

# Throwing Away of European Nature and Acquisition of Americanism

—Two Great Dreamers, Twain and Salinger—

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# Introduction

## I . The aim of this thesis

The aim of this thesis is to prove that *The Adventure of Huckleberry Finn* (1884)<sup>1</sup> and *The Catcher in the Rye* (1951)<sup>2</sup> are explained from the time axis point of American dream and each works play the role of the beginning and the realization of it, by showing the common points of two authors, Mark Twain(1835-1910)and J. D. Salinger (1919-2010), and by showing the common features of their lived epoch.

Both Mark Twain and J. D. Salinger lived a tragic life after getting a big success in life. It is not a mistake to think that Mark Twain created a juvenile character from his broken dream of the pilot in Mississippi River as an antithesis to reality after the Civil War. He sought for his work's materials before the Civil War which divested his juvenile dream. He sought for his ideal in this boyhood and his youth, and continued to have childlike heart separating from the real world, and eventually he turned out to live a world-weary life in his later years. There must be a dissatisfaction to reality on this point.

Also Salinger is known as a person who lived an otherworldly life by shutting himself from the communication around him. He was in the peculiar position in America as a Jewish, and like Twain, he experienced a war and suffered from a psychological disorder, and had go to a mental hospital. It is sound to think that his devoting to the oriental ideology, repeated marriages and divorces, and

reiterated troubles with mass media are a series of behavior from his dissatisfaction to the reality and escape from it. It is the best adjective for Salinger to name him as a misanthrope.

Also their lived generations, that is, the end of 19th century and 1950s after WW II have in common surprisingly. In the end of 19th century, America entered a turning point between the agriculture age and the industrial age after the extinction of frontier. In this period, America's first democratic stage came to the end. Although there were prosperity, of course there came a social uneasiness and the contradiction of capitalism which were called "Gilded Age" by Mark Twain. America had to seek for a new values after the loss of frontier in those days. These days were never a placid age.

The age of 1950s after WW II in which Salinger acted energetically had troubles, such as a minor poverty amid the majority riches, loss of individual sense to society under the atmosphere of adaptation to structure in the abundant background, and people payed attention to the meaning of personal identity in this age. Also old values were questioned by entering the mass information age from the development of TV culture. 1950s are explained as a smoldering age before the explosion of 1960s whose main activity were the civil rights movement. The appearance of Beatnik could be thought as the youth's dissatisfaction with the real society. Beatnik can be related to Hippie culture.

These similarity of two authors and two generations can be related to the common feature between *The Adventure of Huckleberry Finn* and *The Catcher in the Rye*. Both of Twain and Salinger who were fed up with society had of course discontents to the reality, and the end of 19th century and 1950s had common features such as the social uneasiness in the prosperity and the repulsion to the system. Under

these background, both of *The Adventure of Huckleberry Finn* and *The Catcher in the Rye* came to have similar features. Both works have child main characters and have the same theme as travel: Huckleberry comes down the Mississippi River on the raft and Holden who is a powerless critic about society seeks for his meaning of existence by strolling around. Both character's groping movement are the same feature as travel. For both of them, the travel means an expectation of change, and it is expected to bring about a renewal of reality. The age when *The Adventure of Huckleberry Finn* were wrote were the time that America tried to have a breakaway from the European imitation, and the age when *The Catcher in the Rye* were wrote were the time that America could have the realization of American dream. Both works stand for the beginning and realization of American dream, and there is a time continuity between them. I give the similarity of two authors and two generations, and show the similar points of two works as a reflection of the similar feature of author and generation. By doing so, I aim at the realization of the attachment of historical meaning in two works.

## II . The structure of this thesis

This thesis consists of three books. Book 1 explains about the biographical common points of Twain and Salinger, and Book 2 explains about the historical similarity of their lived ages, and Book 3 analyzes the text of Twain's representative work *The Adventure of Huckleberry Finn* and Salinger's representative work *The Catcher in the Rye*.

In the first chapter of Book 1, I give some factors which can be thought to cause Twain to live a pessimistic life in later years. I

explain about the element of his obsession with money which is caused by his birth in poor family. He rebelled against his father and brother and clung to money because of his experience of poverty. This paper shows that his repeated failure of invest is a reaction to riches from his poor living of childhood. Also, I explain about the influence of the Civil war on him. This enormous war inevitably took away his ideal job of youth as a pilot in Mississippi River. I clarify the reason that he sought for his work's materials before the Civil war because he thought the time of it were his ideal ages. Finally I explain about his influence of marriage. Next, I explain that the traits of Twain's literature which stand for human humor and pathos are based on an oral tradition of western culture and they are opposite with his wife Olivia's eastern tradition of Puritanism. I show that Olivia's personality and influence do not have aids for Twain's literature whose representative feature is vulgarism.

In the chapter 2 of Book 1, I analyze the reality of pessimistic elements in Twain's literature. First, I give *The Prince and Pauper* (1881)<sup>3</sup> and pay attention to the family problem and the influence of one's different position in society. Secondly, I give *What is man?* (1906)<sup>4</sup> and show the pessimistic view of human beings by Twain. Thirdly, I give *The Tragedy of Puddn'head Wilson* (1894)<sup>5</sup> and show Twain's negative judgment on racial discrimination which is called American shame. Next, I give "The Man that Corrupted Hadleyburg" (1900)<sup>6</sup> which seems a humorous literature at first sight but which hides Twain's negative thought on American individualism. Finally, I give the children's masterpiece literature *The Adventure of Tom Sawyer* (1876)<sup>7</sup> and show that this work treats boy's smile-provoking conscience but there is a limited freedom in this work. Actually Tom Sawyer cannot perfectly escape from a social model and rules.