

A Writer's Notebook における Maugham 考察

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(一)

William Somerset Maugham (1874～1965) の作品を理解する上で *The Summing Up* は重要な資料であることはすでに第27巻の第4号で言及していますが、モームをさらにより深く知るための資料として、今回は *A Writer's Notebook* を考察してみたい。

モームは70歳の時、1949年にこの *A Writer's Notebook* は出版される。多作で経験主義のモームにとって、小説の種を豊富に保持することは絶対必要条件であったことは確実で、1892年、聖トマス病院の附属医学校へ入学以来、書きつけておいたノートを整理して出版した。

(二)

まず、冒頭に次のように言及している。

1892

In this year I entered the Medical School of St. Thomas's Hospital. I spent five years there. I carefully set down the dates on which I started my first notebooks, and these dates will, I hope, serve as an extenuation of their contents. My later notebooks are undated, indeed many of my notes were scribbled on a scrap of paper or the back of an envelope, and I have had to determine when they were written by their subject matter. It may be that here and there I am a year or two out; I do not think it is of any consequence.⁽¹⁾

日付についてモームは前半は正確につけていたが後になると記入していないので、その内容から判断する始末になったことを説明しているが所々1～2年の狂いがあることを認め、それは大したことではないと弁解めいた言及からこの *A Writer's Notebook* ははじまる。

この作品はまさにモームの職場を垣間見ることであり、作品の種の貯蔵庫に忍びこむことでもある。組織的に、また、継続的内容でなく断片的に材料が配置されているが、それぞれが文学的宝庫であることに単なるメモ的存在でないことがわかる。

モームは深い感動をうけた時、美しいもの、珍しいものに印象を受けた時にすぐその場でメモ用紙等に的確な言葉で生きた表現でメモを継続的に豊富な旅行を含めた経験を積み重ねつつ、モームの秀れた洞察力や感受性、モーム独特な物の見方、考え方を即座に書きとめる勤勉さがこの作品に脈動している。

もとのノートは15冊の龐大なものであったが普通の小説程度に縮少したとモームは公言している。

前巻とりあげた *The Summing Up* は人生のある時点から過去を書き、この *A Writer's Notebook* はその時、その場で書かれたもので、作品の材料という目的であったことは確実である。

1954年に *The Partial View* として *The Summing Up* と *A Writer's Notebook* の合本が出版された。このことはこれらの二つの作品が表裏一体をなすもので *The Summing Up* やその他の作品を補完する役割を果たして言っても過言ではない。

(三)

A Writer's Notebook を時代毎に考察してみると、1892年～1902年までの記述では次のように警句が多く見られる。

Reading does not make a man wise; it only makes him learned.
Respectability is the cloak under which fools cover their stupidity.
No action is in itself good or bad, but only such according to convention.

An old maid is always poor. When a spinster is rich she is an unmarried woman of a certain age.

Genius should use mediocrity as ink wherewith to write its name in the annals of the world.

Genius is talent provided with ideals.

Genius starves while talent wears purple and fine linen.

The man of genius of to-day will in fifty year's time be in most cases no more than a man of talent.⁽²⁾

読書は人を聡明にしない。ただ教養ある者にするだけだ。

行為自体に善意があるのではなく、社会の習慣からただそれが決められるのだ

天才は飢えるが、才能ある者は高位につき、贅沢する。

今日天才といわれる人も、50年内には先ず、才能のあった男、という程度になるだろう。

当時、モーム自身、若くて人生経験も少なく、社会通念に甘じることなく、正義感も強く、反抗精神旺盛な性格が上記のような警句や皮肉な表現に表われたといえよう。モームの小説の数々の表現の中に垣間見られる皮肉は初期の *A Writer's Notebook* に負うところ大である。

モームは *Of Human Bondage* の中でペルシャ絨緞の哲学を生み出し、人生の無意義を主張しているが、1896年の Note の終りに「人生の意味」を考え、悩んだことを次のように述べている。

Capri. I wander about alone, forever asking myself the same questions: What is the meaning of life? Has it any object or end? Is there such a thing as morality? How ought one to conduct oneself in life? What guide is there? Is there one road better than another? And a hundred more of the same sort. The other afternoon I was scrambling among the rocks and boulders up the hill behind the villa. Above me was the blue sky and all around the sea. Hazy in the distance was Vesuvius. I remember the brown earth, the ragged olive trees, and here and there a pine. And I stopped suddenly, in confusion, my head buzzing with all the thoughts that seethed in it. I could make nothing out of it all; it seemed to me one big tangle. In desperation, I cried out: I can't understand it. I don't know, I don't know.

A rough day in the Bay of Naples. The Neapolitans vomited great platefuls of undigested macaroni. They vomited with a sudden rush, like water escaping from a burst main, and their gaping mouths gave them the stupid, agonised look of a fish out of water, but you can't bang them on the head to put them out of their misery as you do with a fish you've caught. Besides, you have nothing to bang them with.

I suppose it is to the Jews that we owe our idea of the sanctity of home life. They found in their home safety and peace from the turmoil and persecution of the world without. It was their only refuge and so they loved it, but they loved it because of their weakness. The Greeks seem to have had no home life. No one has accused them of domesticity. Full of energy, eager, abounding as perhaps no other people has been with the joy of living, they looked upon the world as a battle place; and the din of warfare, the shouts of triumph, even the groans of the vanquished were music in their ears. They flung themselves into the business of life as a fearless swimmer breasts the waves.

One of the commonest errors of the human intelligence is to insist that a rule should be universally applicable. Take an instance in Anatomy.

Out of twenty cases the branch of an artery in eight will arise from the second part of the root, in six from the first, and in six from the third. Though the exceptions surpass it, the rule will be that it arises from the second part.

The great majority use quite ignobly the portion of intelligence they have over after providing for their self-preservation and the propagation of their species.

I think it possible that, having arrived at a certain high stage of civilisation, men will wilfully revert to barbarism; or fall back from inability to maintain the high level they have reached.

Everything in life is meaningless, the pain and the suffering are fruitless and futile. There is no object in life. To nature nothing matters but the continuation of the species. And is not this last a hasty proposition based on over-brief periods of time, the observation of an eye that sees but a little way?⁽³⁾

私は一人でさまよい歩いた。涯しない自問を続けながら。人生の意義とは何であろうか。それには何か目的とか窮極があるものだろうか。人生には倫理性というようなものがあるのだろうか。人は人生に於いて如何になすべきであろうか。指針は何か

人生のあらゆるものは無意義だ。苦痛にも苦痛にも何ら収穫はない。人生の目的なんか無いのだ。自然にとって重要なのは、種の存在だけだ。

1901年の頃ではモームの文体論が展開されている。モーム自身、影響を受けた作家はかなりいますがその一人 Jeremy Taylor (1613~1667) について、次のように言及している。

Jeremy Taylor. Of no one, perhaps, can it be said with greater truth that the style is the very man himself. When you read *Holy Dying*, with its leisurely gait, its classical spirit, its fluent, facile poetry, you can imagine what sort of a man was Jeremy Taylor; and from a study of his life and circumstances you could hazard a guess that he would write exactly as he does. He was a Caroline prelate. His life was easy, moderately opulent and gently complacent. And such was his style. It reminds one, not, like Milton's of a tumultuous torrent breaking its way through obstacles almost insurmountable, but of a rippling brook meandering happily through a fertile meadow carpeted with the sweet-smelling flowers of spring. Jeremy Taylor is no juggler with words, but well content to use them in their ordinary sense. His epithets are seldom subtle, and seldom discover in the object a new or striking quality; he uses them purely as decoration, and he repeats them over and over again, as if they were not living, necessary things, but merely conventional adjuncts of a noun. Consequently, notwithstanding his extreme floridity, he gives an impression of simplicity. He seems to use the words that come most naturally to the mouth, and his phrases, however nicely turned, have a colloquial air. Perhaps, also, the constant repetition of *and* adds to this sensation of naïveté. The long clauses, tacked on to one another in a string that appears interminable, make you feel that the thing has been written without effort. It seems like the conversation of a good-natured, rather long-winded, elderly cleric. Often, it is true, the endless phrases, clause after clause joined together with little regard to the meaning, with none at all to the construction of the sentence, depend merely upon looseness of punctuation, and by a rearrangement of this can be made into compact and well composed periods. Jeremy Taylor, when he likes, can put together his words as neatly as anyone, and then writes a sentence of perfect music. 'He that desires to die well and happily above all things must be careful that he do not live a soft, a delicate, and voluptuous life; but a life severe, holy and under the discipline of the Cross, under the conduct of prudence and observation, a life of warfare and sober counsels, labour and watchfulness.' On the other hand, sometimes his phrases run away with him, then *and* is heaped upon *and*, idea upon idea, till one cannot make head or tail of

them meaning; and the sentence at last tails off obscurely, unfinished, incomplete and ungrammatical. On occasion, however, these tremendous sentences are managed with astonishing skill; and in a long string of clauses the arrangement of epithets, the form and order of the details, will be varied with skill and elegance.⁽⁴⁾

Jeremy Taylor は高僧でその生涯は安楽でかなり裕福であり、温厚な人物であった。それが彼の文体に現れ、美辞麗句、古典精神、流暢な調べであり、モームをして美文としてメモノートに書きとめさせた。

また、当時 Oscar Wilde の *Salome* の絢爛たる文章に驚嘆したことを次のように言及している。

The reader may well ask himself what these enamels, what these stones, precious and semi precious, are doing here. I will tell him. At that time, still impressed by the exuberant prose that was fashionable in the nineties and aware that my own was flat, plain and pedestrian, I thought I should try to give in more colour and more ornament. That is why I read Milton and Jeremy Taylor with laborious zeal. One day, my mind upon a florid passage in Oscar Wilde's Salome, I took pencil and paper and went to the British Museum where, hoping they would come in handy, I made these notes.⁽⁵⁾

モームは Oscar Wilde の作品を読み、ノートにとるために大英博物館に足を運んでいる。また、自分の文章が平明平板、無趣味なものであるのに気づき、もっと色彩や装飾をつけるために Milton や Jeremy Taylor の作品を熱心に読んだことを正直に告白している。

(四)

この Notebook の注目すべき点の一つに空白の年があることである。いろいろな理由があることは想像できるが1904年から1908年までのブランクはモームが劇作家として人気を得て大変忙しい時期であったと言えよう。その証として、

1908年、モーム34歳の時であるが、まず最初に“success”と言葉で次のように言及している。

1908

Success. I don't believe it has had any effect on me. For one thing I always expected it, and when it came I accepted it as so natural that I didn't see anything to make a fuss about. Its only net value to me is that it has freed me from financial uncertainties that were never quite absent from my thoughts. I hated poverty. I hated having to scrape and save so as to make both ends meet. I don't think I'm so conceited as I was ten years ago.

Athens. I was sitting in the theatre of Dionysus, and from where I sat I could see the blue Ægean. When I thought of the great plays that had been acted on the stage, I got cold shivers down my spine. It was really a moment of intense emotion. I was thrilled and awed. A number of young Greek students came and began chattering to me in bad French. After a while one of them asked me if I would like him to recite something from the stage. I jumped at the chance. I thought he would recite some great speech by Sophocles or Euripides, and though I knew I shouldn't understand a word I prepared myself for a wonderful experience. He clambered down and struck an attitude, then with an appalling accent he started: *C'est nous les cadets de Gascogne.*⁽⁶⁾

1907年、彼の戯曲「Lady, Fredrick」がコート劇場で大当たりとなり、貧乏からの脱出に成功したことで1908年の冒頭に上記のように“Success”となったことは言うまでもない。モームはこの成功により、経済的不安から解放されたことになる。モームは貧乏が身にしみて、金なしでは人生のいかなる企画も実行できぬことを悟り、戯曲をかくことで経済的安定をねらい、この目的が実現したことになる。

戯曲での成功はモームを社交界に導き、戯曲は次から次と発表し、ロングランとなり人気絶調の劇作家となる。

一方では、モームの大長篇 *Of Human Bondage* の構想にとりつかれ、約2年の年月を経て1915年に出版に至る。

第一次大戦が勃発すると志願して前線に出ることになるがこれは人気劇作家からの解放を求め、自分を見つめ直す機会を求めたのではないかと想像される。しかし、この経験が後の作品に影響を与えたことは確実である。

具体的には、1914年(40歳) フランス前線で病院車の運転手、その後、情報機関に入りフランス、スイスに滞在。

旅行家モームのはじまりは1916年、南海旅行に出かけることから、ハワイ、サモア列島、フィジー諸島。

1917年にはロシア そこで病気になりスコットランドのサナトリウムで療養。1919年、アメリカに行く。モームのアメリカ観を次のように言及している。

When I have travelled through America I have often asked myself what sort of men those were whom I saw in the parlour-cars of trains or in the lounge of an hotel, in rocking-chairs, a spittoon by their side, looking out of a large plate-glass window at the street. I have wondered what their lives were, what they thought of and how they looked upon existence. In their ill-fitting, ready-made clothes, gaudy shirts and showy ties, rather too stout, clean-shaven, but wanting ashave, with a soft hat on the back of their heads, chewing a cigar, they were as strange to me as the chinese and more impenetrable. Often I have tried to speak with them, but I have found no common language in which I could converse with them. They have filled me with timidity. Now that I have read *Main Street* I feel that I am no longer quite unfamiliar with them. I can give them names. I know how they behave when they are at home and what they talk about. I have enriched my knowledge of human nature. But the author of *Main Street* has done something more than depict with accuracy the inhabitants of a small town in the Middle-West, and I cannot make up my mind whether he has done it knowingly or by accident. He has described a very curious circumstance, the beginnings in America of the social distinctions which in Europe make up so important a part of life. And it is interesting to see this

arise when in Europe the war is thought to have abolished so many distinctions of class. The story of *Main Street* is very simple: it is the description of the marriage of a lady with a man who is not a gentleman. He is an excellent fellow, but she suffers much because his ways are vulgar and the people among whom she has to live are common. In England a woman in such a case would have been at once conscious of the social difference and would have hesitated to marry. Her friends would have said to her: 'May dear, of course he's a dear good chap, but he's not a gentleman and you can't possibly be happy with him.' And much else of the story hangs on the various levels of village society; the tradesman looks down on the farmer and the farmer on the hired man. There could not be more class-consciousness in an English village; but in an English village each man knows his station and accepts it without rancour. It looks as though every civilisation as it grows complicated and stable gave rise to a minute difference of classes, and to acknowledge them frankly conduced to ease of mind. In the community described in *Main Street* every man allows with his lips that every other is as good as he, but in his heart he does not think it for a moment. The banker does not ask the dentist to his house and the dentist will not hobnob with the tailor's assistant. The lip-service which is given to equality occasions a sort of outward familiarity, but this only makes those below more conscious of the lack of inward familiarity; and so nowhere is class-hatred likely to give rise in the long run to more bitter enmity.⁽⁷⁾

上記のアメリカについての記述もロシアと同様、アメリカについての論評が主でモームの考え、意見を知る上で貴重なる資料である。

1922年～1923年にかけて再び南海へ旅行し、ニューギニア、ボルネオ、中国、マレイ、ビルマ（現在のミャンマー）等々を訪れ、小説の材料の収集にあたる。

短編 *Rain* に登場する人物についてはサモアのバゴ・バゴでの宣教師、その妻、ミス・トムソン、それにバゴ・バゴの宿屋についてかいているがそれがそのまま *Rain* になっている。

また、これらの旅行によって上記の *Rain* 以外に、*The Moon and Sixpence*, *The*

Painted Vel, Ashenden, The Gentleman in the Parlour 等の誕生となる。

モームは文明によって満たされたものよりも野性的で自然のままの生きざまや南海の原生的な植物、鳥類、土人の姿、等々にモームの鋭い観察眼はそそがれたが Notebook に実に鮮明に描写されている。

(五)

A Writer's Notebook の中でモームの喋報活動が意外に思われる点であるが、一般に小説家、劇作家という身分でありながら、自ら志願し従軍、しかも諜報活動にも従事し、赤裸々な人間模様に好奇心をおどらせ、各国のスパイが暗躍するスイスに在住したり、ロシアでは革命阻止の任務をもって革命直前に潜入し、第二次大戦の間ではアメリカでその方面の仕事に従事しており、そういう様々な経験を通して貴重な、一般生活では得られない特殊な内容のメモが得られたことは疑いなしと見るのが妥当であろう。しかし、そのことについては前述の *Ashenden* という短編にしか見られないのは残念である。諜報活動という内容が内容だけに公表するには問題ありと判断したことは疑う余地はないであろう。

とはいえ、ロシアという国はモームにとって好奇的な眼で見るに値するところで、特に作家としてのドストエーフスキー、チェホフの作品を通じて関心度は高く、実際、ロシアに滞在し、モームの批評眼でロシア文学についての論評はかなりの部分をしめており、重厚さを思わせる。

I read *Anna Karenina* when I was a boy in a bluebound translation published by Walter Scott, long before I began to write myself, but my recollection of it was vague, and when I read it again many years afterwards, interested then from a professional standpoint in the art of fiction, it seemed to me powerful and strange, but a little hard and dry. Then I read *Fathers and Sons*, in French; I was too ignorant of Russian things to appreciate its value; the strange names, the originality of the characters,

opened a window on romance, but it was a novel like another, related to the French fiction of its day, and for me at all events, it had no great significance. Later still, when I found myself definitely interested in Russia, I read other books by Turgenev; but they left me cold. Their idealism was too sentimental for my taste, and unable in a translation to see the beauty of manner and style which Russians value, I found them ineffectual. It was not till I came to Dostoievsky (I read *Crime and Punishment* in a German version) that I received a bewildering and arresting emotion. Here was something that really had significance for me, and I read greedily one after the other the great novels of Russia's greatest writer. Finally I read Chekov and Gorki. Gorki left me indifferent. His subject matter was curious and remote, but his talent seemed mediocre: he was readable enough when he set down unaffectedly the lives of the lowest orders of the population, but my interest in the slums of Petrograd was soon exhausted; and when he began to reflect or philosophise I found him trivial. His talent sprang from his origins. He wrote of the proletariat as a proletarian, not as do most authors who have dealt with the subject, as a bourgeois. In Chekov on the other hand I discovered a spirit vastly to my liking. Here was a writer of real character, not a wild force like Dostoievsky, who amazes, inspires, terrifies and perplexes; but one with whom you could get on terms of intimacy. I felt that from him as from no other could be learned the secret of Russia. His range was great and his knowledge of life direct. He has been compared with Guy de Maupassant, but one would presume only by persons who have read neither. Guy de Maupassant is a clever story-teller, effective at his best—by which, of course, every writer has the right to be judged—but without much real relation to life. His better known stories interest you while you read them, but they are artificial so that they do not bear thinking of. The people are figures of the stage, and their tragedy exists only because they behave like puppets rather than like human beings. The outlook upon life which is their background is dull and vulgar. Guy de Maupassant had the soul of a well-fed bagman; his tears and his laughter smack of the commercial room in a provincial hotel. He is the son of Monsieur Homais. But with Chekov you do not seem to be reading stories at all. There is no obvious

cleverness in them and you might think that anyone could write them, but for the face that nobody does. The author has had an emotion and he is able so to put it into words that you receive it in your turn. You become his collaborator. You cannot use of Chekov's stories the hackneyed expression of the slice of life, for a slice is a piece cut off and that is exactly the impression you do not get when you read them; it is a scene seen through the fingers which you know continues this way and that though you only see a part of it.

In the above I was grossly unfair to Maupassant. 'La Maison Tellier' is enough to prove it.

Russian writers have been so much the fashion that sober-minded people have greatly exaggerated the merit of certain writers merely because they write in Russian, so that Kuprin, for instance, Korolenko and Sologub have received an attention which they hardly deserve. Sologub seems worthless to me, but his combination of sensuality and mysticism is evidently one that was bound to attract readers of a certain class. On the other hand I can't look on Artzibachev with the contempt some affect. *Sanine*, to my mind, is a book of some value; it has the merit, rare in Russian fiction, of sunshine. The characters do not pass their lives in the freezing drizzle which we are accustomed to: the sky is blue and the pleasant breezes of summer rustle through the birches.

What must surprise anyone who enters upon the study of Russian literature is its extraordinary poverty. The most enthusiastic critics claim no more than a historical interest for the works written before the nineteenth century, and Russian literature begins with Pushkin; then you have Gogol, Lermontov, Turgenev, Tolstoi, Dostoievsky; then Chekov; and that is all. Students mention a number of names, but they do not attach any importance to them, and the stranger has only to read works here and there of other writers to realise that he will lose little by ignoring them. I have tried to imagine what English literature would be if it began with Byron and Shelley (it would scarcely be unfair to put Tom Moore in Shelley's place) and Walter Scott; proceeded with Dickens, Thackeray and

George Eliot; and finished with George Meredith. The first effect would be to give a far greater importance to these writers.

Because the Russians have so small a literature they know it with great thoroughness. Everyone who reads at all has read everything and read it so often that it is as familiar to him as to us the authorised version of the Bible. And because literature in Russia consists for the most part of novels, fiction has a much higher place in the opinion of the cultivated man than in other countries.⁽⁸⁾

(六)

モームは次から次へと旅行し、各地でシニカルな観察を小説や戯曲の窓口を拡大していくのだが、モーム自身の虚無的な人生観は変ることなく進行する。

1933年にはスペイン、その結果、旅行記 *Don Fernando* が出版され、1936年には南米の佛領ギニアに出かけ流刑地を見聞。

1938年、モームは64歳に達し、60歳で戯曲の筆を断ち、ここで *The Summing Up* を出版している。この年にインド旅行をして多くの Notebook を作成することになる。

モームはこのインドで哲学、宗教に魅せられ、多くの聖者やヒンズー教徒たちに会おう。モームはインドの印象について次のように言及している。

When I was leaving India people asked me which of all the sights I had seen had most impressed me. I answered as they expected me to answer. But it wasn't the Taj Mahal, the *ghats* of Benares, the temple at Madura or the mountains of Travancore that had most moved me; it was the peasant, terribly emaciated, with nothing to cover his nakedness but a rag round his middle the colour of the sun-baked earth he tilled, the peasant shivering in the cold of dawn, sweating in the heat of noon, working still as the sun set red over the parched fields, the starveling peasant toiling without cease in the north, in the south, in the east, in the west, toiling all over the

vastness of India, toiling as he had toiled from father to son back, back for three thousand years when the Aryans had first descended upon the country, toiling for a scant subsistence, his only hope to keep body and soul together. That was the sight that had given me the most poignant emotion in India.

Wellington is supposed to have said that the Battle of Waterloo was won on the playing fields of Eton. It may be that the historians of the future will say that India was lost in the public schools of England.⁽⁹⁾

インドでモームの心をとらえたものはタジ・マハールでもなく、マデュラの寺院でも、またトラバンコールの山々でもなく、ひどく瘠せた、腰のまわり以外は素裸の大地を耕す大地と同じ日焦け色をして飢えるに近い生活をするために働きつゝ、望みはただ辛うじて生きることだけの、瘠せおとろえた百姓たち。それを見たことがインドで最もモームの胸を打つものであった。

インドでは皮肉、批判的なモームではなく人間的なやさしい心を披瀝している。

1939年にはフランス北東部の炭坑都市ランスに行き、炭坑生活をつぶさに観察している。

1939

Lens. The *table d'hôte*. A long table at which sat a number of youngish men respectably dressed in dark clothes, but who gave you the impression that they hadn't had a bath for some time. They were school teachers, insurance clerks, shop-assistants and what not. Most of them read the evening paper while they dined. They ate their food greedily, a lot of bread, and drank *vin ordinaire*. They talked little. Suddenly a man came in. '*Voilà Jules,*' they cried, and seemed to wake up. Jules brought gaiety. He was a thin man of thirty, with a pointed red face and a comic look; you could well see him as a clown at the circus. His fun consisted in throwing bread pellets at till and sundry, and when he hit anybody, the person hit cried: *un obus qui tombe du ciel*.

They were all on friendly terms with the waiter, whom they *tutoyé*d, and who *tutoyé*d them. A little girl, the daughter of the patron, sat on a bench knitting a foolard and they chaffed her not unkindly; you got the sensation that they looked forward to the time when they could make a pass at her.⁽¹⁰⁾

1941年の記録はアメリカに行き、現地で書かれたもので、モームの素直なアメリカ観でアメリカの国民性、習慣等々で特にアメリカの階級意識についての言及は興味深いものである。

Some American Delusions.

- (i) The there is no class-consciousness in the country.
- (ii) That American coffee is good.
- iii That Americans are business-like.
- (iv) That Americans are highly-sexed and that red-heads are more highly-sexed than others.

Of all the hokum with which this country is riddled the most odd is the common notion that it is free of class distinctions. I was asked one day out West to lunch with a woman who, I was told, had twenty millions. I have never seen a duke in Europe treated with such deference as she was. You might have thought that every word that issued from her opulent lips was a hundred-dollar bill that the guests would be allowed to take away with them. It is true that there is a pretence that one man is as good as another, but it is only a pretence. A banker will talk in the club car of a train to a travelling salesman as though they were equal, but I am not aware that he will dream of asking him to his house. And in such communities as Charleston or Santa Barbara the travelling salesman's wife, however charming and cultivated, will never succeed in making her way into society. Social distinctions in the final analysis depend upon money. The great English lords of the eighteenth century were not treated by their inferiors with the obsequiousness which now turns our stomachs because of their titles, but because of their wealth, which, with the influence it gave

them, enabled them to grant favours to their friends and dependants. With the industrialisation of England they lost a great part of their wealth and with it their influence. If they have managed to maintain themselves in some measure as a class apart it is due to the innate conservatism of the English. But they no longer enjoy the same consideration. It was properly respectful dearly to love a lord when there was something to be got out of him, but now that he has nothing to give you it is contemptible.

But it is a mistake to suppose that class distinctions exist only in the upper and middle classes of society. In England the wife of the skilled artisan looks upon herself as a cut above the wife of the common labourer and will not consort with her. I know of a mushroom city in the Far West which was built only a few years ago to house the employees of a great factory. White-collar workers and factory hands live in adjoining blocks in houses built on the same pattern and as like as peas; they eat the same canned goods, read the same papers, go to the same movies, drive the same automobiles; but the wives of the white-collar workers will not play bridge with the wives of the factory hands. It looks as though the existence of class distinctions is inseparable from life in the social state, and instead of denying its existence it would be more honest to admit it.⁽¹¹⁾

1944年 モーム70歳の誕生日。70歳という大きな区切りで、自分の一生を省みて、現在の心境を語っている。

まず、自分の70歳という年齢について。

1944

By way of postscript. Yesterday I was seventy years old. As one enters upon each succeeding decade it is natural, though perhaps irrational, to look upon it as a significant event. When I was thirty my brother said to me: 'Now you are a boy no longer, you are a man and you must be a man.' When I was forty I said to myself: 'That is the end of youth.' On my fiftieth birthday I said: 'It's no good fooling myself, this is middle age and I may just as well accept it.' At sixty I said: 'Now it's time to put my

affairs in order, for this is the threshold of old age and I must settle my accounts.' I decided to withdraw from the theatre and I wrote *The Summing Up*, in which I tried to review for my own comfort what I had learnt of life and literature, what I had done and what satisfaction it had brought me. But of all anniversaries I think the seventieth is the most momentous. One has reached the three score years and the which one is accustomed to accept as the allotted span of man, and one can but look upon such years as remain to one as uncertain contingencies stolen while old Time with his scythe has his head turned the other way. At seventy one is no longer on the threshold of old age. One is just an old man.⁽¹²⁾

70歳というのは貴重なもので、これは人間に割りあてられた寿命と考える年齢であり、もうあとは、大鎌をもった「時」の老人がよそ見をしている間に、不確かな偶然の時をぬすんでいくしか余命は残されていないものと見る年齢である。70歳はもう老人の入口ではない。正に老人である。

モームは自分の作品、特に *Of Human Bondage* についても興味深いことを述べている。

Of Human Bondage がモームの代表作と一般に考えられ、現在も広く読まれ、あの作品が世間の人から重要な作品と見られてきたことはモームにとって大きな驚きだが、世代の経過とともに、あれは他のもっとすぐれた多くの長編ともども忘れられるだろうとモームは見ていると断言している。

(七)

モームは現代小説には興味がわかず、時間の経過を忘れさせてくれる点数の探偵小説が無かったら、自分の慰みをどうしてよいか分らないと言うほど探偵小説も愛読し、今では現代の詩人たちにも関心を示し、また、老人なりに熱中できる対象、即ち、哲学にも大いに関心を示している。

It is strange how long it can take one to become aware of the benefits a kindly nature has bestowed on one. It is only recently that it occurred to me how lucky I was never to have suffered from head-aches, stomach-aches or tooth-aches. I read the other day that Cardan in his autobiography, written when he was approaching eighty, congratulated himself on still having fifteen teeth. I have just counted mine and find that I have twenty-six. I have had many severe illnesses, tuberculosis, dysentery, malaria and I know not what, but I have neither drunk too much nor eaten too much, and I am sound in wind and limb. It is evident that one cannot expect to get much satisfaction out of old age unless one has fairly good health; nor unless one has an adequate income. It need not be a large one, for one's wants are few. Vice is expensive, and in old age it is easy to be virtuous. But to be poor and old is bad; to be dependent on others for the necessities of life is worse: I am grateful for the favour of the public which enables menot only to live in comfort, but to gratify my whims and to provide for those who have claims upon me. Old men are inclined to be avaricious. They are prone touse their money to retain their power over those dependent on them. I do not find in myself any impulse to succumb to these infirmities. I have a good memory, except for names and faces, and I do not forget what I have read. The disadvantage of this is that having read all the great novels of the world two or three times I can no longer read them with relish. There are few modern novels that excite my interest, and I do not know what I should do for relaxation were it not for the innumerable detective stories that so engagingly pass the time and once read pass straight out of one's mind. I have never cared to read books on subjects that were in no way my concern, and I still cannot bring myself to read books of entertainment or instruction about people or places that mean nothing to me. I do not want to know the history of Siam or the manners and customs of the Esquimaux. I do not want to read a life of Manzoni, and my curiosity about stout Cortez is satisfied with the fact that he stood upon a peak in Darien. I can still read with pleasure the poets that I read in my youth and with interest the poets of to-day. I am glad to have lived long enough to read the later poems of Yeats and Eliot. I can read everything that pertains to Dr. Johnson and almost everything that

pertains to Coleridge, Byron and Shelley. Old age robs one of the thrill one had when first one read the great mesterpieces of the world; that one can never recapture. It is sad, indeed, to reread something that at one time had made one feel like Keats's *Watcher of the Skies* and be forced to the conclusion that after all it's not so much. But there is one subject with which I can still occupy myself with my old excitement, and that is philosophy, not the philosophy that is disputatious and aridly technical—'Vain is the word of a philosopher which does not heal any suffering of man'—but the philosophy that treats the problems that confront us all. Plato, Aristotle (who they say is dry, but in whom if you have a sense of humour you can find quite a lot to amuse you), Plotinus and Spinoza, with sundry moderns, among whom Bradley and White-head, never cease to entertain me and incite me to reflection. After all, they and the Greek tragedians deal with the only things that are important to man. They exalt and tranquillise. To read them is to sail with a gentle breeze in an inland sea studded with a thousand isles.⁽¹³⁾

読書家モームの面目躍如というべき言及である。Yeats, Eliot, Dr. Johnson, Coleridge, Byron そして Shelley という堂々たる面々。

また、哲学では Plato, Aristotle, Plotinus, Spinoza, Bradley そして Whitehead に熱中し、モームを大いに喜ばせ、考える刺激を与えている。上記の哲学者たちとギリシャの悲劇詩人たちは人間にとって重要な事物とだけしか組まないが故にモームは愛読し、それらを読むことによって、心を高尚にし、鎮めてくれることに心打たれている。

モームは *The Summing Up* の中で自分の経験や読書や瞑想の間に自分をとらえる神とか不朽とか、人生の意義と価値について印象や考察を書きとめておいたがその考えは変化していないことを述べている。

モームは自分の生涯をもう一度繰り返したいかと問われて、自分の人生はかなりよい人生だったがもう一度繰り返したい気はしないと答えている。そして、死については、苦痛なく死にたいと思うだけで、最後の息と共に自分の魂も、

その切望や弱さもろとも、無に帰すことを確信して満足であると淡々と述べている。

その後、5年経過して秀れた生物学者を知り有機哲学という有益な興味深い問題と思い、これらは精神を解放してくれるものだと心服している。

モームが伯父の牧師と暮らしていた少年時代、そしてドイツに遊学し、ハイデルベルクでの生活、そして開眼しキリスト教の信仰との訣別、医学生時代の科学的なものに立脚した人間観からモームの思想は形成されたものだが結局はペルシャ絨緞や人間の絆からの解放という人間の本心に大きな重みを置いていたことを筆者は感知せざるを得ない。

<Note>

(1)	A Writer's Notebook in The Partial View	p. 1
(2)	〃	p. 2
(3)	〃	pp. 26-27
(4)	〃	pp. 42-43
(5)	〃	p. 45
(6)	〃	pp. 67-68
(7)	〃	pp. 151-152
(8)	〃	pp. 117-119
(9)	〃	p. 249
(10)	〃	pp. 242-243
(11)	〃	pp. 260-261
(12)	〃	pp. 279-280
(13)	〃	pp. 285-286

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