

**MAIN THEME AND IDEAS RAISED IN " "OF HUMAN BONDAGE"
(SOMERSET MAUGHAM)**

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Annotatsiya: Maugham (Maugham) o'qishga arziydi, chunki u jiddiy yozuvchi va odatdagidek oddiy hikoyachi emas. Ushbu maqolada uning ajoyib ijod namularidan birining tahlili va yozuvchilar yangi yozish usullarini sinab ko'rayotgan , bunda noaniqlik va murakkablik ustunlik qilgan bir paytda; Maughamning sodda, aniq uslubi hech narsani taklif qilmasligi haqida yoziladi.

Kalit so'zlar: asosiy mavzu, sarlovha , voqealar rivoji, kayfiyat.

Abstract: Maugham is worth reading because he is a serious writer and not the usual simple storyteller. This article is an analysis of one of his masterpieces and at a time when writers were experimenting with new ways of writing, where ambiguity and complexity prevailed; It is written that Maugham's simple, clear style suggests nothing.

Key words: major theme, title, plot, mood.

The major theme of the novel is that the submission to passion is human bondage, while the exercise of reason is human liberty.

Of Human Bondage, semiautobiographical novel by W. Somerset Maugham, published in 1915 and considered his masterwork. It is a perceptive depiction of the emotional isolation of a young man and his eventual insight into life. Of Human Bondage is a 1915 novel by W. Somerset Maugham. It is generally agreed to be his

masterpiece and to be strongly autobiographical in nature, although Maugham stated, "This is a novel, not an autobiography; though much in it is autobiographical, more is pure invention." Maugham, who had originally planned to call his novel *Beauty from Ashes*, finally settled on a title taken from a section of Spinoza's *Ethics*. The Modern Library ranked *Of Human Bondage* No. 66 on its list of the 100 best English-language novels of the 20th century.

Plot: Born with a club foot, Philip Carey is acutely sensitive about his handicap. As a medical student in London, he meets a selfish and unfaithful waitress for whom he develops an all-consuming passion and whom he cannot leave. When Philip finishes medical school, he enters a loving relationship with another woman, whose possible pregnancy forces him to examine his life.

Title: Maugham had borrowed the title of his book from Spinoza. Part IV of his *Ethics* is titled "*Of Human Bondage, or the Strength of the Emotions*". In this part, *Spinoza discusses people's inability to control their emotions which, thus, constitute bondage. He also defines good and bad categories based on the people's general beliefs, connecting it to their "emotions of pleasure or pain"*. He defines perfectness/imperfectness starting out from the desire, in its meaning of particular aims and plans. Philip Carey, the main character of *Of Human Bondage*, was seeking this very useful end, and became satisfied only after realizing what his aim had been, and having found a person to share this aim with.

Autobiographical features: Maugham had a stammer (instead of a club foot), lost his parents early in life, and was sent to live with his aunt and uncle. He studied medicine and his tastes in literature coincide with those of the main character in this book. Although Maugham was never an artist, he was interested in painting. He possessed in his private collection works by four painters mentioned in the book: Pissarro, Sisley, Monet, and Renoir. In *The Summing Up*, he discloses that he read

Ruskin and became acquainted with many pieces of European art. Many of his other works are focused on this topic: *The Moon and Sixpence* (the main character has some resemblance to Paul Gauguin). Maugham wrote an article for *Life* magazine titled "Painting I Have Liked". *Of Human Bondage* is, probably, the most vivid instance of Maugham's inclination towards arts. According to Stanley Archer, more than 30 artists are named in the book, ten famous paintings are mentioned by name and many others are referred to. Over half of the 33 artists named in the novel were painters whose careers developed primarily in the 19th century.¹ Of these, 13 are French, five English, and one, Whistler, is American. Eleven were alive at the time in which the plot of the novel is unfolding and five – Carolus-Duran, Degas, Monet, Raffaëlli, and Renoir – were alive when *Of Human Bondage* was published in 1915.

Major: The major theme of the novel is that the submission to passion is human bondage, while the exercise of reason is human liberty. Philip Carey loves Mildred passionately and, in trying to possess her, traps himself in her bondage. His freedom is curbed, his education is disrupted, and his fortune is lost. All his reasoning, power, and intelligence are eradicated by his passion for Mildred. On the other hand, when Philip thinks logically, he succeeds in achieving his goal. In Heidelberg, he learns not only languages but about life in general. In Paris, he learns to appreciate art, the value of life, and the beauty of nature. In London, after Mildred leaves him, he analyzes his emotions logically and overcomes his passion for her. He realizes that he has wasted his love on a person who did not understand his worth. Swept away by the heart, he had become unreasonable and thoughtless which brought him nothing but misery.

Minor. There are several minor Themes in the novel. The first is that inappropriate love can be destructive. In spite of her many weaknesses, Philip loves

¹ Davies, Horton, *A Mirror of the Ministry in Modern Novels* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959)

Mildred and showers his affection and money on her. He even sacrifices his education and limited resources to please her. In the process, Philip wastes the important years of his life following a woman who is not deserving of his love. It is definitely a destructive relationship for Philip, one that keeps him in bondage. Another minor theme is that experience in life makes a person wiser. Philip profits from every event in his life and becomes stronger as a person. His stay in Heidelberg makes him realize the value of freedom and the narrow-mindedness of Christianity. Freedom allows him to see the beauty of nature and to question the value of religion. After a few months in London as an accountant, Philip travels to Paris to study art. While working as an artist in Paris, he discovers that he lacks real talent. He gives up art and chooses medicine as his career. His life as a medical student teaches him to study people closely and learn the hard facts of life. His wasted years with Mildred make him realize the value of money, freedom, and happiness.

Finally, Maugham tries to show how life and death are meaningless and of no consequence. When Philip observes the life of Hayward, Cronshaw, Fanny Price, and his own patients, he realizes that they are all rushing through life without achieving anything. He acknowledges the futility of living and the inconsequence of dying. It seems that after death, people are quickly forgotten. During the course of the novel Philip learns that he has to seek his own meaning in life.

MOOD. The mood of the novel is serious, but not gloomy. Maugham, with irony and cynicism, presents the struggle of a lonely protagonist and the turmoil in his mind. Philip Carey suffers because of his handicap, his inferiority complex, and his tender heart; his suffering invokes a sense of pity in the reader. Maugham, however, does not allow the mood of the novel to turn gloomy. Philip's stay in Heidelberg and Paris and his life in London in the absence of Mildred are bright. The novel also ends on a

cheerful note, for Philip has settled into his life and career and looks forward to the future with hope.

Maugham says about this in Of Human Bondage as follows;

" It was a strange life, dark and tortured, in which men and women showed to remorseless eyes the evil that was in their hearts; a fair face concealed a depraved mind the virtuous used virtue as a mask to hide their secret vice, the seeming-strong fainted within with their weakness; the honest were corrupt, the chaste were lewd, .. "

(Of Human Bondage p. 142-143)

The critical mind discloses the misery and humor within himself and then changes into the doubts to the human society, human world, and the ideals of the society. As we can see in Of Human Bondage, Maugham suffered from the physical deficiency. In his youth he thought that if he had a strong religious faith in god, and religious, pious life, his physical deficiency would be all right. And so he put it into practice, but the religious and pious life, and the earnest prayer to god every morning and every night could not do anything good about the physical deficiency. So he despaired and gave up his faith in god. Maugham had another reason in giving up the faith in god. That is to say, he realized the dilemma between his uncle's preaching and his selfishness, and disliked his uncle very much. And besides he began to have the distaste for all the clergyman. In my opinion, the hypocrisy of his uncle's, aroused not so much indignation as distaste in Maugham's mind in his youth. But these pessimism might have been in the inner part of his mind. The bitter experiences that he had at his uncle's house, together with his physical weakness and his original character made the habit of confining himself within apart from others. He is essentially a man of solitude and retrospective character.²

² Somerset Maugham: An Appreciation', p.3.

For instance in love affairs he was afraid of being laughed at and despised by others rather than absorbed in love. But his lonely solitude brought forth many dreams. They are sometimes very romantic but I think, in most cases sarcastic, cynic, ironical, and gloomy mainly because of his retrospective character and physical weakness.

References:

1. Paul Dottin, 'The Realism of Somerset Maugham: The Painted Veil', in *The Maugham Enigma*, p.145.
2. Oscar Wilde, 'The Picture of Dorian Gray', p.45,56,79,189.
3. 'Somerset Maugham: An Appreciation', *Saturday Review of Literature*, 19 August 1939, p.3.
4. Somerset Maugham. *Writers and Their Work* (Windsor: Profile Books, 1982). and John Whitehead, W, *Somerset Maugham. The Critical Heritage* (London and New York: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1987).
5. *The Modes of Modern Writing*, ([n.p.]: Edward Arnold, 1977), p.45.
6. Davies, Horton, *A Mirror of the Ministry in Modern Novels* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959).