

**'BIRD' AND HUCK FINN  
THE INNER DEVELOPMENT OF THE HEROES  
IN KENZABURO OË AND MARK TWAIN**

Minoru IIDA

I saw in their eyes something I was to see over and over in every part of the nation—a burning desire to go, to move, to get under way, any-place, away from any Here. They spoke quietly of how they wanted to go someday, to move about, free and unanchored, not toward something but away from something. I saw this look and heard this yearning everywhere in every state I visited. Nearly every American hungers to move.

John Steinbeck, *Travels with Charley*<sup>1</sup>

At first sight, it may seem curious to compare Oë with the author of *Huckleberry Finn*, for they are rather more contrastive than corresponding in many respects. Oë shows the keenest response to socio-political problems and has already published three large collections of his (primarily) political essays, while Mark Twain does not deal with the direct relation between men and politics either in his novels or in his essays, although he wrote some biographical essays on politicians. Oë sometimes creates a grotesque humor but as a whole he is an almost excessively serious writer; while Mark Twain is universally acknowledged as the best humorous writer in the United States. In *Huckleberry Finn*, we perceive the vast, serene, American sky spreading over the Mississippi, while in Oë's novels, we feel a choking sensation as if we were confined in a small dark room. Oë's style is filled with unnatural rhythms and the stunning combinations of contrasting metaphors, while Mark Twain's style aims at clarity and straightforwardness through the use of colloquial language, etc. Seemingly, there is no particular basis for the proper comparison of the two authors, as long as we focus our attention on the discrepancies between them.

Turning our eyes to the heroes of the two authors, however, we can detect some peculiar affinities among them. The primary resemblance is found in the process of the inner development of Huckleberry Finn and that of Oë's heroes from his earliest stories to the latest novels. This affinity is no coincidence because "all through my experiences in the summer of twenty years ago, *Huckleberry Finn* was my only favorite book written by an American."<sup>2</sup> In the same essay, he also

confesses: "When we were at war with the United States, a copy of *Huck Finn* reached me somehow or other, slipping away from the grip of the invisible net of enmity, hatred, scorn and terror toward America. And immediately afterward, Huckleberry became my first hero that I acquired through literature."<sup>3</sup> Twenty years passed, and when Oë got off a bus at Harvard square to participate in the Kissinger International Seminar at Harvard University in 1965, he carried a copy of *Huck Finn* in his pocket!<sup>4</sup> It is no wonder, therefore, that Oë's heroes display some deep relation with Huck Finn.

The development of Huck's action can be summarized in the following form: confinement → escape → decision at a crucial moment.

The assumption which I wish to prove in this paper is that this process corresponds to that of Oë's heroes.

#### A. The confined state of man —the early short stories—

Oë explains the major theme of his stories collected in *The Pride of the Dead* (1958): "I wrote these stories in the latter half of 1957. My consistent theme was to think about a state of man who has to live in confinement—inside the walls without an exit."<sup>5</sup> For example, in a story called "A Queer Job," three college students act as slaughterers of dogs for their pay job. In the slaughter house, each of one hundred and fifty dogs is tied to a stake, waiting for the moment of death. As the students approach them, they begin to bark furiously, but cannot move at all. "Stepping inside, the private-college student said in a gloomy voice with his head drooped, 'I cannot stand the idea that those dogs are unable to move a bit, surrounded by the low walls. We can see beyond the walls, but they cannot. And they are just waiting for the moment they are killed.'"<sup>6</sup> This image of dogs bears a strong resemblance to the situation of "us" Japanese students, who have fallen into the abyss of spiritual inertia. In "The Other's Legs," the children of vertebrae are "spending their quiet hours within the thick submucous walls"<sup>7</sup> without any hope of walking on their feet. Similarly, the student in "Time of False Witness" is bound to a wooden chair, having no freedom to move about. In "The Sheep of Men," several Japanese passengers are threatened and forced to expose their buttocks by a group of drunken foreign soldiers in a bus, but no Japanese passengers dare to resist this gross insult.

Since Oë was infatuated with Sartre when he was producing these stories, it is quite natural that his view on the state of man in confinement should be greatly influenced by Sartre's philosophy, in which man is defined as 'a being within a situation.' However, it is wrong to consider Oë as only a skilful writer of fictional versions of existentialist philosophy. The intrinsic force of his stories, I think,

comes from his keen awareness of an undeniable coincidence between the personal feeling of his own unhappiness and the recognition of the universal state of man. This is why we feel that these stories reflect not only Oë's inner world but also the socio-political situation of Japan in the late 1950's. For instance, in the the postscript of *Leap Before You See* (1958), the second collection of his short stories, he clearly states: "I intended to develop one particular theme here. I aimed to describe repeatedly the interrelationship between the foreigners as 'masters,' the Japanese in a more or less humiliating situation, and the intermediaries (like interpreters and prostitutes for foreigners)."<sup>8</sup> Like all prominent writers in the world, Oë has the keenest sensitivity to the very predicament of his own generation.

The young men in confinement in Oë's stories correspond to Huck Finn in the early part of the story where he is deprived of freedom under the strict supervision of Mrs. and Miss Watson (especially the latter).

Miss Watson she kept pecking at me, and it got tiresome and lonesome. By and by they fetched the niggers in and had prayers, and then everybody was off to bed. I went up to my room with a piece of candle, and put it on the table. Then I sat down in a chair by the window and tried to think of something cheerful, but it warn't no use. I felt so lonesome I most wished I was dead.<sup>9</sup>

Huck succeeds in escaping from Mrs. Watson's house, and is "cramped up" again by his own father. But still Huck is smart enough to outwit grown-ups and to run away, while Oë's heroes in his early stories are either completely devoid of the will-power to escape from their predicament, or betrayed and shattered by grown-ups like the young hero in "The Catch." It may be said that "the sub-mucous walls" surrounding Japan are too thick and hard for those young Japanese to break through.

### B. Escape—*Our Age* and *The Adventures in Daily Life*—

*Our Age*, a novel published in 1959, is an important work because it marked not only a peak of Oë's two years' apprenticeship in novel writing, but also a starting point of the second phase of his literary career. The theme of 'escape' or 'departure' emerges for the first time in a distinct form. It is to reappear again and again after *Our Age*. How ambitious Oë was when he started this novel is plainly expressed in an essay called "*Our Age* and Myself."

I had been, so to speak, a writer of the pastoral world until I wrote this novel. Now I intended to become an anti-pastoral writer of the real world. Also I decided to adopt the sexual images as the most important device of my novels to be written after *Our Age*.<sup>10</sup>

The human relationships around the hero in this novel are basically similar to those in *Leap Before You See*. Against Yasuo Minami, a young Japanese student in a humiliating situation, there is a powerful foreigner named Wilson, and between the two is Yoriko who "had been a prostitute for foreigners for ten years,"<sup>11</sup> and is now mistress of both Yasuo and Wilson. Yasuo cannot budge at all, tightly caught in Yoriko's "vaginal world."<sup>12</sup> "With her eyes closed and her eyebrows twisted, Yoriko firmly embraced him in her arms, caught his loins tightly between her thighs—a powerful oil-press, as it were—and made sure of his capture by fastening her nails in his sides."<sup>13</sup> The image of a man captured between the woman's thighs, which dominates at least the first half of the novel, apparently symbolizes the desperate condition into which many Japanese youths have fallen. "The spiritual, not physical, impotence was rampant like the plague among the young students at Yasuo's university."<sup>14</sup> They know they should take some wild action to liberate themselves, but in reality they choose rather to fall into inertia and to perspire from their naked skin on the bed. They are "shut in darkness, simply because they are young Japanese intellectuals."<sup>15</sup> For Yasuo, there is only one way to escape. It is to win the first prize for his essay on the relationship between French and Japanese culture. If he gets it, he is offered the scholarship to study in France for three years. This will be the last chance to run away from "the disgusting life which consists of the mixture of pleasure and humiliation,"<sup>16</sup> from "a rosy vaginal world,"<sup>17</sup> and from "the moist climate of Japan and the sentimental human relationships."<sup>18</sup> "The West will welcome a young man from the East to their tight, hard and fresh atmosphere."<sup>19</sup> Of course, Yasuo is well aware that the departure for France itself will not immediately lead to a genuine escape from the horrible reality, but at least it will provide an opportunity to attain true escape and self-liberation.

He wins the prize. Here is a conversation between Yasuo and Yoriko: 'Are you hopeful now? Does it bring you any better future just to go to France, leaving me behind you?' 'I am not hopeful. *I just want to go. I just want to depart without any restraint.* If I do not depart now, I will have to live never to accomplish anything all my life.' (my italics).<sup>20</sup> Yasuo's strong urge to depart makes a good comparison with Huck's burning desire to escape. Huck says, "All I wanted was to go somewhere; all I wanted was a change, I warn't particular."<sup>21</sup> Unlike Huck Finn's,

however, Yasuo's long cherished planning suddenly comes to failure when his relationship with an Arabian, a member of the FLN in Algeria, is disclosed to the French Embassy. But the moment he replies 'non' to a French official's demand that he should not cooperate with the Arabian any more, Yasuo is again thrown into the depths of void and despair, instead of feeling proud of his own courageous decision. A few days later, he comes across his friend, Yagizawa, who invites Yasuo to participate in a leftist students' organization called Mingakudo. "Here comes an attack!" Yasuo thinks, "Here comes an attack on me. There is no reason, indeed, why I should not join them, but neither is there any reason why I have to join them."<sup>22</sup> He refuses Yagizawa's invitation, saying, "Perhaps you are right. I may be evading reality. But tell me, is your 'Mingakudo' true reality? Does it enable me to face reality if I join you?" This is the end of their friendship. Yasuo feels that the only action left for him is 'suicide,' although he is not courageous enough to attempt it. "So we must go on living with the keen awareness of the possibility of suicide. THIS IS OUR AGE, ANYWAY."<sup>23</sup> The novel ends with this dark statement. As a matter of course, this pessimistic epilogue does not necessarily indicate that the author of the book is in the same depth of despair as his hero. On the contrary, Oë could make this novel his new starting point simply because he had already transcended the pessimism of Yasuo.

Oë seems to have discovered at least two important themes in writing this novel. One is the rejection of the given reality; the other is the escape from it. Oë continues to develop these two themes in his succeeding novels such as *The Adventures in Daily Life* (1963-64) and *A Personal Matter* (1964).

*The Adventures in Daily Life* is a memorable work in spite of its serious defects in plot and characterization, because it presents a new type of hero who succeeds in 'escape' anyway. I say 'anyway,' for the whole life of this hero is not in any sense regarded as a success. Saikichi Saiki—that is the name of the hero—is a young man "always contemplating the fundamental problems of human morality, unlike most of the Japanese youths who were born between 1935 and 1940,"<sup>24</sup> although this habit of contemplating never keeps him from a series of adventurous actions. Is it really possible for a young Japanese boy to be adventurous? But the narrator, a friend and alter ego of the hero, asserts: "He was a man who could pursue his adventure freely and easily in this real world, while we are forced to lead an entirely anti-adventurous life day in, day out."<sup>25</sup> Is the narrator making a joke? Anyhow, let us listen to the 'adventures' of Saikichi Saiki.

He practices boxing to become a tough-guy movie star; he is expelled from the movie studio after he knocks down his director; he enjoys sexual intercourse with a daughter of a famous painter 'on their feet,' while he is talking with her father who is in the next room; he changes his wife one after another, with one

of whom he steals a car; his first attempt to go abroad fails, because his ship is shot and sunk off the coast of Hong Kong! Returning to Japan, he marries a girl called Himiko, and becomes the manager of a young Korean boxer; he remarries a rich, fat, middle-aged woman, and goes to Europe to study drama; what an anti-climax, however, to hear him say to the narrator at the airport, "I am completely alone over there (in Europe). I cannot speak any foreign language! I cannot be free from uneasiness unless I can think that you may join me pretty soon ..... I'm so afraid of going to Europe alone, I feel almost dead!"<sup>26</sup> The irony in calling him an adventurer is only reinforced when we are told that he is attending an English conversation class at a school for immigrants in London. Then, in Paris, he deserts his fat wife, and brings back another fat woman (this time, an Italian!) called M. M. to Japan. Finally, he departs for Europe again with M. M. and "perhaps after a number of exciting experiences, he hangs himself with a rope tied to the stem of a metal lotus in a shower room of a hotel at a small town in North Africa."<sup>27</sup> What, then, in this quixotic anti-hero attracted the narrator of the novel?

To be sure, Saikichi Saiki did not attain any of his ideals in this world... Why was I driven so enthusiastically to record his biography or adventures, then? Well, what I can say now is that he was at least a man of our age. And the rôle of Saikichi as a hero of our age was to talk violently, to fuck wildly, to try everything adventurous and finally to be gripped by a sudden death without realizing any ideals.<sup>28</sup>

So far, Oë's concern was solely centered around a group of young men, whether they are adventurous or not, who try and fail, and finally come to self-destruction, while Mark Twain presented a successful adventurer in Huck Finn. But in the next novel of Oë, the distance between the two authors is greatly shortened.

### C. Decision at a crucial moment— *A Personal Matter*—

Without a doubt, *A Personal Matter* (1964) is not merely the best novel Oë has ever written, but also one of the masterpieces of contemporary Japanese literature. In this novel, Oë created two remarkable characters who are quite unique in Japanese literature. One is a woman called Kamiko; the other is a man simply called 'Bird' by other characters. Kamiko is Oë's Eternal Woman, pure, tender, self-sacrificing— a progeny of Dostoevski's Sonia. I think Oë's creation of Kamiko is strong evidence that his view on sex has drastically changed. When he declared

in "*Our Age and Myself*" that he decided to adopt the sexual images for the primary device of his novels, he only meant that he was concerned with sex as a means, not as an end. His view on sex at that time is distinctly explicated in another essay called "Our World of Sex," in which he classifies the modern men into two categories—'Political Man' and 'Sexual Man'. The former is a positive and active man who always confirms himself by standing or resisting against others, while the latter is a docile conformist who never resists the will of other persons. And Oë concludes that today's Japan is shrunk under the dark shadow of many complacent 'sexual men.'<sup>29</sup> Here, obviously, Oë regards sex as a symbol of the negative element in man. Consequently, the sexual descriptions in his novels prior to *A Personal Matter* completely lack the flavor of actuality in spite of a flood of sexual terms and images. Now, in *A Personal Matter*, he has come to recognize some positive and affirmative aspects of sex through the study of the relation between Kamiko and Bird. It is Kamiko's tenderness in their sexual intercourse that recovers Bird's soul from despair and that leads him to ultimate self-discovery. Kamiko, in this sense, is a symbol of the healing power inherent in human sexuality.

Bird is the first affirmative hero in Oë's novels, although he has no bright, glorious future before him. (Who can expect a bright future nowadays? Oë would ask). He is affirmative in the sense that he chooses to lead a humane life at the stake of his personal dream and happiness. We may be able to say that Oë created a true 'existentialist hero' in Bird just as Mark Twain created his own in Huck Finn.<sup>30</sup>

Bird comes into the novel as almost the same type of young man as Yasuo in *Our Age*, though Bird is now a married man teaching at a preparatory school in Tokyo. His wife is in hospital to be delivered of a baby. Like Minami and Sasaki, Bird is burning with a desire to depart for Africa "for adventure, encounters with new tribes and with the perils of death, for a glimpse beyond the horizon of quiescent and chronically frustrated everyday life."<sup>31</sup> He knows that if his wife gives birth to a baby, he will lose all possibility of realizing his dream. But his real suffering begins when the doctor tells him that the new-born baby will not grow up a normal child because of a brain hernia. Now his problem is how to escape this unexpected disaster which has suddenly befallen him in his quiet daily life. He has to run away from the baby monster, anyway. He suggests that the doctor starve the baby by giving him sugar water instead of milk. Thus he "sensed that he had taken the first step down the slope of contemptibility."<sup>32</sup> He feels that what he is experiencing personally now is "like digging a vertical mine shaft in isolation: it goes straight down to a hopeless depth and never opens an anybody else's world."<sup>33</sup> However, Kamiko immediately recognizes through her

tender love for Bird that he is not suffering in vain, but is moving unconsciously in the direction of ultimate salvation. She helps him to creep out of the abyss of "contemptibility" and to become aware of his true self. "You should become either a tough villain or a tough angel, one or the other,"<sup>34</sup> she says. And finally he decides to accept this monster and to bring him up instead of running away from him, so that he may become "a tough angel." He is now "evading deception's final trap" and is "restoring his faith in himself."<sup>35</sup> This self-assuredness of Bird after his decision is sharply contrasted with Yasuo's emptiness after his rejection of the grant.

Soon after Bird's final decision, it turns out that the baby is not suffering from a brain hernia, but just from a benign tumor, which is easily cured by operation. This happy ending provoked severe criticism even from Oë's admirers like Mishima and Jun Eto, for they took it as proof that Oë's view of reality was too hopeful. What does Oë himself answer to this attack? In the discussion of this novel with Jun Eto in 1965, Oë defends the ending of *A Personal Matter*, saying:

Since it is not an essay but a novel, the most important thing is the concrete description of the young man's inner world which sways from this side to the other,—the hesitation about his final decision. And I think this novel comes to its conclusion at the moment when the protagonist decides to accept the baby and to bring him up.<sup>36</sup>

What Oë said about the last chapter of *A Personal Matter* is perfectly applicable to the important scene in *Huck Finn* where Huck decides not to send the letter concerning Jim's fate. (And I believe Oë had *Huck Finn* in mind when he was writing this chapter). Huck is hesitating with the letter in his hand,—the letter which will inform against Jim.

It was a close place. I took it up, and held it in my hand. I was a-trembling, because I'd got to decide, forever, betwixt two things, and I knowed I studied a minute, sort of holding my breath, and then says to myself; "All right, then, I'll go to hell" —and tore it up. It was awful thoughts and awful words, but they was said. And I let them stay said; and never thought no more about reforming. I shoved the whole thing out of my head and said I would take up wickedness again, which was in my line, being brung up to it, and the other warn't. And for a starter I would go to work and steal Jim out of slavery again; and if I could think up anything worse, I would do that, too; because as long as I was in, and in for good, I might as well go the whole hog.<sup>37</sup>



Commenting on the above passage, Oë calls Huck "an existentialist hero," and continues:

Mark Twain discloses that Jim was already liberated at the end. Thus the author provides Huck with a loophole so that he may not go to hell. The important thing is, however, that Huck has already made a decision by himself. Besides, since there is a suggestion at the end that Huck is starting out again, it is almost certain that he will soon be on his way to hell again without any loophole next time. Huck frees himself from his time, society and even his God, stands against them all in the state of nakedness, and says, 'All right, then, I'll go to hell.' At this moment, he has become a hero who represents America from his age to the present.<sup>38</sup>

The parallel between the two novels is distinct. Just as Huck declares, "All right, then, I'll go to hell," Bird suddenly says to Kamiko, "I've decided to take the baby back to the university hospital and let them operate. I've stopped rushing at every exit door."<sup>39</sup> The moment he makes this decision "in the state of nakedness," Bird is transfigured from an escapist to "an existentialist hero." And, as Oë himself claims, I think the happy ending of this novel is no more crucial than that of Huck Finn, compared with the decisive moment. We are also sure that the protagonist of *A Personal Matter* "will soon be on the way to hell" as Huckleberry Finn.

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Since the publication of *A Personal Matter* (1964), Oë has given to the world two major novels, *Football in the First Year of Manen* (*Mänen gannen no futtabōru*, 1967) and *The Waters Drew up to My Soul* (*Kōzui wa waga tama ni oyobi*, 1973). Accordingly, a brief reference must be made to the heroes of these two novels in relation to *Huck Finn*.

*Football* starts where *A Personal Matter* ends, and ends where *A Personal Matter* starts. Mitsusaburo Nedokoro, one of the two heroes of this novel, is the father of a mentally retarded baby (a similar predicament in which Bird was caught), and estranged from his wife, for she refuses to have sexual relations with him in fear of a second conception. In despair he can do little but drink whisky, and confine himself in a pit in the ground at night, where he meditates on the hideous suicide of his friend which took place several months ago.

The other hero is Takashi, Mitsusaburo's alter-ego as well as his younger brother, who is active, wild, and passionate by nature, fresh from a roving journey to America. The two brothers, accompanied by Mitsusaburo's wife and two young followers of Takashi, return to their home village surrounded by mountains in Shikoku, in order to start a new life together. Takashi immediately organizes young villagers into a football team and instigates them to plunder a super-market run by a Korean called 'Emperor.' Takashi, however, driven by an insane desire, kills a young village girl in an attempt to rape her. After confessing to his elder brother that the suicide of their feeble-minded sister was caused by her incestuous relationship with him, Takashi commits masochistic suicide by shooting himself in the face with a shotgun.

Again in despair, Mitsusaburo shuts himself up in the basement of his house, feeling helpless amid the ghosts of Takashi and other ancestors of the Nedokoro family. Eventually, urged by his wife now with Takashi's baby, he decides to leave Japan for Africa (again!) by himself, where he is to work as an interpreter. But this time, Africa is not a land of promise to him, as it was to Bird; it is simply a place where "at least it is easy to build a grass house."<sup>40</sup>

This novel is, so to speak, a negative response to the final decision of the protagonist of *A Personal Matter*. The basis of the world in which Bird chose to live proves to be too fragile against erosion by the destructive elements inherent in man. As a result, here reappears that old pattern of the hero's action—confinement—→escape. The author is still within the scope of Huck Finn's escapist world.

If *Football* is a negative answer to *A Personal Matter*, *The Waters* is a bold jump over *A Personal Matter* onto a positive *yea* to the human destiny characterized by death and destruction. We can even sense in it something like *a strong will to accept the self-destruction as a salvation*.

Isana, the hero of *The Waters*, lives in a ferro-concrete nuclear shelter with his mentally handicapped son, Jin, almost entirely shunning outside human society. This setting of the story is very close to those of the two previous novels, but there are great differences. First, Jin is described not as the symbol of the hero's desperation but as that of his salvation, because, in spite of his mental weakness, or rather for that very reason, Jin was born with perfect innocence and purity which enable him to communicate with nature outside. Second, Isana is not a man of despair as Bird or Mitsusaburo. He professes himself to be a spokesman of the souls of trees and whales, for, led by his own son, he has learned to have a mystical conversation with those plants and animals. Lastly, unlike his predecessors, Isana is not content to play the inactive role of a bystander, but is willing to get involved with a group of violent youths called Free Voyage Corps, entrenches

himself in his house with other young members to fight against the riot police, and is finally killed in his nuclear shelter. "All's well! The moment that visits all human beings visits him now."<sup>41</sup>

It is ironical indeed that the death in a nuclear shelter is brought to the hero, not by a nuclear explosion, but by the tear gas and the spray of water hoses, and that the police force he is fighting is not so much beset with the 'death' principle as with the democratic 'life' principle, trying to save as many lives of the besieged as possible. This inevitably makes us feel that the hero and his comrades are simply indulging in a ridiculously childish self-satisfaction. The gloomy premonition of cataclysm, or the eschatological setting of this novel, is almost nothing compared with the horrible destruction predicted in the Apocalypse.

But, on the other hand, it is also readily acknowledgeable that Oë again created an entirely new type of hero in modern Japanese literature. Isana's uniqueness lies, for example, in his acceptance of the reality as it is with a manly perseverance, the acceptance of the tragedy (or comedy) of those violent youths as his own. There are a strange calmness, spirituality and even saintliness around this character.

The story of the Free Voyage Corps takes over the 'escape' theme which appears in all major works of Oë. They plan to flee into the sea so that they "may have nothing to do with anything political" and "may not be killed by the people in power."<sup>42</sup> All their actions are simply absurd, and Isana is naturally not motivated at all by such an 'escape' drive, although he is considerably sympathetic to them. He seems to deny any possibility of flight from the confined state of man, while, at the same time, he seems to acknowledge the possibility of man's salvation in *this* world.<sup>43</sup> This banishment of the 'escape' drive from the hero's mind perhaps indicates that the author is finally departing from Huck Finn's escapist world.

(Originally written in May 1969, revised and enlarged in November 1975)

## Notes

1. John Steinbeck, *Travels with Charley* (New York, 1963), p. 10.
2. Kenzaburo Oë, "Huck Finn Goes to Hell," *Sekai*, No. 250, Sept. 1966, p. 238. All citations from Oë's works except *A Personal Matter* were translated by my own hand.
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Ibid.*
5. Kenzaburo Oë, *The Complete Works* (Tokyo, 1966), Vol. I, p. 380.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 13.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 51.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 380.
9. Richard Lettis, ed. *Huck Finn and His Critics* (New York, 1968), p. 3.
10. *The Complete Works*, Vol. I, p. 381.
11. *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 142.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 186.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 132.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 130.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 145.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 149.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 186.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 249.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 186.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 252.
21. *Huck Finn and His Critics*, p. 2.
22. *The Complete Works*, Vol. II, p. 300.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 302.
24. *Ibid.*, Vol. V, p. 130.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 132.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 310.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 132.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 337.
29. See K. Oë, *Solemn Funambulism (Genshuku na tsunawatari)*, Tokyo, 1960), pp. 229-237.
30. As we see later, Oë calls Huck "an existentialist hero."
31. K. Oë, *A Personal Matter*, trans. John Nathan (New York, 1968), p. 19.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 100.
33. *Ibid.*, p. 155.
34. *Ibid.*, p. 148.
35. *Ibid.*, p. 210.
36. "Modern Writers and Society," *Gunzo*, No. 243, March, 1965, p. 123.
37. *Huck Finn and his Critics*, p. 189.
38. *The Complete Works*, Vol. II, pp. 353-354.
39. *A Personal Matter*, p. 209.
40. K. Oë, *Manen gannen no futtobôru* (Tokyo, 1967), p. 393.
41. K. Oë, *Kôzuiwa waga tama ni oyobi* (Tokyo, 1973), Vol. II, p. 246.
42. *Ibid.*, p. 73.
43. The problem of salvation is not clearly stated in this work, for it is out of the line of a novel. However, the hero of *The Waters* talks very seriously about "the Being to come next" (Vol. I, p. 140) who will rejoice in new life after the total annihilation of living creatures on earth. This is perhaps a reflection of Oë's historicism, eschatology being one of its forms. Oë's image of man's future is, therefore, quite different from Mark Twain's in his later years. The pessimism of the latter apparently comes from a belief that man is essentially evil, and has been deprived of any chance of salvation since the fall of Adam

and Eve. Out of this fatalistic concept of man, is his dark, bitter, wry humor derived. In contrast, Oë's horror comes mainly from his nuclear obsession which permeates many of his important works, and partly from man's unreasonable violence more or less related with political problems or injustice.

In other words, Oë has not yet reached the truly metaphysical level of the "salvation" problems, because his concept of evilness in human nature is still vague and wavering.

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