



# The Importance of Teaching the Literary Analysis of Idea, Characters, Plot Summary of the Story “Escape” by Somerset Maugham

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**Abstract:** *In this article is given more information about the importance of teaching the literary analysis of idea, characters, plot summary of the story “Escape” by Somerset Maugham. Somerset Maugham English novelist, playwright, and short-story writer whose work is characterized by an unique understanding of human nature. If we were, the foreign language teachers, can provide or create a life-like situation in which our students are exposed to adequate foreign language inputs, and motivated the students to use the foreign language while teaching them the language concepts, the students will greatly improve their communicative competence.*

**Keywords:** *novelist, playwright, family relationships, language inputs, language concepts, communicative competence, vivid linking, story retelling, self-directed statement, role-playing.*

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**INTRODUCTION.** Somerset Maugham, in full William Somerset Maugham English novelist, playwright, and short-story writer whose work is characterized by a clear unadorned style, cosmopolitan settings, and a shrewd understanding of human nature. He was among the most popular writers of his era and reputedly the highest-paid author during the 1930s. Maugham was orphaned at the age of 10; he was brought up originally in France, Maugham lost his mother at the age of eight. Two years later his father died of cancer and Maugham the orphan was moved to Kent, where he boarded at King's School, Canterbury. After a year at Heidelberg, he entered St. Thomas' medical school, London, and qualified as a doctor in 1897. He drew upon his experiences as an obstetrician in his first novel, *Liza of Lambeth* (1897), and its success, though small, encouraged him to abandon medicine. He traveled in Spain and Italy and in 1908 achieved a theatrical triumph—four plays running in London at once—that brought him financial security. His holidays were spent with an uncle in Whitstable. About this time Maugham developed the stammer which made it difficult for him to make relationships and contributed to his shy and introverted manner.

Maugham studied philosophy and literature at Heidelberg University and then in London he qualified as a surgeon at St. Thomas's Hospital. His reputation as a novelist rests primarily on four books: *Of Human Bondage* (1915), describing his unhappiness and anxiety in early life and recounting his experiences as a medical student and a semi-autobiographical account of a young medical student's painful progress toward maturity; *The Moon and Sixpence* (1919), an account of an unconventional artist, suggested by the life of Paul Gauguin; *Cakes and Ale* (1930), the story of a famous novelist, which is thought to contain caricatures of Thomas Hardy and Hugh Walpole; and *The Razor's Edge* (1944), the story of a young American war veteran's quest for a satisfying

way of life. Maugham's plays, mainly Edwardian social comedies, soon became dated, but his short stories have increased in popularity. Many portray the conflict of Europeans in alien surroundings that provoke strong emotions, and Maugham's skill in handling plot, in the manner of Guy de Maupassant, is distinguished by economy and suspense. In *The Summing Up* (1938) and *A Writer's Notebook* (1949) Maugham explains his philosophy of life as a resigned atheism and a certain skepticism about the extent of man's innate goodness and intelligence; it is this that gives his work its astringent cynicism. Maugham served in the British Intelligence Service in World Wars I and II. During World War I he worked as a secret agent. In 1914 he was part of a Red Cross unit in France, later acting as a secret agent in Geneva. In Petrograd he was involved in trying to prevent the outbreak of the Russian Revolution. These experiences are related in *Ashenden, or the British Agent* [Maugham, 1928], a group of stories which influenced Ian Fleming's Bond stories. After the war he resumed his interrupted travels and, in 1928, bought a villa on Cape Ferrat in the south of France, which became his permanent home.

Maugham's travels fuelled his fascination with the Orient and South Sea Islands. *The Moon and Sixpence* [Maugham, 1919] is based on the life of Paul Gauguin, the artist who rejected France and civilization to live in Tahiti. *The Painted Veil* was originally set in Hong Kong but after threats of legal action Maugham changed the place-name to the fictional Tching-Yen. The now rare first printing of this novel still has Hong Kong as the colony (the British Library copy is the second printing).

Maugham became a witty satirist of the post-colonial world and wrote over thirty plays, mainly light satiric comedies. At one time he had four dramas running simultaneously; only Bernard Shaw has had more plays on at the same time in London. The British Library holds many of Maugham's published plays, and the Library's Lord Chamberlain's collection contains a considerable number of typescripts.

**THE METHODS AND METHODOLOGY OF THE RESEARCH WORK** . The scientific features of the material and the tasks set forward demand the use of the following methods; Method of historical analysis, transformational method of linguistic analysis and transformational method. The Methodology is based on well-known scholars' scientific works and articles. For instance, linguists such R.S. Ginzburg, I.V. Arnold, J. Buranov, S.R. Rakhimov, G.M. Hoshimov, M.A. Abduvaliyev and V.A. Vositov etc. we could learn linguistic and stylistic analysis of the literary works which we chose as our research's scientific area. In our graduation paper we depart from the theoretical positions of such renowned foreign linguists and Methodists as: N. Widdowson, Hornby A., Meyer Jeffrey, R. Monder, R.A. Cordell, Vidal Gore, Hastings S. and etc.

**DISCUSSION.** The story under the consideration "The Escape" was written by one of the outstanding English writers – William Somerset Maugham. William Somerset Maugham is one of the best known English writers of the 20th century. He was not only a novelist, but also a one of the most successful dramatist and short-story writers. The story is about a wealthy man Roger Charing who falls in love with Ruth Barlow. After some time being together they start to think about marriage. Then suddenly Roger dissolves loving Ruth, so he finds a way to break up with her. He tells her that they are going to marry after they find a perfect house, but he rejects all the orders of offering a new house. At last Ruth loses her patience. They break out.

The problem of the story lies in the relationships of man and woman. So the idea is that in order to finish the relationship some people decide to lie instead of telling the truth.

The story is ironic and humorous. The author introduces the reader marriage as a dangerous thing, it is seen through metaphor ("flight could save him", "the inevitable loom"). So the author reveals us contrast between Roger's attitude to Ruth. In first part Roger is in love with Ruth, in second - Roger changes his mind and carry a plan of escape.

To create the ironic mood the author describes the nature of main characters to us. The author describes miserable and unlucky woman directly, through parallel construction "If she married a husband he beat her; if she employed a broker he cheated her; if she engaged a cook she drank. She never had a little lamb but it was sure to die. It is expressed through the epithets "helpless little thing", "rotten time", "unfortunate", "poor dear", the metaphor "a little lamb".

So, only cause a pity on her has made Roger love her creat plans to marry. The metaphor "the gift of pathos", the epithets "splendid dark eyes", "the most moving eyes", "big and lovely eyes" give us understanding of the author's attitude to that woman. But according to the narrator's opinion, Ruth was two-faced woman of few ideas: he called her stupid and scheming. The epithets "stupid", "scheming", the simile "as hard as nails" give us full comprehension of her image. Roger in his order is described directly through the epithets "sufficient experience, careful, his prudence and his worldly wisdom". He is rich, generous and glad to care of Ruth.

While Roger is very happy that he love her, the writer applies parallel construction to depict his feelings " He gave her lovely jewels. He took her here, there, and everywhere. He was committing a good action and at the same time doing something " So we get it that for the first time his feelings were sincere.

In the second part Roger's attitude has changed. He fall out of love. There was no evident reason, the writer depicts his feelings through metaphor "it was merely that this pathetic look of hers ceased to wring his heart-strings". Roger becomes conscious that Ruth marries him because of money. It is obvious Ruth was narrow-minded woman and she didn't really love Roger. The epithets "acutely conscious", "a solemn oath" stress the importance, significance of his decision. But he didn't want people to say that he jilted a woman. In means that what is important for him is public opinion, what is typical for character of Maugham's stories.

Roger remains attentive to all her wishes. It is decided that they would be married as soon as they find a suitable house. But it occurs that it's very very very hard to find the suitable one. Where is no question why. He is dishonest, his behavior wasn't fair, it is even disgusting in some way. He makes a plan how to get rid of Ruth instead of to say straight to her face, that there is no love anymore. Parallel constructions "sometimes they were too large, sometimes they were too small, sometimes they were too expensive and sometimes they were too stuffy", the metaphor "house-hunting" describe Roger's scheming about their devorce. As a result Ruth leaves Roger for another man, she understands that Roger doesn't love her. It is Roger's victory. He achieved his gains.

This story tells about playing games between men and women and importance of public opinion. We see dishonest relations between man and woman based on the trickery, scheming from the very beginning. This problem will exist until the end of human history. For some people it is easier to lie instead of telling the truth. Even Roger has made a plan to jilt Ruth and he has lived with unloved woman 2 years not to spoil his reputation.

What about my harmble opinion I can say that it wasn't a surprise for me when I looked for materials writing this analysis and met different opinions of this text. Considirations were divided, boys predominantly took a position of Roger and girls took a side of Ruth. Trying to be objective I just wanna to notice that everyone gets what he deserves and it is reflected here exactly.

**RESULTS.** If we, the foreign language teachers, can provide or create a life-like situation in which our students are exposed to adequate foreign language inputs, and motivate the students to use the foreign language while teaching them the language concepts, the students will greatly improve their communicative competence. The following example will demonstrate this. Our students have learned to answer the question, "You are not a student, are you?" either by "No, I am

not," or "Yes, I am." They know consciously that if they want to give a negative answer, the whole sentence should be in the negative form and vice versa.

However, when they are asked such a question in their daily life, they will sometimes utter the wrong answer, saying, "Yes, I am not" or "No, I am." This example illustrates that knowing about a language is far from enough.

For years we have studied how to help our language learner become more competent. Through our teaching experience we have realized that language acquisition and language learning, the two ways of developing competence in a second language, are interrelated and mutually supplementary. Krashen [1983] says, "Language is best taught when it is being used to transmit messages, not when it is explicitly taught for conscious learning." These words have helped me to develop four possible ways to conduct acquisition activities in classroom teaching. They are vivid linking, story retelling, self-directed statement, and role-playing.

### ***Vivid linking:***

In my intensive reading class, I often try to put the new words and expressions from the text into real life contexts whenever possible. For example, take the phrase "be on one's knees doing something." I told my students to think of a famous Japanese TV cartoon show titled "Clever Yi Xiu." I asked them to describe how Yi Xiu mopped the floor. The students described it without difficulty. They said, "Yi Xiu is always on his knees mopping the floor." When they uttered this sentence, the picture of the cartoon vividly appeared in their minds. When I taught the students the use of the preposition "from," I told them that "from" could be followed by another prepositional phrase. Some students did not quite understand this linguistic concept. So I reminded them of an advertisement often appearing on TV. I said, "The chemist raised two fingers and looked at you...." The students continued, "from above his spectacles, saying 'two tablets.'" Some students who were wearing glasses even looked at me from above their spectacles and raised their two fingers as the chemist did in the ad. Tapping into their knowledge of another image helped them understand the difficult linguistic concept better. I said, "Suppose a little boy is very naughty, and his father wants to spank him, but the boy is under the bed. What will the father do?" The students answered in chorus, "Drag him out from under the bed." After these examples when I asked the class if anyone had any more questions, they emphatically said, "No." [3p.]

From the above examples we can see that when teaching or learning a second language, the explanation of a linguistic concept is often necessary but not always sufficient. Situational language teaching, or language in real communication, helps much in learning a second language.

Another example of how real life experiences helped my students learn foreign linguistic concepts is shown when the students were studying a new lesson titled "Factory Life-A Student Experience." They were confronted with several new terms, such as "assembly line," "conveyor belt," and "mentally ill." I recommended that the students think of the well-known American comedy *The Modern Age*. I told them to think of Charlie Chaplin. In the film he is a worker with a screwdriver in his hand. The factory he works in is equipped with assembly lines and he works at a conveyor belt. After a day's boring work involving only one action, screwing, he becomes mentally ill and has to be sent to hospital. He even wants to screw the buttons on a woman's coat. My students burst into laughter. By then the new terms were not merely terms in their textbooks but associated with real images in their minds.

On many occasions I tell my students the meanings of new phrases first and then provide them with situations in which the new terms are used. For instance, with the phrase "beyond one's means," I said to them, "Suppose you find a very beautiful dress in a shop and you like it. But you cannot buy it, because...." The students responded at once, "it is beyond my means." When they learned the

phrase "dirty looks," one of my students, Paul, was asked to give dirty looks to a disruptive student. With that little show the students said, "We could neither forget the phrase 'dirty looks' nor the real dirty looks from Paul. What dirty looks they were!" This is my intention: To take the language learners beyond verb forms and vocabulary lists to more lasting insights into language and language use.

### ***Story telling:***

Teachers as well as students are well aware that in a language learning situation, all classroom activities are contrived for language learning. It is the teacher's responsibility to plan realistic activities, or acquisition activities, that are relevant to the students' everyday life and communication needs. So in my class, besides explaining the text and doing exercises, I often provide the students with some interesting stories to read. Instead of giving all the students the same stories, I give them different ones.

After reading, the students are supposed to tell their stories to a partner in their own words or use the words they remember from their readings. In any case, they are not allowed to read the story to each other. When this is done each student is asked to retell the story heard from his or her partner to the whole class. The intent is to make the students focus on the meaning they want to get across, not focus on the linguistic forms that are being used. In telling or retelling the story, the students are allowed to use gestures and facial expressions, but not Chinese. They are informed that each pair of students will share the marks for the story's retelling. The marks are mainly based on the meaning of the story, not on the language. In this kind of activity, the students do not feel like they are just doing exercises. They are eager to tell their partner the plot of the story, so they let the language take care of itself. The principle here is, as Krashen (1983) puts it, "Normal conversation tends to be quite rapid, and the speakers' attention is usually on what is being said, not how it is being said."

### ***Self directed statement:***

The self-directed statement activity places the responsibility for communication chiefly on the learners themselves. The teacher's role is to prepare proper topics. For instance, when I was teaching the text of "My Wonderful Lousy Poem," I asked the students to try to fully understand both the mother's love and the father's love as stated by the author. I allowed them 10 minutes to write out their understanding of both kinds of love according to their own experiences. In their preparation, they concentrated on collecting evidence from events that happened in their daily lives. When they reported on their individual understanding of the terms to the class, the most important thing was to get the meaning across as effectively as they could. They were not to be overly concerned with using exactly the correct words or using them accurately. Circumlocution in this activity was not only permitted, it was desirable if it aided communication. It is what they said that counted, not how they said it. Something interesting happened: When some of them were telling about their views of the love shown by their parents, they used the exact sentences and expressions from the text. When asked if they deliberately recited these sentences, they answered negatively. They said that they did not intend to copy them. These words just flowed right out of their mouths. They could not tell which sentence was the author's and which was theirs. This meant that these expressions were no longer expressions appearing just in the text, but they became part of the learners' language.

Helen Keller's Three Days to See triggered my students to talk about what they would most want to see if they had only three days of sight. I suggested another topic: What would you do if you had only three days to live? Everyone tried to be first. The things they would do differed from each other. In short, this kind of exercise gave them confidence in talking to someone in a foreign language and in expressing real ideas instead of quoting from the book.



With this kind of activity, students do not feel that they are merely doing exercises. Instead, they are communicating with others. Whenever I devise these kinds of exercises, I have Krashen's (1983) advice on second-language acquisition in mind: "Activities in the classroom focus at all times on topics which are interesting and relevant to the students and encourage them to express their ideas, opinions, desires, emotions and feelings."

**CONCLUSION.** Today, Maugham is probably best known as a short story writer. His clear, lucid and economical style makes easy reading and his short stories have been reprinted frequently in collected editions. Maugham said himself: "I have never pretended to be anything but a story teller". This story carried me with its eternal intrigue – the war between male and female, playing games between the sides. We may be in earnest about it or may try to ignore it, but it really takes place and this problem will exist until the end of human history.

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