琉球大学学術リポジトリ

『白鯨』，「私の親戚，モリノー少佐」への一考察 : 九回の「交歓」と七回の「出合い」

メタデータ	言語: English 出版者: 琉球大学法文学部 公開日: 2010-02-19 キーワード (Ja): キーワード (En): 作成者: Taira, Masashi, 平良, 柾史 メールアドレス: 所属:
URL	http://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12000/15770

The Nine Gams and Seven Meetings: An Approach to *Moby-Dick* and "My Kinsman, Major Molineux."

Masashi Taira

1. Introduction

In *Moby-Dick*, the *Pequod* engages nine different ships at sea in what are called gams. Melville defines a gam as follows;

> GAM. Noun—A social meeting of two (or more) whaleships, generally on a cruising-ground; when, after exchanging hails, they exchange visits by boats' crews: the two captains remaining, for the time, on board of one ship, and the two chief mates on the other.[1]

Although Melville defines a gam as a meeting of ships where news is exchanged and a social visit is made, the nine gams of the *Pequod* are not merely social meetings, for each also plays an important role in the development of the *Pequod's* fate. As for this, Tyrus Hillway says, "The symbolism used by Melville in identifying these nine ships also has a definite bearing upon the development of the outward and inward narratives of the book"[2]

The nine gams would seem to be divided into three patterns according to their functions: a warning or prophecy, a difficulty of communication, and a prologue to the final moment.[3] The first three gams may be categorized as a warning and a prophecy. The warning, symbolized by the albatross and trumpet, climaxes with Gabriel's prophecy in the gam with the *Jeroboam*. Gabriel's prophecy, "beware of the blasphemer's end!" prefigures

the tragedy of the *Pequod*. The next four gams, the *Virgin* through the *Bachelor*, indicate the difficulty of communication between the *Pequod* and the other ships. The fourth, the German ship *Virgin* (*Jungfrau*), and the fifth, the French ship *Rose-Bud*, portray the difficulty of communication as a result of language barriers, in particular the *Rose-Bud* episode, which is parodical. In order to communicate with the *Rose-Bud*, Stubb has to "cry with his hand to his nose" and to "come close to the blasted whale and so talk over it" (p. 517). This lack of communication climaxes in the gam with the *Bachelor* whose course is entirely different from the *Pequod's*. The final two gams prologuize the alternative action in the approaching dangers to the *Pequod*. Melville uses these nine gams effectively to increase the readers interests and to make clear the focal point of the *Pequod's* searching for Moby Dick.

The *Pequod's* gams are similar in function and structure to Robin's meetings in Hawthorne's "My Kinsman, Major Molineux." Both the Hawthorne tale and *Moby-Dick* are stories of quest. While Ahab pursues the White Whale, Robin searches for his kinsman. And during that search, Robin experiences seven meetings with different people. I intend to show that these seven meetings may also be classified into the patterns of warning or prophecy, a difficulty of communication, and a prologue to the final moment.

The forms and settings of these two pieces of fiction are, of course, quite different. *Moby-Dick* is almost seven-hundred pages long and takes place on the sea, while "My Kinsman, Major Molineux" is a short story of less than thirty pages set on the land. However, it is not profitless to compare the gams

and meetings of these two stories, and in this paper I will analize each gam and meeting, ultimately approaching the theme of each story in those contexts.

II. The Nine Gams of the *Pequod*.

The *Pequod's* first gam is with the *Albatross*. Ahab calls, "Ship ahoy! Have you seen the White Whale?" (p. 314) As the captain of the *Albatross*, a stranger to Ahab, raises his trumpet to answer, it suddenly falls from his hand into the sea. Here, Melville gives us two significant symbols—the name of the bird, albatross, and the trumpet. An albatross is usually a symbol of good omen, described as "God's great, unflattering laureate, Nature" (p. 256). Coleridge similarly uses the albatross in "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner." But here, Melville presents the albatross as a harbinger of evil. He says in his Note to *Moby-Dick*, "I assert, then, that in the wondrous bodily whiteness of the bird chiefly lurks the secret of the spell" (p. 256, note). Even in the "Ancient Mariner," the albatross is finally revealed as an evil omen which Melville later indicated as follows;

> Bethink thee of the albatross, whence come those clouds of spiritual wonderment and pale dread, in which that white phantom sails in all imaginations? Not Coleridge first threw that spell; ...(pp. 255-256)

The trumpet is a symbol of prophecy as employed in the Bible to signal the coming of Christ. Here, when the trumpet falls from the hand to the sea, we feel the shadow of difficulty and an omen of doom. The first gam, then, is a prophecy or a warning as to the *Pequod's* future.

Soon after encountering the *Albatross*, the *Pequod* meets

another whaler, the *Town-Ho*, which has actually met Moby Dick. The boat had been lowered, but the harpooners were tossed into the sea. The ship eventually made harbor, whereupon most of the crew deserted for fear of another encounter with Moby Dick. In this second gam, Moby Dick is viewed as a judgment of God and, at the same time, a "most deadly immortal monster."

The third gam of the *Pequod* is with the *Jeroboam*. Here again, the White Whale is seen as divine. Gabriel, who calls it "the Shaker God incarnated," solemnly warns Ahab against attacking the White Whale: "Think, think of the blasphemer—dead, and down there!—beware of the blasphemer's end!" (p. 413) The *Jeroboam's* first mate, Macey, ignored this warning and was killed by Moby Dick. According to Gabriel's prophecy, blasphemers of the White Whale's divinity must be executed. Thus, Gabriel's prophecy throws a dark omen on the fate of Ahab. Gabriel tells Ahab that he will soon join Macey's doom: "...thou art soon going that way" (p. 414). The name "Gabriel" is also symbolic. As Milton describes in *Paradise Lost* (Book IV), Gabriel is the angel in charge of guarding the Gate of Paradise. If Moby Dick is "the Shaker God incarnated," Gabriel's warning Ahab against attacking the whale can be seen as similar to the angel Gabriel's guarding the Gate of Paradise, the divinity of God.

The next four gams, the *Virgin* through the *Bachelor*, indicate a difficulty of communication. The lack of communication with others is one of Ahab's major problems throughout the novel. Due to his monomaniac desire to kill Moby Dick, the "great demon of the seas of life" (p. 251) to him, Ahab

could not hear anything which did not concern the White Whale. The *Pequod* is, in this sense , isolated from the world, another important theme in *Moby-Dick*. The difficulty of communication between the *Pequod* and the *Virgin*, a German ship, is due not only to the language barrier but also to the *Virgin's* ignorance of the White Whale and many of the basic facts of whaling. The same is true in the ironically named *Rose-Bud's* case. The *Rose-Bud*, a French ship which the *Pequod* encounters in her fifth gam, has not heard of the White Whale either. In addition to this, the captain is unable to speak English and is so ignorant that he hangs on to a diseased rotten whale which makes a tremendously bad odor throughout his ship. For Ahab, both highly skilled and driven, there is no need to communicate with the *Virgin* or the *Rose-Bud*.

The sixth gam, with the *Enderby* of London, also deals with the difficulty of communication. Ahab cries as usual , "Ship, ahoy! Hast seen the White Whale?" The captain of the *Enderby* replies, "Hast seen the White Whale? See you this?" He then displays an arm of white whale bone, the original lost when his ship encountered Moby Dick. Thereby, Ahab sympathizes with this captain who has lost his arm in the exact manner in which he has lost his leg. Ahab cries out, "Aye, aye, hearty! let us shake bones together! — an arm and a leg — an arm that never can shrink, d'ye see; and a leg that never can run" (p. 559). Here it seems that Ahab has a good communication with the captain of the *Enderby*. However, the points of view of both captains are quite opposit. To the one-armed captain, Moby Dick is a noble great whale—"the

noblest and biggest." He argues that Moby Dick should be let alone: "No more White Whales for me; I've lowered for him once, and that satisfied me. There would be great glory in killing him, I know that; ... but hark ye, he's best let alone; don't you think so, captain? ... What is best let alone, that accursed thing is not always what least allures. He's all a magnet!" (p. 564). There can be no more communication between them, and Ahab leaves immediately. Ahab's monomania for revenge never allows him to accept any opposing opinion.

The *Pequod's* seventh gam is with the *Bachelor*. In contranst with the empty and ignorant *Virgin*, the *Bachelor* is a full ship and homeward bound. Ahab asks, "Hast seen the White Whale?" The other replies, "No; only heard of him; but don't believe in him at all" (p. 627). The *Bachelor*, therefore, proves herself unworthy of communication. Ahab leaves them immediately, saying, "Thou art a full ship and homeward bound, ... So go thy ways, and I will mine. Forward there! Set all sail, and keep her to the wind!" (p. 627).

The last two gams, the eighth and ninth, present a prologue to the final moment. The *Pequod* meets a large ship, the *Rachel*, and Ahab cries out as usual, "Hast seen the White Whale?" The commander of the *Rachel* replies, "Aye, yesterday. Have ye seen a whale-boat adrift?" (p. 668). The *Rachel* had encountered Moby Dick just the previous day, but Moby Dick had run away with his pursuers. Overcome with the prospect of meeting the whale, Ahab ignores the question of the *Rachel's* captain. Ahab excitedly asks, "Where was he? —not killed! —not killed! How was it?" (p. 668). Ahab's monomania and inhumanity reach their height in this gam.

When the captain asks Ahab to help find a lost boat containing his crew and his own son, Ahab refuses in his cold manner, saying, "Captain Gardiner, I will not do it. Even now I lose time. Good bye, good bye. God bless ye, man, and may I forgive myself, but I must go" (p. 671). We feel, in this gam, the approaching peril of the *Pequod*.

The *Pequod's* final gam is with the *Delight*, which bears "the white ribs and some few splintered planks, of what had once been a whale-boat" (p. 679). The *Pequod's* meeting with the *Delight* is the last forewarning of the danger to come. Ahab asks, "Hast seen the White Whale?" The *Delight* has just encountered Moby Dick and is now burying her men killed by the great whale. Again, he asks, "Hast killed him?" Ahab's monomania reaches its peak in this and the previous gam, and his attitude to the other people changes entirely. This is obvious in his conversation in these last two gams. Ahab obviously believes that the great White Whale should not be killed by any other hands than his own. When the captain of the *Delight* asserts that "The harpoon is not yet forged that will ever do that" (p. 680). Ahab replies, "Look ye, Nantucketer; here in this hand I hold his death! Tempered in blood, and tempered by lightning are these barbs; and I swear to temper them triply in that hot place behind the fin, where the White Whale most feels his accursed life!" (p. 680). The day is calm and clear, and in the "feminine air" the snow-white wings of small, unspeckled birds are gliding. This calmness increases the coming fear or danger. From this deadly silence, we know that the *Pequod's* fatal meeting with the White Whale is to come soon.

Ⅲ. Robin's Seven Meetings

Just as Melville uses two significant symbols—the albatross and the trumpet—in the *Pequod's* first gam, Hawthorne, in the first meeting of Robin with a ferryman, also uses two symbols as controling metaphors. These are the "moonlight evening" and "river." Although the moonlight distinctly illumines the world, it is a peculiar and evocative light. Hawthorne says in "The Custom House" in *The Scarlet Letter*; "Moonlight, in a familiar room, falling so white upon the carpet, and showing all its figures so distinctly, —making every object so minutely visible, yet so unlike a morning or noontide visivility, — is a medium the most suitable for a romance-writer to get acquainted with his illusive guests."[4] In "My Kinsman, Major Molineux," indeed, the moonlight evening embodies an uncertain, dark and terrifying moral world which Robin will experience in his journey, and at the same time it foreshadows Robin's illusive pursuit for his kinsman. One also recognizes that the silence of the moonlight evokes the silence before the storm which Melville so often uses in his novels: the awful stillness in *Mardi*, the calmness just before Ahab's encounter with Moby Dick, and the stony silence when Pierre arrives at the city in the moonlight evening. The moonlight evening foreshadows, as it does in *Pierre*, the darkness and uncertainty of the city life which Robin is about to enter across the river. The darkness of the city is, in "My Kinsman, Major Molineux," similar to the forest in "Young Goodman Brown" or other stories of Hawthorne—a sinister setting where all manner of sins, crimes and hatreds take place.

The river is the symbol of the cycle of life, seen in

"Ecclesiastes" as "All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea is not full; unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again." This image of the river indicates the change (or growth) of Robin. As for Hawthorne's use of this image, william Stein says, "In his fiction, from story to story, he uses water in its traditional meaning of rebirth. By analogy, then, Robin's passage across the river foreshadows this change."[5] As symbolized by these two images, Robin's meeting with the ferryman at the ferry comes to be prophetic; that is to say, this first meeting contains an undertone which indicates the ultimate results of Robin's journey.

Robin's next four meetings are with an old man with a cane, an innkeeper, a woman in a scarlet petticoat, and a watchman. This second group may be classified as representing the difficulty of communication. To each one Robin asks, "I pray you tell me whereabout is the dwelling of my kinsman, Major Molineux," just as Ahab continually asked "Hast ye seen the White Whale?"

When Robin enters the city after getting off the ferry, he discerns the old man with a long and polished cane slowly walking in the moonlight. Robin holds the skirt of this old man's coat and asks about his kinsman's dwelling place. The old man answers in a tone of excessive anger and annoyance, "Let go my garment, fellow! I tell you, I know not the man you speak of. What! I have authority, I have—hem, hem—authority."[6] The old man barely listens to Robin, and his inquiry is coldly rejected on the basis of authority.

The innkeeper and the woman in the scarlet petticoat are concerned only with their business of making money. The

innkeeper, a little man in a stained white apron, is generally courteous and pays his professional welcome to the strangers. But he becomes cold to Robin after he notices that Robin does not have enough money: "Better trudge, boy; better trudge!" (p. 242). No sooner is Robin beyond the door than he hears people laughing behind him. In the midst of this laughing, the innkeeper's voice is particularly distinguished from others "like the dropping of small stones into the kettle" (p. 242). Robin turns to the corner of the narrow lane and thinks, with his usual shrewdness, "Oh, if I had one of those grinning raskals in the woods, where I and my oak sapling grew up together, I would teach him that my arm is heavy though my purse be light!" (p. 242). The woman in the scarlet petticoat is a prostitute. When Robin asks her about his kinsman, she lies and says that the major lives in her house. She says, "But come in, I pray, for I bid you hearty welcome in his name" (p. 244), and takes Robin by the hand. Her attitude toward Robin is apparently based on her business.

At the fifth meeting, Robin's difficulty in communicating reaches its height. He meets a watchman and asks the same question, "I say, friend! Will you guide me to the house of my kinsman, Major Molineux?" (p. 245). The watchman does not say anything but turns the corner and walks away. Robin roams desperately, and "at random, through the town, almost ready to believe that a spell was on him, ... The street lay before him, strange and desolate, and the lights were extinguished in almost every house" (p. 245).

Throughout the four meetings, the second through the fifth, we can cleary see the difficulty of communication between

Robin and people whom he meets. There is obviously a great gap between Robin's enthusiasm for finding his kinsman's dwelling place and the other people's self interests. This is exactly the same gap seen in the gams between the *Pequod* and the *Virgin*, the *Rose-Bud*, the *Enderby* and the *Bachelor*. The people in those ships could not follow Ahab's monomaniac enthusiasm in pursuing the White Whale; or, more properly, Ahab's monomaniac enthusiasm could not allow the others to establish communication.

Robin's last two meetings, with the red and black faced man and with the gentleman, represent a prologue to the final moment. As the *Pequod's* final gam with the *Delight* increases fear and indicates the last forewarning to the *Pequod*, so the man with face in red and black indicates a final forewarning to Robin. One side of the face of this man blazes "an intense red" and the other is "black as midnight." This face is as if "two individual devils, a fiend of fire and a fiend of darkness, had united themselves to form this infernal visage" (p. 246). The story which began in a moonlight evening is hightened in fear and darkness at the appearance of this man, "a fiend of fire, and a fiend of darkness." Seymour L. Gross takes this face as "the geography of Robin's voyage — the voyage from blind innocence of a primal paradise to the scorching fire of satanic knowledge."[7] Replying to Robin's question, "Whereabout is the dwelling of my kinsman, Major Molineux," the man gives Robin a definite answer: "Watch here an hour, and Major Molineux will pass by" (p. 246).

Finally, Robin meets the gentleman. He is the only person

who is helpful and kind to him. Smiling at Robin, the gentleman says, "Major Molineux! The name is not altogether strange to me" (p. 249). He sympathizes with Robin and sits together with him on the steps to witness the meeting of Robin with his kinsman. In these last two meetings, Robin establishes a genuine communication with others, and waits for the final moment.

Just as we could foresee the approaching peril of Ahab in the last two gams of the *Pequod*, so we know now, through the last two meetings, that the final moment will come soon to Robin, too. After a while, indeed, the sounds of a trumpet echoe in the street and the "shouts, the laughter, and the tuneless bray, the antipodes of music, came onwards with increasing din, till scattered individuals, and then the denser bodies, began to appear round a corner at the distance of a hundred yards" (p. 251). Robin rises from the steps, and at last he sees his kinsman Major Molineux amid the crowd of people. However, the Major's appearance is not as heroic as Robin expects. His face is rather "pale as death, and far more ghastly" and the broad forehead is "contracted in his agony." In fact, the figure of Major Molineux is miserably defeated in the midst of the laughter of the people led by the red and black faced man. Robin's knees shake and his hair bristles "with a mixture of pity and terror" (p. 253). Captured by a strange feeling, Robin himself delivers a big shout of laughter, and his shout is the loudest among the people in the street.

Ⅳ. Conclusion

As we have already seen in the analysis of each gam and meeting, they all play an important role in the development of the respective narratives. Throughout the nine gams, Melville gradually increases the mystical quality of the White Whale as an ungraspable phantom and hightens the ominousness of the *Pequod*'s fate. Similarly, Hawthorne increases the mystery surrounding Major Molineux through the seven meetings. Like Moby Dick, Major Molineux never appears to us until the very end of the story even though the title bears his name.

Although both Ahab and Robin go in the same pattern, their final moments are quite different. Whereas Ahab falls into total destruction, Robin experiences initiation at his meeting with Major Molineux. Ahab who was blinded by his monomaniac pursuit could not see that the White Whale was actually representing Nature, that is to say, the dignity of God, and regarded him as the "great demon of the sea." William Sedgwick regards this monomania of Ahab as evil, saying that "It demands the ruthless sacrifice of love and preys on his common humanity."[8] In the note to *Moby-Dick*, Feidelson says, "Ahab believes only in the principle of evil, yet, paradoxically, he longs to destroy it" (p. 247, note). Thus Ahab remains damned in his total destruction. In contrast, Robin finds nourishment, even though Major Molineux's defeated figure destroys his hope. Robin realizes the illusion of searching for his kinsman as an heroic figure, and at the same time, he comes to know that the rising power of revolt against Great Britain is in reality in New England. His loud laughing in the final scene shows this clearly. By so laughing,

he eliminates his illusion. At this point, Seymour Gross' notion of Robin's journey comes to be clear. Robin grows and enters into the world of man and completes his initiation. Here again, the image of the river comes to mind, the cycle of life and rebirth. As the gentleman says in the very last of the story, Robin may rise in the world without the help of his kinsman, Major Molineux.

Notes

I would like to thank professors Richard LeMon, Kozen Nakachi and Mikio Shiroma for their valuable advices and suggestions.

1. Herman Melville, *Moby-Dick* (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company Inc., 1975), p. 320. All the page references in this paper are to this edition.

2. Tyrus Hillway, *Herman Melville* (New Haven: College & University Press, 1963), p. 101.

3. James Dean Young has carefully analized the nine gams in his article "The Nine Gams of the *Pequod*" (*American Literature*, XXV, pp. 449-463). Young describes the first gam as an indication of the future and a description of the present, the second and third as a warning and a prophecy, the fourth through the sixth as the impossible attitude (innocence at the fourth gam, inexperience at the fifth gam, and indifference at the sixth gam). and the seventh through the ninth as the alternative of action.

4. Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter* (New York: The Modern Library, 1950), p. 42.

5. William B. Stein, "Teaching Hawthorne's 'My Kinsman, Major Molineux'." *College English*, Vol. 20 (1958), p. 84.

6. Nathaniel Hawthorne, "My Kinsman, Major Molineux" in *Selected Short Stories of Nathaniel Hawthorne* (Greenwich, Conn.: Fawcett Publications, Inc., 1966), p. 239. All the page references are to this edition.

7. Seymour L. Gross, "Hawthorne's 'My Kinsman, Major Molineux': History as Moral Adventure." *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, XII (1957), p. 107.

8. William E. Sedgwick, *Herman Melville: The Tragedy of Mind* (New York: Russell & Russell, Inc., 1944), p. 112.

Bibligraphy

Chase, Richard. *The American Novel and Its Tradition*. Garden City: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1957.

Cross, Seymour L. "Hawthorne's 'My Kinsman, Major Molineux': History as Moral Adventure," *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, XII (1957), 97-109.

Hillway, Tyrus. *Herman Melville*. New Haven: College and University Press, 1963.

Howard, Leon. *Herman Melville*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967.

Levin, Harry. *The Power of Blackness*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1976.

Male, Roy R. *Hawthorne's Tragic Vision*. New York: W. W. Norton, 1964.

Matthiessen, F. O. *American Renaissance*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1957.

Sedgwick, William E. *Herman Melville: The Tragedy of Mind*. New York: Russell & Russell, Inc., 1944.

Stein, William B. "Teaching Hawthorne's 'My Kinsman, Major Molineux'," *College English*, 20 (1958), 83-86.

Young, James D. "The Nine Gams of the Pequod," *American Literature*, XXV (1954), 449-463.