

THE PROBLEM OF HUMAN AND ART IN THE NOVEL “THE MOON AND SIXPENCE” BY W. S. MAUGHAM

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Rezumat

Acest articol studiază tendințele literare din sec XX în literatura engleză și activitatea literară a marelui autor W. S. Maugham. Deoarece este dedicat romanului „Luna și doi bani jumătate”, romanul este analizat pas cu pas. Sarcina principală este de a oferi mai multă informație despre Om și Artă - problematica reflectată în roman. Articolul redă opinia scriitorului cu privire la artă și se face o analiză a expresiilor realiste folosite în opera dată.

—The Moon and Sixpence is a short novel of 1919 by William Somerset Maugham based on the life of the painter Paul Gauguin. The story is told in episodic form by the first-person narrator as a series of glimpses into the mind and soul of the central character, Charles Strickland, a middle-aged English stockbroker who abandons his wife and children abruptly to pursue his desire to become an artist.

In —The Moon and Sixpence, the pursuit of beauty is the main theme of the novel. If this novel is essentially a realistic novel, the absolute beauty is only a vision. Strickland's (the main character) aestheticism, his passionate pursuit of beauty, and faith in beauty, comes not from the realistic attitude but the romantic, aesthetic attitude. If life is noble and fine because of the existence of beauty, the realization of beauty is the best and greatest ideal of human being. Human being can make himself more than what he is by the realization of the ideal beauty. This thought is evidently idealistic and romantic.

The novel is an illustration of one of Maugham's favourite convictions that human nature is knit of contradictions, that the workings of the human mind are unpredictable. Strickland is concentrated on his art. He is indifferent to love, friendship and

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În acest articol se pune accent pe semnificația și mijloacele de păstrare a stilului operei literare originale în traducere. În procesul de traducere, traducătorul, în mod creativ, reproduce stilul originalului prin intermediul tehnicilor lingvistice care, în limba-țintă, „sunt similare celor din limba-sursă, pentru ca versiunea tradusă să fie receptată aproape la fel cum este apreciat originalul.

“The Moon and Sixpence” is a short novel of 1919 by William Somerset Maugham based on the life of the painter Paul Gauguin. The story is told in episodic form by the first-person narrator as a series of glimpses into the mind and soul of the central character, Charles Strickland, a middle-aged English stockbroker who abandons his wife and children abruptly to pursue his desire to become an artist.

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kindness, misanthropic and inconsiderate to others. His pictures fall flat on the public and recognition comes to him only after death.

Maugham borrowed the title of the novel from a review of his book "Of Human Bondage". Speaking of the principal character of the book, the reviewer remarks: "Like so many young men he was so busy yearning for the moon that he never saw the sixpence at his feet." The title served to Maugham as a symbol for two opposing worlds — the material world quit by Strickland, where everything is thought of in terms of money, and the world of pure artistry craving for beauty [1, pp. 142-143].

The inspiration for this story, Gauguin, is considered to be the founder of primitivism in art. The main differences between Gauguin and Strickland are that Gauguin was French rather than English, and whilst Maugham describes the character of Strickland as being largely ignorant of his contemporaries in Modern art (as well as largely ignorant of other artists in general), Gauguin himself was well acquainted with and exhibited with the Impressionists in the 1880s and lived for awhile with Van Gogh in southern France. How many of the details of the story are based on fact is not known. However, Maugham had visited the place where Gauguin lived in Tahiti and purchased some glass panels painted by Gauguin in his final days.

"The Moon and Sixpence" is the story of Strickland is a well-off, middle-class stockbroker in London some time in the late 19th or early 20th century. Early in the novel, he leaves his wife and children and goes to Paris, living a destitute but defiantly content life there as an artist (specifically a painter), lodging in run-down hotels and falling prey to both illness and hunger. Strickland's decisive quality as an artist is, in Maugham's own word, "simplification," although the irony is that this "simplification" is anything but simple. It is extraordinarily hard to understand. It is almost as though Maugham is poking fun at his own presumable simplicity as well as at the myth of the modern artist whose rejection of all that is

conventional turns out to be obfuscating rather than clarifying. Modern art, whether Gauguin's or Maugham's own, is indeed difficult, although one need not be hit over the head with it for its subtleties to emerge [2, 7].

The innovative complexities of "The Moon and Sixpence" are not, however, limited to temporal experimentation or the refusal to allegorize. If the novel resembles Conrad in narrative structure and tropical site, it also departs from Conrad in its suspension of sympathy for the visionary. Maugham's first-person narrator does not construe his relation to Strickland along the familiar lines of the secret sharer or double (the narrator who recognizes his own dark or repressed side by identifying with his perplexing subject), the combined technical and psychological device that Maugham borrows from Conrad and turns on its head. Unlike Conrad's Marlow, Maugham's narrator is drawn to the visionary not by sympathy but by mere curiosity, circumstantially created by the entreaties of Strickland's abandoned wife, whom he meets in London at the book's start, and, later on, by the circumstances of World War I, when he finds himself in Tahiti after Strickland has died. Even though Maugham's narrator is himself an artist (a professional writer), he does not glorify the artist's pain and suffering. "I have nothing but horror," says Maugham in a 1917 entry in "A Writer's Notebook", "for the literary cultivation of suffering which has been so fashionable of late." Despite the narrator's fascination with Strickland, there is no kinship, nor is there antagonism. There is instead a preposterously cool neutrality, made convincing by the charming avuncularity of tone that is Maugham's stylistic signature [3, 37].

This charm is what makes the Maugham narrator the central force in "The Moon and Sixpence", and a special voice in English fiction as a whole. Nameless in "The Moon and Sixpence, this persona came to be used more and more by Maugham over the years, acquiring the name of Ashenden in many of Maugham's

stories. He even survives his incarnation as Ashenden with the publication of "The Razor's Edge" (1944), when he takes on Maugham's own name. Endearingly paradoxical, the Maugham narrator is sophisticated and cynical, but also affable and companionable; dry and indirect, but also vivid and straightforward. While it may appear that his exact descriptive powers in "The Moon and Sixpence" contrast with the lack of an explanation to the puzzle of Strickland, his unwillingness to offer allegorical answers to aesthetic, existential, or metaphysical quandaries is of a piece with his trenchant exactitude. If something cannot be described, what is its status? Maugham had little use for the ineffable, not because his sympathy for Romantic vision was nil, but because the realist in him bridled at the excessive poeticity to which the description of inward states of mind might lead. He mocks the dangers of such rhetorical self-indulgence in the opening chapters of "The Moon and Sixpence", finally throwing up his hands in the face of the bad writing that results from it in order to get on with his story [4, 123].

The novel "The Moon and Sixpence" is about the problem of human and art in every sense of the word. The character of Charles Strickland, the mild-mannered stockbroker who rejected everything in life for a single-minded pursuit of his art, as the archetype of what art is and what the artist must do to achieve it. His relations with others show the depths to which one must truly stoop in order to create something of enduring truth and meaning. In contrast, the character of Stroeve is the archetype of love, and he conducts himself in the way all must who wish to put love above all else. Their conflict over Stroeve's wife Blanche is extremely interesting when viewed in this context, to say nothing about Blanche's motivations for choosing Strickland (art) over Stroeve (love). The real ending of the book should have been with the image of the pictures Strickland painted on the walls of his Tahitian home, pictures painted while going blind from leprosy, pictures that were beautiful and obscene, pictures that revealed an understanding of the

workings of the universe man was never meant to know, and pictures Strickland would surround himself with after going blind and study in the dark center of his mind's eye, seeing more than anyone had ever seen before. The few paragraphs that follows this are a bit of an anticlimax, but probably necessary. The final scene with Strickland's abandoned wife and child potential degree. Presumably Strickland's "moon" is the idealistic realm of Art and Beauty, while the "sixpence" represents human relationships and the ordinary pleasures of life.

"The Moon and Sixpence" can be read as a treatise on the tension that exists between the idealistic pursuit of art and the ability to maintain healthy human relationships and from that perspective its disturbing message is clearly that the artist can have one or the other, but not both.

We believe there's a deeper reading of "The Moon and Sixpence", a much more fascinating reading that puts the tension not between competing ideals and forces of the world at large, but within the artist himself. The narrator refers to Strickland's inward focus and a kind of desperate inner struggle again and again in the novel. Like when he first visits Strickland in Paris. He says that he never cared for Paris, for the sightseeing, as if he travelled Paris for 100 hundred times. The author tells the reader that any person whoever visits Paris for several times will anyway be fascinated by the sights and monuments of it, but Strickland was really not interested in it, he was very cold toward the beauty of the city. He is possessed by some outer force. He is in search of something which he does not know himself. He is so much devoted to art and painting that even forgets about himself. He is transformed into some kind of machine, if we can say so [3, 87].

Another important aspect of Strickland's "transformation" is the way he draws pictures. Meanwhile he had never ceased to work at his art; but had soon tired of the studios, entirely by himself. He had never been so poor that he could not buy canvas and paint, and

really, he needed nothing else. He painted with great difficulty, and in his unwillingness to accept help from anyone lost much time in finding out for himself the solution of technical problems. He was aiming at something, and perhaps he hardly knew himself; He did not seem quite sane. He would not show his pictures because he was really not interested in them. He lived in a dream, and the reality meant nothing to him. He worked on a canvas with all the force of his violent personality, oblivious of everything in his effort to get what he saw with the mind's eye; and then, having finished, not the picture perhaps, he lost all care for it. He was never satisfied with what he had done; it seemed to him of no consequence compared with the vision that obsessed his mind.

English literature is passing through a period of transition and any forecasts concerning its further development would be arbitrary. One thing seems certain, however – the best works of contemporary prose and poetry are being put at the service of the momentous issues of today and bear relevance to the needs aspirations of humanity. Literature is the vision of life. Its main aspect is human being, his acts, his fights, his love, his hatred, happiness and grief. Human being is considered to be the leading core in the creation of literature, because the author creates the overall content of the work through the human being. While creating literary image, the writer shows his individual aspects as well. It is not an easy task to get to the heart of the readers through the books. One of the great writers of the English Literature William Somerset Maugham could combine both human character and the art in his novel “The Moon and Sixpence”. The novel could show us the devotion of a man to art, his sacrifice and finally his grief. He ends up his life getting blind and living a miserable life. William Somerset Maugham can be considered as one of the brightest representatives of the English Literature. That's why, in our opinion, it is important to read, analyze and spread his novels to the people.

References

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WRITING IN PLAIN ENGLISH

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Rezumat

Articolul dat are în vizor importanța scrierii folosind un limbaj clar și pe înțelesul tuturor, care apare în limba engleză sub numele Plain English. Plain English (sau, în traducere, engleza simplă) este o formă de prezentare a informației într-o manieră ce ar facilita înțelegerea încă de la prima lecturare sau audiere. Termenul nicidecum nu se referă la utilizarea unui limbaj simplist, ci la utilizarea unei forme a limbii ce este directă, ușor de înțeles, care face uz de termeni cotidieni și evită pe cât de mult posibil terminologia de specialitate și structurile întortocheate, lungimea enunțului limitându-se la 15-20 de cuvinte.

"Plain English is clear, straightforward expression, using only as many words as are necessary. It is language that avoids obscurity, inflated vocabulary and convoluted sentence construction."

Professor Robert Eagleson

Since many of the official documents and business writing are too long and excessively complicated using bureaucratic language and corporate jargon, which limit the ability to understand them, it is essential to try to make writing clearer and as concise as possible.