

劇作家としての William Somerset Maugham

田 中 正 志

〈序〉

William Somerset Maugham (1874—1965) については日本のみならず、世界的に著名な小説家であることは知られているが、劇作家として米国及び英国の演劇界でモーム独特の作風を表現し、大いに活躍したことを知る人は少ないのではないだろうか。

モームは劇作家になること切望し、文学界に身を投ずるのである。本編ではそのプロセスを考察する。

〈 1 〉

モームが八才の時に母、Edith Mary を肺結核でその二年後に父、Robert Ormond Maugham が胃癌で死亡し、叔父 Henry MacConald Maugham の居住するイギリスのケント州の牧師館に引きとられ、カンタペリーのキングズ・スクールで学ぶことになる。

不幸にしてモーム自身も母親同様、肺結核になり、また、フランスで生れ、フランス語を母国語として養育され、生来の吃音もあって英語については苦勞し、楽しい学園生活を過せず、約五年間在学したのち退学することになる。

ドイツの貴族出身である叔父 Henry の妻、Barbara Sophie のすすめで、モームはハイデルベルク大学で学ぶことになる。1890年、モーム16才の時だった。

モームのこれまでの学校生活とちがって、自由で解放的な生活をはじめて楽しみつつ、大学での講義や新しい友人、知人を得て、今までの固定した思考からも解放され、多様な思想に触れることになる。

劇作家モームの誕生の因となる経験をハイデルベルク前衛劇場での Herik Ibsen (1828-1906) や Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860) 作の劇に強い影響を与えられる。

モームはハイデルベルクに来るまで芝居というものを見たことがなかった。従って上記の Ibsen と Schopenhauer の外に Becque, Hauptmann や他の自然主義者の芝居に触れ、劇場からの帰途、友人たちと芝居について論争することになる。次のように Richard Cordell は言及している。

Maugham's guardian, his narrow clergyman uncle, with whom the boy lived from the age of ten to eighteen, viewed the theatre with the professional horror proper in the 1880's. Not until the boy at eighteen went to Heidelberg for a year did he see a play. Then he was suddenly introduced to the new drama of Ibsen. Hauptmann, Becque, and other early naturalists. Night after night he went to the grubby, ill-lighted local theatre and afterwards in a *Bierstube* de-bated solemnly with his young companions the merit and meaning of the revolutionary new plays. It is interesting to note that in spite of this initiation into the new continental drama of the early 1890's, Maugham never wrote the kind of insurgent social-idea plays that excited these boys and young men in Heidelberg in 1892. (1)

〈 2 〉

1892年の春、ハイデルベルクで1年半を過ごして帰国する。牧師である叔父はモームが聖職者になるために Oxford 大学に進学するように説得するが、作家志望であるためにその気にならず、会計事務所に短期間、勤務するが最終的には医師になることで、聖職者を強く主張する叔父夫妻の同意を得て、ロンドンのセント・トマス病院に併設されている医学校に入学する。

ハイデルベルクでの演劇が頭に入っているモームは医学校の勉強と共にイ

ブセン流の戯曲を書き、それを劇場経営者に送るが取りあげてもらえない。

当時、イギリスでは Jacob Thomas Grein (1862-1935) が会員制の独立劇場を作って、小説家の George Moore (1852-1933) の戯曲を上演したのをみたモームはまず、小説家としてある程度の評価を得る方が近道と考えて、戯曲を中断し小説を書き始めることになる。

モームは小説家になりたいのではなく、劇作家で名声を得たいがために小説を書いたというのが本音であると断言できる。

モームの処女作、小説 *Liza of Lambeth* の誕生をはじめ、幾編の小説、短編等を次々と出版し、有望な新進作家として世に出ることになる。

〈 3 〉

モームは戯曲を全部で32編発表し、上演されている。

まず、戯曲の一覧を示してみたい。

サマセット・モームの戯曲

	執筆	初演
1 Schiffbrüchig (Marriages are Made in Heaven): I Act	1896-97	独1902
2 Mademoiselle Zampa: I Act	1896-97	1904
3 A Man of Honour	1898 (Revised 1902)	1903
4 The Explorer	1899	1908
5 Loaves and Fishes	1903	1911
6 Lady Frederick	1903	1907
7 Mrs. Dot	1904	1908
8 Jack Straw	1905	1908
9 Penelope	1908	1909
10 The Noble Spaniard (仏 grenet Dancoust の劇の翻案)	1908	1909
11 Smith	1909	1909
12 The Tenth Man	1909	1910
13 Landed Gentry (Grace)	1910	1910
14 The Perfect Gentleman (Molière: Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme の劇の翻案)	1912	1913

15	The Land of Promise	1913	米1913, 英1914
16	Our Bidders	1915	米1917, 英1923
17	The Unattainable (Caroline)	1915	1916
18	Love in a Cottage	1917	1918
19	Caesar's Wife	1918	1919
20	Home and Beauty (Too Many Husbands)	1919	1919
21	The Circle	1919	1921
22	The Unknown	1920	1920
23	East of Suez	1922	1922
24	The Camel's Back	1923	米1923, 英1924
25	The Road Uphill	1924	unproduced
26	The Constant Wife	1926	米1926, 英1927
27	The Letter	1926	1927
28	The Sacred Flame	1928	米1928, 英1929
29	The Breadwinner	1930	1930
30	For Services Rendered	1932	1932
31	The Mask and the Face (Luigi Chiarelli の劇の翻案)	1933	米1933
32	Sheppey	1933	1933

「モーム研究」(サマセット・モーム全集31) 作品総目録より

モームは32編の戯曲をかくが多く、多くの批評家から歓迎された訳ではなかった。そのことについて Richard Cordell は次のように言及している。

He frankly admits that he turned his attention seriously to playwriting early. in the new century when he knew he had abandoned medicine as a career and suspected that the rewards of fiction would never provide him with the financial independence he longed for. 'I wanted to write plays that would be seen not only by a handful of people. I wanted money and I wanted fame.' His outspoken preference for financial success and his freedom from cant concerning the material pleasures of life have from the beginning of his career as a professional writer alienated many critics, who have assumed that as a playwright he has been more concerned with the size of audiences than with literary excellence. When Maugham started play-writing, a half-dozen established public favourites, including Pinero. Sutro, Jones, and Chambers, had a stranglehold on the London theatre;

managers knew that these prolific and popular playwrights could fill the theatres, and were indifferent to young or untried writers. A ware of the difficulties encountered by Shaw, Barker, Hobson, Hanks, and other 'originals' in gaining entrée into the commercial theatre, Maugham concluded that if he were to get a foothold at all, his plays must first please a manager, or better still, an actor-manager.

It is a fact, however, that since his forthright attempts from 1904 to 1908 to achieve a popular success on the stage, he has written only as he pleases and what he pleases—with two rare exceptions, and then by request of the British government. Otherwise, he says, 'I have always written with pleasure... and my pleasure was independent of the result.' Almost all of his popular plays from 1909 to 1933 show an indifference to, sometimes a contempt for, popular mores and views.(2)

小説を書くことによってモームは思うように収入が得られないと考え、医学の道からも経済的に絶望を感じて、戯曲に転じ、真剣にとりくむことになる。

「私はわずかな人たちだけに見られるのではない芝居を書きたかった。私は金が欲しかったし、名声が欲しかったのである」

上記のモームの発言は批評家たちにとってモームの物質的な人生の快樂に、プロの作家としていかなるものかとして敬遠されることになる。

〈 4 〉

モームは経済的安定は個人にある程度の感情的落ちつきを与え、これによって人格が向上することになる、と言及している。

Maugham's idea of poverty seems hardly to have been what is generally meant by the word. He may have had to exercise restraint on spending, but he never suffered the extreme penury of many other struggling artists. Sir Gerald Kelly, who knew Maugham in the latter half of this period, does not recall him being in great financial need. Richard Cordell has

pointed out that he always had his hundred and fifty pounds from his father's estate and an average yearly income of a hundred pounds from his writing.¹⁶ Nevertheless, these years gave Maugham a desire for the security of money which lasted to the end of his life.

In *Remembering Mr Maugham* Garson Kanin tells a fascinating story which illustrates Maugham's concern for money even in his eighties. Kanin and his wife, Ruth Gordon, are travelling with Maugham to Paris in 1954, and when the conversation turns to currency, Maugham instructs his secretary to show them his funds: Alan picks up one of the attache cases, unlocks it, and opens it. I damn near fall out because there, neatly stacked and packed, are huge piles of American currency. I see nothing but \$100 bills in fat stacks.

"Holy God!" I exclaim.

Ruth says practically, "Is it safe to carry that much around?"

Maugham: "Certainly not. It's most... dangerous. There's over a hundred thousand dollars there. It might easily be lost or stolen. The train might be... derailed, or the Channel boat might sink."

I ask the logical, dumb question, "Why do you do it then?"

"Because," says Maugham, "I was once trapped in the fall of France without sufficient currency in my possession, and vowed at that time that, should I... come through, I would never again permit myself to be caught in a similar situation. Experience has... taught me that American currency is usually the best coin. Had I had some at that time, I might have saved myself and my friends a good deal of... difficulty and discomfort."

He reaches out and touches the money with his fingertips, reassuringly.

The importance to Maugham of his success was the spiritual liberation that it gave him. As he was to demonstrate in *Of Human Bondage*, he never believed that penury and struggle are ennobling; they tend to degrade the character, to force it into meanness and pettiness. Financial security, on the other hand, gives the individual a measure of emotional stability, and he argued that this improved his character. As he was to claim later, it is the poor who are obsessed with wealth; those who have it know its advantages and disadvantages and can view it with detachment.

From the artist's point of view, however, Maugham's financial security gave him something else—freedom of action—and with this came a large degree of artistic freedom. Much later he wrote:

I was glad to earn a great deal of money as a dramatist. It gave me liberty. I was careful with it because I did not want ever again to be in a position when for want of it I could not do an thing I had really a mind to.(3)

貧困との悪戦苦闘は絶対に精神をたかめず、人格を墮落させがちで、それで否応なく野卑さやつまらぬものにおちいってしまう、というのがモームの主張である。また、富の妄想にとりつかれているのは貧乏人、富を手にしてある人たちはその利点と不利な点を知り、超然とした態度でそれをながめることができる。

芸術家の立場から見て、モームの経済的安定はモームに対して、行動の自由を与え、それとともに芸術的自由がもたらされることになる。そして、上記の記述の中で最後に言っているように、モームが劇作家として巨大な金を稼いだことを喜び、それが自由を与えてくれた。その後、お金を大切にあつかったが、金がないために、ほんとうにしたいと思っていることが何もできない立場に二度と再びもどりたくなかったから。

モームの金銭哲学とも言える名言に「お金とは第六感のようなもので、それがないと他の五感がうまく働かない」⁽⁴⁾とあるが、モームは物質的な人生の快樂について偽善的な言葉を使わない。

経済的成功で、モームは1928年フランスの St-Jean Cap Ferrat に別荘モーレスク (Villa Mauresque) を買いとり、Robert Calder の言葉を借りれば “an ideal fortress”⁽⁵⁾即ち、「理想的な城砦」とする。

この別荘モーレスク邸「城砦」から世界に向けて出発し、また、安楽地の「城砦」へもどる。

Robert Calder はモームがこの別荘に文学、芸術、政治、社交界方面での数多くの最大の人物を招待したことを次のように述べている。

Maugham's financial success enabled him in 1928 to buy the Villa Mauresque, in St-Jean Cap Ferrat. This beautiful and spacious home along the Riviera provided him with an ideal fortress; from here he could travel to all parts of the world and return to its seclusion and protection. Here, too, he could entertain many of the greatest names in literature, art, politics and society—it might be H. G. Wells, Winston Churchill, Michael Arlen, Kenneth Clark, or Noël Coward—and he could meet them on his own terms. In his own microcosmic world he could set the scenes, arrange the people, and make his entrances and exits when he wished (his schedule, for example, included the morning spent writing, and no one was ever permitted to disturb this). In this regard, his old friend Sir Gerald Kelly, in a conversation with this author in September 1969, said that at the Villa one did as Maugham expected or one knew that the invitation might not be extended again. It was not that Maugham acted in an authoritarian manner; it was, rather, that the situations in a setting of his own design were never likely to threaten his essential self.

Despite Maugham's gratification at his sudden popularity in 1908, he later looked back upon his success with a realisation of some of its drawbacks. Success, he claimed in *The Summing Up*, is the most difficult thing with which the writer has to cope: 'When after a long and bitter struggle he has at last achieved it he finds that it spreads a snare to entangle and destroy him.' Recognition, he discovered, places the writer in a new world and it carries its own restrictions and barriers. He finds it difficult to remain close to the world in which he formerly moved, the way of life which has given him his material. His old friends can no longer associate with him with ease, and the new world may never be fully open to him. The successful author suddenly finds that there are new responsibilities, new claims on him.

In Maugham's case, he soon grew tired of the life into which his fame as a playwright took him. Although he was pleased to associate with the high-born and the affluent, he always retained an essential disdain for them and a special abhorrence of social dictates and taboos. He soon grew bored with the role which was expected of him as a popular dramatist,

and he became disenchanted with the narrow spectrum of artistic and literary people with whom he came in contact in London. As he later wrote in *The Summing Up*, 'It was stifling me.'

It has been pointed out that on at least three occasions in his early life Maugham sought to escape through travel—to Germany, Spain, and France. Once again, through travel he was able to escape from the conventions of London life, and it became one of his greatest pleasures. Indeed, Maugham was one of the most widely travelled authors of any age. At any time, he might be found in Capri, or Spain, or South America, or Tahiti, or China, or Russia, or Bermuda. Even when he was eighty-five years old he was visiting a judo academy in Tokyo, and when he created the Somerset Maugham literary award a stipulation was that the winner must use the money to travel. (6)

イギリスの小説家、文明批評家の H. G. Wells (1866~1946)、イギリスの政治家で首相を1940年~1945年と1951年~1955年に二回つとめた Winston Churchill (1874~1965) アルメニア系のイギリス小説家 Michael Arlen (1895~1950)、イギリスの劇作家、俳優、作家 Noel Coward (1899~1972) 等、著名人をモーム自身の条件で会い、自分自身の小さな世界で、モームは場面を設定し、人びとを排列し、望むときに、自分が登場し退場できる。

モームは午前中を執筆に当て、だれにもこの妨害を許されない。モームの旧友 Sir Gerald Kelly によると、この別荘では人はモームの期待どおりに動き、そうでなければ、招待が二度とされぬのを知ったと述べている。

Robert Calder によると、これはモームが独裁主義者的態度でふるまったということではなく、むしろ、彼自身の設計になる道具立ての状態が彼の本質的な自己を絶対におびやかしようもないものだったということが出来る。

Robert Calder はモームに対して暖かい思いやりをこの見方に吐露しているのではないだろうか。

〈 5 〉

モームは1908年に人気をいきなり獲得し、それに満悦したにもかかわらず、後半この成功をふりかえって、*The Summing Up* の中で成功は作家が対処しなければならない最大の困難であると述べている。

モームは劇作家として名声を得た後に複雑な心境になる。ここで、モームを理解するために“escape”即ち「逃避」が Key Word になるのではないだろうか。

モームは社交界で高貴の人たち、富裕な者との交際を最初は大いに喜び、自慢でもあったが次第に軽蔑と嫌悪感すらもつことになる。

劇作家としても名声を得た後、モームに対する期待にうんざりし、また、ロンドンでの芸術家や文学者たちの交際を通じて、彼等の視野の狭さにもうんざりし、息のつまる思いをいだく。その結果、過去にも逃避として、ドイツ、スペイン、フランスの旅行をしたようにロンドンを脱出し旅行に出る。

以前の筆者の論集の執筆の中でも幾度となく触れているように、モームは作家の中では広く旅をした作家と言えよう。

具体的に列記すると、カプリ島、スペイン、南米、タヒチ島、中国、ロシア、バーミューグ島、シンガポール、特にここでは今でもモームが宿泊した、ラッフルズ・ホテルはあまりにも有名である。

日本には1959年11月に来訪し、丸善で開かれた「モーム展」にも足を運び、自分の写真を眺めている写真が雑誌「英語研究」に掲載されているし、モーム来日記念のサイン会も開かれ、日本橋・丸善の洋書部フロアは満員になり、通路まで人があふれたと報じられている。

〈 6 〉

モームは自分のことを「通俗劇作家」と標榜しているが、モーム研究家、菅泰男氏によると、「このことは日本の現在の状況で呑み込むわけにはいか

ない。例えて言えば、13世紀以来の立憲思想・人権思想できたえてきたイギリスの「保守」と日本の「保守」とはかなり違うというようなものである。言葉が同じだからと言って同一視していると間違ふことになる。わが国の劇は歌舞伎、新派、中間演劇、新劇等の芸術的な劇と大衆劇・通俗劇とは大変な距離がある。モームの劇は「通俗劇」かもしれないが、わが国ではモームの諷刺や機智を出すにはどこでやれるだろうか。モームの喜劇は少なくとも王政復古以来の伝統をもち、近代劇ではオスカー・ワイルドからノエル・カワードに及ぶ、そういう意味の「商業劇場」の「通俗劇」であると述べているが、モーム自身も少数のインテリ観客を相手にするのではなくて、大衆相手の観客を望んだのである。*The Summing Up* の中で次のようにその辺の心境を詳しく述べている。

Since the Stage Society was at that time the only organization of its kind, its productions attracted a good deal of attention, and my play was treated by the critics as seriously as though it had been put on for a run in an important theatre. The old hacks, with Clement Scott at their head, abused it soundly; the critic of *The Sunday Times* stated that it showed no sign of any talent for the stage. I have forgotten who he was. But the critics who had succumbed to the influence of Ibsen treated it as a work worthy of consideration. They were sympathetic and encouraging.

I thought I had taken such a step forward that my course from then on would offer no great difficulties. It did not take me long to discover that, beyond learning a good deal about the technique of playwriting, I had achieved nothing. After its two performances my play was dead. My name was known to the small body of people who were interested in the experimental theatre, and if I had written suitable plays I have no doubt that the Stage Society would have performed them. But that seemed to me unsatisfactory. During the rehearsals I had come in contact with the people who were interested in the Society and especially with Granville Barker, who played the leading part in my play. The attitude I found there was antagonistic to me. It seemed to me patronizing and narrow.

Granville Barker was very young; I was only twenty-eight, and he, I think, was a year younger. He had charm and gaiety and a coltish grace. He was brimming over with other people's ideas. But I felt in him a fear of life which he sought to cheat by contempt of the common herd. It was difficult to find anything he did not despise. He lacked spiritual vitality. I thought that an artist needed more force, more go, more bluntness, more guts, more beef. He had written a play. The *Mariage of Ann Leete*, which seemed to me anæmic and affected. I liked life and wanted to enjoy it. I wanted to get all I possibly could out of it. I was not satisfied with the appreciation of a small band of intellectuals. I had my doubts about their quality, for I had been to a stupid and rather common little farce that the Stage Society had unaccountably given, and had seen its members consumed with laughter. I was not at all certain that there was not a great deal of pose in their concern for the higher drama. I wanted no such audience as this, but the great public. Moreover I was poor. I had no notion of living on a crust in a garret if I could help it. I had found out that money was like a sixth sense without which you could not make the most of the other five.(7)

モームは人生が好きで、人生を享受しようと思い、人生からでき限りのものを得ようと思っていた。従って、少数のインテリの集りの鑑賞に満足しないだけでなく、彼等の演劇への関心にはかなりのポーズであるのではないかと疑いをもつ。そして、当時28才のモームにとって貧乏であることから解放されたいと願ったことは間違いなく、モーム独特のお金というものは第六感という金銭哲学に達する。

1907年、モームの劇曲“*Lady Fredrick*”がコート劇場で上演され、大成功を収め、一躍劇壇で脚光をあびて金銭的にも満足する状態となる。*A Writer's Notebook* 中の1908年の項で次のように自分の成功を語っている。

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 un-certainties 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.(8)

モームにとって「成功」は予期していたことで、自然に受け入れ、その真価は長い間、モームの念頭を去らなかつた経済的不安から解放されただけの事であった。モームは貧乏を嫌い、生計をやりくりするために節約することに嫌悪感を強くいだく。

< 7 >

The Collected Plays (モーム戯曲選集) の第三巻の中で、四つの戯曲を書き上げ、それで劇作家としての仕事を終りにしたいと、何年もの間考えていたと述べているが、実際に引退表明は1932年10月であった。

何故、モームは四つの戯曲、即ち、*The Sacred Flame* (聖なる炎1928)、*The Breadwinner* (稼ぎ手1930)、*For Services Rendered* (報いられたもの1932)、*Sheppy* (シェッピー1933) を書き上げたら、劇作家に終止符を打つ決意をしたかということも、上記の *The Collected Plays* (vol. three) の序文の中に明瞭に言及している。

What I had to say really was very simple. For some years I had had in mind the four plays with which I proposed to finish my career as a practising dramatist. I was prepared to write them only on this account, for I did not think any of them was likely to succeed and I knew how difficult it was for a dramatist to recover a popularity that he had lost. I was much surprised that *The Sacred Flame* and *The Bread-winner* had a considerable success. I expected nothing of *For Services Rendered*. During the rehearsals of this piece I amused myself by devising the way in which it might have been written to achieve popularity. Any dramatist

will see how easily the changes could have been made. The characters had only to be sentimentalised a little to affect their behaviour at the crucial moments of the play and everything might have ended happily. The audience could have walked out of the theatre feeling that war was a very unfortunate business, but that notwithstanding God was in his heaven and all was right with the world; there was nothing to fash oneself about and haddock *a la crème* and a dance would finish the evening very nicely. But it would not have been the play I wished to write.(9)

四つの戯曲は興行的に成功するとは思えず、劇作家が一度大衆の人気を失えば、その人気を回復することがいかに困難であるかということをモームは自覚していたことを断言している。

大衆との共感を失いつつある劇作家はその末期を見逃さずに引退すべきだというモーム独特の美学ではないだろうか。

モームは大衆に迎合することなく、どうしても書かなければならない心境を押さえることができず、興行的には成功しないことを自覚しながら、最後の四つの戯曲を書きあげた。

筆者にとって、モームの戯曲に対する考え方が初期の作品と比較すると大きな変化に不可思議を感じる。

<Note>

- (1) Somerset Maugham pp. 173-174
- (2) Ibid., pp. 174-175
- (3) W. Somerset Maugham & The Quest for Freedom pp. 10-11
- (4) The Summing Up p. 112
- (5) W. Somerset Maugham & The Quest for Freedom p. 12
- (6) Somerset Maugham pp. 12-13
- (7) The Summing Up pp. 111-112
- (8) A Writer's Notebook p. 67
- (9) The Collected Plays vol.3 p. xvi

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