This study of Somerset Maugham's plays should need no apology for there is no work offering an exclusive study of all Maugham's plays which number about thirty, present a vast range of themes and represent the dramatic work of one of the most popular writers of our century.

Maugham appears to have been one of those authors who evoke strong reactions. Glenway Wescott tells us (Images of Truth, N.Y., 1962, p. 63), "Among my best friends there are three or four whose opinion as a rule tallies with mine, ... with whom I cannot have a civil conversation about this one author" (i.e. Maugham). If this is a widespread phenomenon, the present enquiry may be particularly welcome as a step towards dispelling prejudice and formulating an objective assessment of one important aspect of Maugham's work.

I thank the numerous writers and critics whom I have consulted and referred to in this work.

I take this opportunity to express my deep sense of gratitude to Dr. M. K. Naik, Professor and Head of the Department of English, Karnataka University, Dharwar, whose constant encouragement and valuable suggestions have helped me more than I can say.

Date 29 December, 1973

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