neither believe in it or disbelieve in it” yet he sets about living his life by its codes (Maugham 266). During his time spent in India, Larry lives as a second-rate citizen in awe of the otherness of the Indian people, a period of denial for Larry which is illustrated by his adoption of Indian dress and his acquirement of a sunburn

so that “unless... attention was drawn to [him] you might have taken him for a native” (Maugham 273). Larry’s search for authenticity ends in his becoming an imposter. He denies his Western self in favor of a contrived personage based on a religion and a people he is incapable of understanding. He ironically gives to Hinduism the faith that he had been told by a monk was a requirement for belief in Christianity. He chose to believe in difference for the sake of difference.

What Maugham failed to realize, and what Naipaul perceived, was that Maugham had idealized India in the exact manner that James had America, thereby subjecting *The Razor’s Edge* to the same criticism it offers *The Portrait of a Lady*. In *Half a Life*, Naipaul suggests that by romanticizing a foreign culture, Maugham had ignored the commonalities of human nature; no one culture is implicitly chaste: both good and bad, religious and secular, corrupt and honest people reside within all cultures. For Naipaul, happiness and authenticity can only be found within ourselves; looking for them in another culture is futile because all that can be defined by setting one’s self against a foreign backdrop is difference in cultural conditioning, which is less a signifier of self than of community.

Naipaul picks up the narrative with his refigurement of Shri Ganesha, the Indian holy man who helped bring Larry salvation. Naipaul, like Maugham, first sets out to deconstruct the idealistic renderings of his predecessor by reworking the main character from the idealized land. Shri Ganesha, Maugham’s characterization of Sri Ramana Maharsi, an Indian holy man whom he had met while on a promotional tour in 1938, appears as Willie’s father in *Half a Life*. Maugham encountered the holy man when he regained consciousness after having fainted prior to a speech he was supposed to deliver. When Maugham awoke, Sri Ramana Maharsi comforted

Maugham by telling him “[s]ilence is also conversation” (Coetzee 117), a line which is repeated verbatim in Larry’s recollections of Shri Ganesha’s imparted wisdom (Maugham 295). Maugham, obviously taken by the exotic man, makes his character the facilitator of Larry’s Eastern education. Naipaul begins his story at the moment Maugham meets the holy man but offers the reader a much less romantic depiction of him than Maugham does. Naipaul writes him as a devious man who is more commendable than condemnable.

Half a Life begins with Willie’s father telling him the tale that led to his first encounter with Somerset Maugham. Chandran explains that he had taken a vow of silence in order to avoid persecution for “something [he] had done” (Naipaul 4). During the course of this silence, Chandran met the writer and provided what “foreign critics [saw as] the spiritual source of *The Razor’s Edge*” (Naipaul 5). As Naipaul writes in the details that determine Chandran, the reader comes to understand that the circumstances, which chanced the meeting between the mendicant and the author in the temple’s courtyard were less than honorable. Chandran, in a misguided pursuit of “civil disobedience” (Naipaul 23), chose to make a “sacrifice of himself” (Naipaul 11) by heeding Mahatma Gandhi’s call to protest casteism by “marry[ing] the lowest person [he] could find” (Naipaul 12). The person he married was Willie’s mother, and his decision to do so was independent of compassion for the woman. He explains to Willie that after the marriage he

grew everyday more ashamed of her, [so much so that he] took a vow of sexual abstinence, [the failure of which was] very swiftly punished [with her becoming pregnant]. (Naipaul, 32-3).

Chandran goes on to reveal that at Willie’s birth “[a]ll [his] anxiety... was to see how much of the backward could be read in his features” (Naipaul 33). It is clear that Chandran, even within his own family, perpetuates the prejudice that his sacrifice was supposed to combat. After hearing his father’s contemptuous story of dissatisfaction and regret, Willie responds by telling him, “I despise you” (Naipaul 35). This declaration marks Willie’s independence and segues into the second and third portions of the book that tell the remainder of his story.

It is with Willie’s quest that Naipaul intends to answer the claims of his predecessors. He first addresses what he believes to be Maugham’s misconceptions by writing Willie a mosaic past of exploitation and betrayal that he has been bequeathed by his father and his nation. Willie, whose father is a Brahmin and mother is a backward, has considerable trouble defining himself in India’s class-based society. He belongs nowhere. Because of this, he is sent to a missionary school led by Canadians in accordance with his mother’s wishes; there, she believes, the West can provide Willie opportunities that the politics of casteism would deny him. So from the very beginning, Willie understands that he has been cared for by outsiders, rather than by his own countrymen, and believes that no opportunities are available to him in India. Willie learns to depend on his conception of the West as the source for his desires and dreams. First, he thinks he might be a missionary, then, a writer in British literary circles, and then, an estate man in Mozambique – an imperialist. Each desire is a denial of his self, each dream an escape from and reflection of India’s past.

Naipaul is characteristically critical of India when he begins his story by looking past the days of British colonialism to the beginning of the

decline for this Maughamian utopia. He suggests that the root of India's trouble lies not in its colonization but in its peoples' long history of idealistic passivity. According to Willie's father, the troubles began for India when it was conquered by the Muslims and simply increased with British colonization, not because of the change in government – that had actually regularized India's situation somewhat because the British brought law and some sense of order – but rather because the Indians had allowed their population to increase beyond their capability to support it. In addition to this condemnation of his country in general, Naipaul adds his distaste for Mahatma Gandhi in particular. Gandhi's politics and methods of resistance are questioned with the character of Sarojini. Sarojini is strongly influenced by her uncle on her mother's side who, as the leader of a firebrand, strongly contests Gandhi's political methods. She favors the firebrand's militant opposition to imperialism and casteism over Gandhi's passivity. She believes that India's citizens have a responsibility to improve their country's condition for posterity and disapproves of Willie's decision to abandon his people in order to seek another life elsewhere.¹²

Sarojini's convictions concerning political responsibility create a tension between her and Willie that is expressed in her letters. She is constantly criticizing Willie for his capriciousness and continues to warn him against becoming idle like his father. Sarojini herself, though, has done little to advance the quality of life for her people and flees to Europe because of a relationship with a German photographer. In this way, Sarojini represents Naipaul himself – an outside critic of a system she is not working to change, condemning others for their indolence.

After *Half a Life* has taken us with Willie as he fails to find authenticity in England's academy and Mozambique's aristocracy, we are deposited with him at Sarojini's home where he recounts to her the ways in which he has spent and wasted his time. Here the reader learns all of the details of Willie's life abroad. We learn how he searched for love and purpose in England. How he came to marry Ana, which was more a marriage of convenience so that he could have a secure home after he left the university. How that marriage eventually failed and how it was that he ended up alone and directionless in his early forties. By following Willie's life story, we learn what it is to be displaced in the world, how the turmoil of his youth spent in a postcolonial country led to his desire to be anything but what he was born, and how his attempt to deny his parentage contributed to his perpetuation of those characteristics that had been so debilitating to his ancestors.

Taken by itself, it is easy to consider the story of Willie's life to be the result of the colonial tragedy that dominated much of the world in the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries. That may or may not be true, but in addition to this we also become aware of a different possibility when we consider *Half a Life* as part of a dialogue. The three protagonists, as I have suggested, are searching for their authentic selves by contrasting themselves with Otherness. Having become disenchanted with their ordinariness, each desires difference: Isabel Archer seeks high culture and refinement; Larry the understanding of life through religion; and Willie identity. Each has benefited from certain advantages and suffered from other deficiencies, yet they are all equally dissatisfied. They traveled to America, to England, to India, to Mozambique, to anywhere in the world pursuing either the center or the periphery, but the demons they fled and

the treasures they sought remained illusory. The exoticism of the Other became more seductive which causes them to deny nationalism and tradition in search of more romantic cosmopolitan identities. Difference is always seductive, and as James has shown with Isabel, Maugham with Larry, and Naipaul with Willie, it most certainly always will be. What James had stated to be an American concern and Maugham had extended to the Western world, Naipaul has taken around the world. The idea that the perusal of happiness is a universal condition, as suggested by Naipaul, may be one of those unique circumstances where romance and reality combine to set forth a truth about human circumstance. If the pursuit of happiness is a universal condition, so must be the frustration that serves to fuel the search – an ironic lesson for a world that has become increasingly fragmented by nationalistic politics.

Notes

- ¹ Quote taken from the speech “Our Universal Civilization” delivered by Naipaul at the Manhattan Institute on the 30th of October, 1992.
- ² While the connection between *Half a Life* and *The Razor’s Edge* has been cited in contemporary criticism by J.M. Coetzee, the connection between *The Razor’s Edge* and *The Portrait of a Lady* was not mentioned by reviewers’ of *The Razor’s Edge*. After consulting articles from *Atlantic Monthly*, *The Times Literary Supplement*, *Saturday Review of Literature*, *The New York Times*, *The New Republic*, *The New Yorker*, *Time*, *Booklist*, *New Statesman and Nation*, and *Weekly Book Review*, I have discovered only two mentions of Henry James and none of *The Portrait of a Lady*. *The Atlantic Monthly* article speaks of how Elliot Templeton “might have been tailored by Henry James,” (“Quest” 127) while *The Times Literary Supplement* notes how Maugham “handles his Jamesian method with conspicuous resource” (“Modern Mystic” 341).
- ³ Helen Tiffin identifies canonical counter-discourse as a sub-grouping of counter-discursive theory wherein a “post-colonial writer takes up a character of characters, or the basic assumptions of a British canonical text, and unveils those assumptions, subverting the text for post-colonial purposes” (Tiffin, 17).
- ⁴ Maugham was called Willie affectionately by his family, a fact which Naipaul uses to accentuate the familiarity he suggests between the characters of Willie’s father and William Somerset Maugham.
- ⁵ Maugham’s Isabel, in addition to her name, is also characteristic of James’s Isabel physically. She is sketched as “a tall girl with [an] oval face, straight nose, fine eyes, and a full mouth. . . She was comely though on the fat side, which I [Maugham] ascribed to her age, and I guessed that she would fine down as she grew older” (Maugham 22). Isabel Bradley is introduced into the novel in her late teens whereas James’s Isabel is introduced in her early twenties and would have already outgrown such an awkward stage provided it ever existed. Isabel Archer is first described as “a tall girl in a black dress, who at first sight looked pretty” (James 13) and upon closer examination became “unexpectedly pretty” (James 14) as she was “slim and charming” (James 15). This likeness is much nearer to Isabel Bradley’s second introduction to the reader after ten years has elapsed between scenes. She returns to the reader in her late twenties or early thirties and is described by Maugham as being as “slender as anyone could wish” and she “had acquired ease, self-possession, and assurance. . . She had chic to the tips of her rose-painted nails” and was “ravishing” (Maugham 138-9). Isabel Bradley and Isabel Archer came from similar socioeconomic backgrounds as well. Both had been raised in upper-middle class homes where money was not a principle want, but neither was able to look forward to an ample inheritance; they would each have to supplement their allowances somehow. But, while Archer had no conception of money or desire to obtain it, Bradley was driven by the desire to be extremely wealthy and to spend it luxuriously.
- ⁶ In a letter to his mother dated 13 October, 1869, James writes of the differences between Americans and Europeans. He states that “[t]he pleasantness of the English. . . comes in great measure from the fact of their each having been dipped into the crucible, which gives them a sort of coating of comely varnish and colour. They have been smoothed and polished by mutual social attrition.” This quote speaks of the tendency of people to consciously and unconsciously adopt the characteristics, assumptions, prejudices, and tastes of their communities.
- ⁷ Because all the characters in the novel are American-born, save Lord Warburton, James defines Isabel’s Other through his characterizations of Gilbert Osmond and Madame Merle who, because of the duration of their stay in Europe, have become representative of European society. As Isabel is experiencing her first real exposure to European society, she is most representative of what James believes is embodied in the American spirit. She is youthful, innocent, pure, earnest, genuine, and, most of all, naïve. Her character is implicitly irreproachable. Madame Merle and Gilbert Osmond, however, because each of them has been in Europe for longer than they had lived in America, have been lured into uselessness by their perceptions of European society. As it is revealed through their conspired plot to deceive Isabel and relieve her of her fortune to provide for their own parental inadequacies, they are irresponsibly idle, artificial, and appearance driven. That is to say that European society is built on tradition and habit. While such a statement does not necessarily demonize Europe, it does suggest it is in opposition to the American ideals of individuality and innovation.
- ⁸ In his article “The Myth of America in *The Portrait of a Lady*,” Leon Edel writes that with *Portrait* James’s intention “was to paint Isabel within a ‘myth’ of America” and continues that “[h]e endowed her with many American qualities and many American beliefs” (Edel 8).
- ⁹ Elliot Templeton is Isabel Bradley’s uncle on her mother’s side. He is an American expatriate living in France who has become, like Gilbert Osmond and Madame Merle, fitted to the ideologies of the European lifestyle.
- ¹⁰ Gray Marutin is Larry’s childhood best friend. He is the son of a successful Chicago stockbroker and is being groomed to take over his father’s firm which, prior to the stock market crash of 1929, held great promise of making him extremely wealthy.
- ¹¹ Sophie MacDonald was a childhood friend of both Isabel and Larry. She married young, had a child, and was happy until a car crash took the lives of her husband and child. After the accident she became extremely depressed and her life became ruled by drugs, alcohol, and sex. Larry sought to bring her out of this by marrying her, but Isabel wouldn’t allow it. Under the guise of friendship, Isabel offered to help Sophie pick out a wedding gown, but at the moment they were supposed to meet, Isabel was absent from the house and had planted a bottle of liquor in the waiting room where Sophie was placed. The temptation proved to be too much and Sophie drank the liquor and reentered her life of drug and alcohol abuse. She left Larry without reason or ceremony and was eventually found murdered: all results, Maugham suggests, of Isabel’s tampering.
- ¹² Sarojini expresses her discontent with her brother’s actions in corresponding letters. She at one point writes to Willie that his friend Percy Cato, who is “off to work with Che in South America. . . Should be an example to [him] (Naipaul 121), but later admits that though there is “serious work to be done in Africa,” she does not think “that it will be done by [Willie]” (Naipaul, 123).

Works Cited

- Coetzee, J. M. "The Razor's Edge." *The Humour & the Pity*. Ed. Amitava Kumar. New Delhi: Buffalo Books in association with The British Council, 2002.
- Edel, Leon. *Henry James Letters*. Cambridge, Mass: The Belknap Press of The Harvard UP, 1975.
- . "The Myth of American in *The Portrait of a Lady*." *The Henry James Review* 7 .2-3 (1986): 8-17.
- James, Henry. *The Portrait of a Lady*. 1881. New York: The Modern Library, 2002.
- Maugham, W. Somerset. *The Razor's Edge*. 1944. New York: Penguin Books, 1992.
- "Modern Mystic." *The Times Literary Supplement*. 15 July, 1944: 341.
- Naipaul, V. S. *Half a Life*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2001.
- Naipaul, V. S. "Our Universal Civilization." Manhattan Institute, New York. 30 Oct., 1992.
- "Quest for Faith." *Atlantic Monthly*. May, 1944: 127, 129.
- Tiffin, Helen. "Post-Colonial Literatures and Counter-discourse." *Kunapipi* 9.3 (1987): 17-34.