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***THE CATCHER IN THE RYE***

**A CRITICAL ANALYSIS**

**(Undergraduate Thesis)**

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. PREFACE
2. INTRODUCTION
3. THE AUTHOR AND HIS WORK
4. LITERARY BACKGROUND
5. PLOT
6. CHAPTER SUMMARIES
7. THE CHARACTERS
8. STRUCTURE
  - A. THE PICARESQUE NOVEL
  - B. CONFLICT
  - C. SUSPENSE
  - D. CLIMAX
  - E. DRAMATIC IRONY
9. STYLE
  - A. LANGUAGE
  - B. LEVELS OF DICTION
  - C. IMAGERY AND SYMBOL
  - D. VIEW POINT
  - E. DIGRESSIONS
10. CONCLUSION
11. BIBLIOGRAPHY

## PREFACE

The History of manhood has been changing its motto under the influence of several fictional conceptions which are brilliantly decorated with illuminating perspectives towards the future of mankind. Especially, there were definite periods when these conceptions took the leading role of notable generations' philosophies and political doctrines such as 'Beats'. "*The Catcher in the Rye*" is one of those master pieces of American fiction. Salinger's character Holden Caulfield, who bears the rebellious teenager spirit, escapes from the vulgar Life standards with his indifferent mannerism against a world of materialistic progress. Salinger's '*The Catcher in the Rye*' definitely helped me to destroy the simplicities of my personal point of view in certain aspects of life therefore I thought and reasonably decided that Salinger's novel "*The Catcher in the Rye*" would be an appropriate choice for my graduation thesis.

Before starting out this analysis work, I would like to thank to the president Dr Suat Günsel for having established such a highly esteemed sophisticated department in the university and also sincerely to our chair person Associate Prof. Dr. Gül Celkan for having helped me in preparing my graduation thesis, besides, to Yasemin Ergin for having directed me to read "*The Catcher in the Rye*" and to all my lecturers and to Ümit Gören, Yakup Egeli, Erol Değgin , Salim Günaydın, Serap Özdemir, Gül Yaman and İsmail Köse for accompanying me in my work.

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## INTRODUCTION

*"The Catcher in the Rye"*, the brilliant work of J. D. Salinger, was firstly published in 1951 . This novel is a key -work of the nineteen -fifties in that the theme of youthful rebellion is first adumbrated in it, though the hero, Holden Caulfield, is more a gentle voice of protest, unrevealing in the noise, than a world-changer. Holden tells his story in a vernacular that has Learned something childishly pitiable.

*"The Catcher in the Rye"* was the culminating work of a series of stories, most of which carried the theme of a sick mind's redemption through the innocence of a child .

It required boldness to present an attempt at solving the world's problems through a positive creed Love, though Salinger's crime is to close in, depicting a family of the elect. Holden at Least confronts the dirty mass of sinning humanity, thought it drives him to a mental home.

*"The Catcher in the Rye"* was a symptom of a need, after a ghostly war and during a ghostly pseudo -peace , for the young to raise a voice of protest against the failures of the adult world. The young used many voices -anger, contempt, self-pity -but the quietest, that of a decent perplexed American adolescent , proved the most telling.



## THE AUTHOR AND HIS WORK

### Jerome David Salinger

In the year of 1951, American literature has testified the birth of a new and a creative author with the publication of "**The Catcher in the Rye**", Jerome David Salinger. It has been proved that since World War II, none of the American writers has achieved the extreme popularity of Salinger's "*The Catcher in the Rye*" as he directly visualized how indifferent and hollow American youth was about to come who would have been exceedingly struggled with their own disappointments in life. Although in his "*The Catcher in the Rye*" Salinger draws a tumbling and neurotic figure, i.e. Holden Caulfield, the known bits of Salinger's life show the evidences of his undramatic life. Salinger was born in New York City on 1 January 1919. He was the son of a Jewish father and an Irish mother, the second of the two children, the first being Doris. Salinger, throughout his education, was not outstanding academically. He was dropped out of Manhattan's Mcburney school and later on enrolled of Valley Forge Academy, a military school where he had caught the opportunity to decorate some parts of "*The Catcher in the Rye*". Salinger graduated from Valley Forge Military Academy in 1936, where Salinger's I.Q. was recorded as 115. The following years had been kind of Fiasco for Salinger as he attended several colleges, including New York University and left there without completing a program for a degree. Between the years 1937-38, he made a brief visit to European countries, Austria and Poland, in the service of his father's import business. Whit Burnett was one of the significant figures who played a great role in Salinger's literary life. Salinger, 1940, wrote "The Young Folks" which was actually on effect of a course given by Burnett at Columbia University. He was at the age of 20 when his first story "The Young Folks" was published. Like many of the writers of his generation, Salinger's life perspective was sufficiently capsized by his experience in the World War II. The Spiritual crisis, caused by the World War II, is obvious to realize in every Salinger hero who embryonically suffer all the frustrations, agonies and horrors of the world at the righteous war with itself.

Salinger was drafted in 1942. He did clerical work and wrote publicity releases. In 1943 he joined the Intelligence Corps of the 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division as a staff sergeant and was shipped overseas for two and a half years. Salinger spent a short period of training in Devon and stayed in the army through five campaigns from D. Day (June 1944) to the end of the war, this period was sufficient to confirm his distaste for military service. He, then married to a

doctor and later he was back to his parents home in New York. There he led a full social life and was rather interested in Zen Buddhism.<sup>1</sup>

Salinger, during the years of war, kept publishing stories and built his ascent bridge from the little magazines to the popular mass-circulation magazines, such as "Collier's" and "Saturday Evening Post" and in the later forties, exclusively in the "New Yorker".

In 1951, Salinger's career, as a writer, arose to its extreme heights with the publication of "*The Catcher in the Rye*" and it was distributed as a Book-of-the-Month Club selection and it contained the contemporary Literary expressions of rebellion against society, such as "Look Back in Anger" by John Osborne. Holden Caulfield has been an excellent

Figure who reflects the speech of the American teenager of the fifties', and its sentiments still find a sympathetic echo worldwide. "*The Catcher in the Rye*" has also been criticized for the degree of obscenity and the fact of the one four-letter word that also irritates Holden Caulfield as well.

"*The Catcher in the Rye*" was followed in 1953 by "Nine Stories". On the other hand, 1953 had another great impact on his life apart from his literary achievement because he met his future wife Claire Douglas, a student at Radcliffe, Claire was born in England, settled in Cornish, New Hampshire, two children were born, a daughter in 1955 and a son in 1960. When Claire Douglas married someone else he began to lead an isolated and reclusive life. In 1955, Douglas divorced her first husband and married Salinger but, Salinger did not give up leading the life of a recluse. After which were the pairs of stories published in the "New Yorker", called "For Esmé-with love and squalor" or "Nine Short Stories", more optimistic compared to the rest of Salinger's works. Then, "Fronny and Zooey"(1961) containing stories first published in 1955 and 1957: and "Raise High The Roof Beam", "Carpenters" and "Seymour": "an introduction"(1963) with stories published in 1955 and 1959. A prolonged silence was broken in 1965 with the publication of "Hapworth 16, 1924" in the "New Yorker".

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<sup>1</sup> Zen Buddhism: Japanese form of Buddhism that stresses the importance of meditation more than the reading of religious writings.



The total publication of Salinger's Stories, from 1940 to 1953, are thirty stories. The rigorous selection for "Nine Stories" left Twenty-one stories buried in the magazines.

Compared to the other master pieces of American Literature, Salinger had more public and critical interest. Unlike Fitzgerald and Hemingway, Salinger refused to live in public, the role of American author. Salinger has published nothing since the publication of "A Perfect Day For Bananafish". This work tries to point out some of the reasons for the suicide described in "A Perfect Day For Bananafish". This detail leaves an enigma about Salinger's life and future.

## LITERARY BACKGROUND

### Beat Generation

The term "Beat", in this sense, is generally pointed to have been devised by Jack Kerouac (1922-69) its characteristic bears connotations of down -beat, down-and-out, drop-out and beatitude, and denotes a group of American writers (especially poets) who become unforgettable figures in the 1950s. They are mainly assorted with San Francisco, USA, and their generally accepted father-figures were Kenneth Rexroth, Henry Miller and William Burroughs. These beat writers (and many of the 'beat generation') developed their own slang and a highly idiosyncratic style. Besides their conviction and attitudes were unconventional, provocative, anti-intellectual, anti-hierarchical and anti-middle-class (the 'squares') These writers and poets were influenced by Jazz, by Zen Buddhism and by American Indian and Mexican Peyote cults, and their Bohemian Lifestyle was popularly associated with drugs, "free" sex, drink and permissive living in general it was in some respects anarchic and provoked considerable hostility. Allen Ginsberg's "How and Other Poems" (1956) represents as well as anything the disillusionment of the beat movement with modern society, its materialism and militarism and its outmoded, stuffed-shirt, middle-class values and mores. Ginsberg's "Kaddish" (1960), an elegy for his mother, and "Reality Sandwiches" (1963) were other important publications. So were Lawrence Ferlinghetti's "Pictures of the Gone World" (1955) and "A Coney Island of the Mind" (1958), Gregory Corso's "Gasoline" (1958) and "Bomb" (1959). And Gary Snyder's collection of work songs and haikus (q.v) in 'Riprap' (1959). Jack Kerouac himself made memorable contributions to the beat movement and Literature with his prose works "On the Road" (1957), "*The Catcher in the Rye*" was an excellent novel reflecting the indifferent status of Beats. The novels of William Burroughs (e.g. Junkie, 1953, 'the Naked Lunch, 1959, "Minutes to Go", 1960) and John Clellon Holmes (e.g. "Go", 1952, "The Horn", 1958) are also closely associated with the Beat movement, whose influence was to go far beyond the English-speaking world, it is discernible, for instance, in the work of the Russians Yevtushenko and Voznesensky. It created a cult and affected pop culture.



## PLOT

The narrator, Holden Caulfield jumps back to his past experiences he had at the age of sixteen, an American teenager's experiment at the end of the autumn term a year before. Although Holden is rather insistent not to mention biographical details, various bits seem to emerge as Caulfield tells his experimental story. Holden is reticent about his parents, they are exceedingly private. Holden briefly mentions his visit to his older brother, D.B., who has an incredible writing talent and a Jaguar, lives in Hollywood. Although it is not certain, Holden seems to be writing from somewhere near Hollywood where he has gone to rest.

**"He is in Hollywood. That is not too far from this crumbly place".<sup>2</sup>**

His story takes short on a windy December day. Holden returns back to **Pencey Prep** school after a trip with the fencing team. He flunks out four subjects at **Pencey Prep** in **Pennsylvania** and before he leaves the **Pencey Prep**, he hurries to pay a farewell visit to his history teacher who is ill, i.e., Mr. Spencer.

Mr. Spencer is rather fond of Caulfield and Mr. Spencer tries to reflect the difficulties of life depending on his experiences and Mr. Spencer tries to inject Holden, the working principles and responsibilities, whereas Holden is not willing to listen and he is pretending politely to Mr. Spencer. Holden is very concerned with the phoney people, what Holden actually think of those people, is, there is nothing worse than phonies. On his return, Holden is visited by a fellow student, a "secret slob", the boy next door, Ackley who is a slob in public and bore for Holden. Holden's roommate, Stradlater arrives and asks Holden to write an essay for him because Stradlater has a date. When Holden finds out Stradlater's date is an old friend of his, his mood changes into depressive Jealousy that even makes Holden to refuse to go downstairs to see her.

Later, Holden Writes an essay about his dead brother Allie and his baseball mitt and we are told that three years ago Allie died and the reason, for it, is leukaemia. Holden passionately remembers him and his mitt, an which Allie wrote bits of poetry. When Stradlater returns, he

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<sup>2</sup> "The Catcher in the Rye", page 1

degrades the subject-matter of the essay and Holden tears it up as Holden is rather obsessed with the thoughts of Stradlater's date with Jane Gallagher whose virginity gains a symbolic importance, Holden starts a fight with Stradlater and loses the fight as Stradlater knocks him out, on the floor. Holden then fails to have comfort and sympathy from Ackley therefore he leaves Pencey three days early.

Holden then, takes a train to New York and goes to a filthy hotel as he does not want to go home because he knows what would happen when his parents receive the headmaster's letter of expulsion. Holden, as being alone, drags himself into the world of adult as he meets a variety of characters who are being either imbecile nor phoney in some ways. Holden during that evening visits two night-clubs, then, he is offered a prostitute by the pimp who is lift boy. Although Holden regrets doing so, he accepts and he gets rather depressed and self-conscious to have sex when the prostitute arrives. She later returns with the pimp beats him up and steals his money from his wallet.

The next morning Holden directly phones his girl friend, and arranges a meeting with her so as to take her to a matinée. Later, he suddenly overhears a boy singing a song which Holden mistakenly believes to be "if a body catch a body coming through the rye!" He seriously gets impressed by the happiness of the child and song regains Holden's mind again, he buys a record for his young sister Phoebe and passes from the dismal cinema queues to the park where he wishes to find Phoebe. He walks over to the museum and looks for her, but she is not there.

His date with his girlfriend "Sally" is almost a failure. Holden again gets stuck with the matter of phonies when he realises that spectators are more phoney than the actors. Sally, later on, has a reunion with an acquaintance and this reunion annoys Holden exceedingly. Lately, at the skating rink, Holden asks Sally to join him in his journey and live together with him in a cabin, apart from New York. Sally refuses Holden's offer as she finds it rather childish and they argue. Holden then decides for a meet with Carl Luce, who is his school friend about sexual relationships. However, Holden is kind of disappointed as Luce points out the lack of his maturity and leaves him alone in the bar where Holden proceeds to get drunk.



Holden becomes more depressed as he finds out no answer for what he faced with. While he is making his way to the park, he unintentionally breaks the record which he bought for Phoebe. Holden, then, becomes more sensitive and thinks of his dead brother Allie and throws away all the money he has left. When he thinks of Phoebe, he gets rid off the melancholy mood that depress him so much. He decides to visit Phoebe and creeps into her room while his parents are out, but when they return he goes to one of his ex-teacher's house, i.e., Mr. Antolini's house. Mr. Antolini is similar the figure of Mr. Spencer, he tries to find out the way to communicate with Holden. On the other hand Holden is terrified of homosexuality with the attempt of Mr. Antolini. Holden awakes and finds Mr. Antolini sitting by his bed and caressing his head. So as Holden gets irritated with this attempt of Antolini, he immediately leaves Mr. Antolini's house. Now he is in a miserable position at the station and the next morning Holden makes a decision of going West and leading his life in his dreamed of cabin. In the morning, he meets Phoebe, who has already brought her case and insisted on joining his scheme on moving West. As the time quickly passes Holden agrees to go home with Phoebe, and the novel ends with the scenery of Holden stands watching Phoebe on the roundabout, drenched in the rain, happy at last as he feels needed and loved.



## CHAPTER SUMMARIES

### CHAPTER 1

Chapter one begins with the direct conversational style of the narrator which has great influence on the reader. Holden Caulfield speaks as if he knows us throughout the novel and the reader seems to take an active part in Holden's life. The reader, is easily impressed and feels sympathy for Holden and his attitudes.

His idioms and tone reflects a teenage American boy of the fifties, who is rather influenced with the typical American teenagers' attitude such as being not very familiar in idioms, used to the colloquial language and slang within. The novel actually has been praised for its quality. Holden uses an immediate and vivid style with the coarseness of epithets,

*"if you really want to hear about it, the first thing you will probably want to know is where I was born, and what my lousy childhood was like, and how my parents were occupied and all before they had me, and all that David Copperfield kind of crap, but I do not feel like going into it, if you want to know truth. In the first place, that stuff bores me, and in the second place, my parents would have about two haemorrhages a piece if I told anything pretty personal about them."*<sup>3</sup>

Holden's sentences are gathered very loosely and sometimes he immediately changes or passes into another subject. Thus Salinger's novel becomes more reliable as it carries a conversational speech style that completely reflects the reality and real situations in life. The same future can be seen in Holden's expressions which are strung together with reality. Another point comes out in his expression is his addition of "and all" as if he is not really sure how to end a sentence, it might be recognised as the sign of insecurity.

Unlike the others Holden's view on several subjects are surprisingly different and he seems to be isolated from the social problems. He is not impressed by any character. Building, he is rather independent in each aspect of life and Holden is a loner who reflects the helping hand of anyone and leads a life without depending on my personal view except his views. Holden,

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<sup>3</sup> "The Catcher in the Rye" page, 1

from the first chapter, draws a character who would easily overcome the difficulties by himself and he pretends to be extremely self-assured. The first impression that we receive is, unlike the other boys, he is not interested in the football game: that might be accepted as his alienation from the other students. By ostracising himself from the pupils in the fencing team, he takes the role of an outsider in society. We are also told that he has been dismissed from the other schools but he has no guilt complex and he has no dread for the future. What he simply explains is nobody has the right to blame his locking, even he, himself. It is the lack of progress and he feels nothing can be done for this lacking point in his progress.

Holden, sometimes, feels that he has no control on events thus, he causally accepts those events which are out of his control, for instance, the theft of his expensive camel's hair coat and fur-lined gloves. Money has been lavished on him.

*"Anyway, it was December and all, and it was cold as a witch's teat, especially on top of that stupid hill. I only had on my reversible and no gloves or anything. The week of that somebody had stolen my camel's-hair coat right out of my room, with my fur-lined gloves right in the pocket and all".<sup>4</sup>*

Holden then mentions his disturbance of the existence of crooks.

*"Pencey was full of crooks. Quite a few guys came from these wealthy families, but it was full of crooks anyway. The more expensive a school is, the more crooks it has I am not kidding".<sup>5</sup>*

In the first chapter, Holden is being rather emotional before he is leaving Pencey Prep and he does not want to leave Pencey without the feeling of farewell. He mentions this while he is pointing out the reason "standing way upon Thomson Hill"

*"What I was really hanging around for , I was trying to feel some kind of good-by. I mean I've left schools and places I didn't even know I was leaving them. I hate that. I*

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<sup>4</sup> "The Catcher in the Rye", page, 3

<sup>5</sup> "The Catcher in the Rye", page, 3



*don't care if it's a sad good-by or a bad good-by, but when I leave a place I like to know I'm leaving it. If you don't, you feel even worse."*<sup>6</sup>

At this point, Holden does not want to be seen extremely sensitive towards his past and its experiences but he fails at doing so because he, at least, has the feeling of "farewell" and he also seems to be accounting the past with this farewell. Holden then, turns his way to Mr. Spencer's house as he recalls the memories with his friends in Pencey.

Finally the chapter ends with his arrival to Mr. Spencer's house where he firstly meets Mrs. Spencer and implies the cold weather which even makes him eager for the door to open.

*"I was really frozen. My ears were hurting and I could hardly move my fingers at all. C'mon, C'mon; I said right out loud, almost "somebody open the door".*<sup>7</sup>

## CHAPTER 2

This chapter begins with little details about Mrs. Spencer and their house. Then, it turns out to be a speech of Mrs. Spencer, recommending Holden how to lead his life, his speech is full of clichés which might be received at youthfulness period by any teenager. Holden, as this long recommendation begins, gets frequently embarrassed and seeks for more vital images in his mind. The reader also receives Holden's use of asides.

Throughout the chapter the reader is not unable to analyse Holden's dreadful indifference. He almost exaggerates everything from the beginning of the chapter:

*"They were both around seventy years old, or even more than that.....If you thought about him too much, you wondered what the heck he was still living for I mean he was all stooped over, and he had very terrible posture, and in class, when he dropped*

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<sup>6</sup> "The Catcher in the Rye" Page, 4

<sup>7</sup> "The Catcher in the Rye" Page, 5



*a piece of chalk at the blackboard, some guy in the first row had to get pick it up and hand it to him.*"<sup>8</sup>

So, this description implies incredible exaggerations, i.e., it is unbelievable that Mr. Spencer would really be over seventy and physically unable to pick up chalk from the floor. On the contrary and, Mr. Spencer is very fond of Holden's future as he tries to constitute the basic fragment's of life into Holden's motto. However this struggle of Mr. Spencer irritates Holden. In fact, Mr. Spencer is not only anxious for Holden because he shares the some interest for any student who would be in the some position as Holden; we realise that Holden's mention of "some other guys."<sup>9</sup> Holden, all of a sudden recognises the pleasure in Spencer's choice by recalling one of his memories with them. Holden has got this judgement just as the beat-up Navajo blanket<sup>10</sup> comes to his mind, Spencer's bought this Indian beat-up Navajo blanket in Yellowstone Park"<sup>11</sup> where Holden was completely astonished to see them buying this blanket. Holden, in his visit receives a fine and hospitable behaviour, although Mrs. Spencer does not treat him like a quest but. Holden, on the other hand, feels like he made huge mistake in paying a visit to Mr. Spencer. Although we are aware of Holden's respect towards Mr. Spencer, Holden reflects him as an antagonised figure of his dreadful life because Mr. Spencer is the recommending figure who calls Holden back to reality where as Holden begins to carp at his struggle and does not like this father-like figure. When Mr. Spencer stars his speech Holden feels sort of humiliated and he, even imagines leaving Mr. Spencer's house without saying goodbye or anything.

Throughout the chapter Holden is honest and he directly tells the truth. However, it is certain that Holden is also depressed with the illness of his teacher, the smells of medicine and the depressing appearance of the sick bore Holden. He then, notices Mr. Spencer's picking his nose and comments on his inability to throw papers on to the bed. Holden persistently rejects to listen Mr. Spencer, he shuts his mind to what Mr. Spencer is trying to say he thinks of the hardness of the bed.

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<sup>8</sup> "The Catcher in the Rye" Page, 6

<sup>9</sup> "The Catcher in the Rye" Page, 6

<sup>10</sup> The Navajos are a North American Indian tribe.

<sup>11</sup> A Huge wild-life park in North West Wyoming, containing volcanic scenery and geysers.

Holden seems to be learnt nothing about the Egyptians and take no interest in all the lessons. All the knowledge that he has, is composed with the mummification process. It is clear that Holden is being rather immature in writing the childish and absurd note at the end of his examination essay. In a way it might be recognised as a dirty trick which indicates that Holden does not mind failing the history examination. The reader might come to a conclusion with this recognition and it is that Holden has no responsibility of work although he is a thoughtful person.

Basically, this chapter contains several themes which later will be related to the following chapters in the book. The first theme is his childish fancy Just as he imagines the presence of a kindly man taking the ducks away to safety and warmth. This childish escape later on, brings him into conflict with several people.

“Phonies” is the second theme that will be shaped in the next chapters. What actually disturbs Holden is existence of hypocrisy, for Holden, it is one of the greatest sins. This becomes more apparent as Holden comments on his previous headmaster, i.e., Mr. Hoas, he is an example of phoniness, Holden in his mind, reacts against the insincere attitude of Mr. Hoas towards wealthier parents.

His knowledge of mummification in the examination paper is also related to one of his childhood interests, it is unoccupied that he has this knowledge from his visits to the museum in Central Park that has a section especially settled for mummies. This will be appeared in the book with a difference of emphasis.

### CHAPTER 3

The opening sentence determines the mood of this chapter.

*“I am the most terrific Liar you ever saw in your life”.<sup>12</sup>*

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<sup>12</sup>“The Catcher in the Rye” Page, 14



It seems to be one of self-conscious bravado. Holden distinguishes phonies from lying. For Holden lying is a sort of freedom and protection. In a way, Holden maintains his independence of authority. It again signifies the immaturity of Holden. He even finds, Edgar Marsalla's crude behaviour in chapel, amusing. His thoughtlessly cynical style, gradedly brought into his chapter as he is pointing to the fact that there is money to be made from death. Holden suggest that Ossenburger might have a religious faith, Holden then exaggerates the length of Ossenburger's speech. While Holden exaggerates Ossenburger's speech, he uses slang and a great deal of schoolboys' clichéd language.

The only place where Holden can find privacy and comfort is the study-bedroom he shares with an elder boy, Ward Stradlater. It is unbelievable to visualise Holden reading Thomas Hardy as he refers the several times to his illiteracy thus it becomes more clear that Holden not only reads but thinks and forms his opinions on books. Holden is being immature and his thoughts are not well-formed. He also adds he prefers to read books that the narrators are like somebody speaking to him on the telephone. In a way this indicates the basis of "*The Catcher in the Rye*" because Holden is like a friend of the reader.

In the chapter 3, Robert Ackley is firstly introduced to the reader. He is eighteen years old and two years older than Holden. Holden does not like him physically, he even disgusts because Ackley does not brush his teeth, and he has pimples. In fact, Ackley has unpleasant mannerism such as touching other people's possessions and cleaning and cutting his fingernails in Holden's room. On the other hand Holden's behaviour towards Ackley is add and remarkable just as he does not look up when Ackley unwillingly. Holden humiliates Ackley several times and teases him and does not tell the name of book he reads whereas Ackley is rather curious about it and finally Holden annoys him by pretending he is blind. Holden's intention in imitative "*horsing around*"<sup>13</sup> is the most nearest practical that comes to his mind "Just to keep from getting bored".<sup>14</sup> We realise that Holden takes life seriously when Ackley laughs at him as the tennis racquet falls on Holden's head, he is particularly sour because of Ackley's attitude.

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<sup>13</sup> "*The Catcher in the Rye*" Page, 18

<sup>14</sup> "*The Catcher in the Rye*" Page, 18



This part of the chapter achieves Holden's immature behaviour. The conversation between Ackley and Holden is characterised by its dullness which completely reflects Holden's apathetic attitude to the school and life.

Towards the end of this chapter Ackley and Holden discuss Holden's roommate Stradlater. The reader is aware of Ackley's Jealousy of Stradlater. Holden expresses Stradlater's generosity and stresses that he and Stradlater both agree Ackley's lack of personal hygiene. Ackley seems to be interested in Stradlater's social life, the reason might be relevant to Ackley's life as he has no social life.

The reader then, is able to draw Stradlater's appearance which is characterised by his speed and decision. Because Stradlater speaks briefly and to the point. His sentences are short and rapid to match his movements. Compared to Ackley and Holden, Stradlater is the opposite figure of them. His energy even fills the room as he enters the room.

#### CHAPTER 4

This chapter brings to the rather a lively visions which is decorated by Stradlater's energy and his friendship with Holden that has an important effect on Holden. At the beginning of this chapter, Holden watches Stradlater physically better than his physical appearance, so it is obscene that Holden is little Jealous of Stradlater. And real attractiveness. Stradlater always looks quite attractive and neat which Holden feels is no fair.

Stradlater is an easy going person who is used to getting his own way and considerably stands on the bizarre behaviour of his roommate with a great patience. Stradlater's patience can be seen in letting or being agreeable to see Jane, his date. Compared to his roommate Holden's immaturity is obvious. Holden is aware of Stradlater's adult forbearance. On the contrary Holden is aware of Stradlater's physical inferiority. The reader has been informed that Holden is much slighter and less physically fit compared to Stradlater.

An ironical view takes place in Holden's expulsion, he is asked to write an essay and Holden seems to be agonised with the bitter of writing. He is even not able to realise that Stradlater is

humouring him as he wants to persuade him to realise that Stradlater is humouring him as he wants to persuade him into writing the essay.

The reader, in this chapter has the opportunity to analyse Holden's lack of self-confidence, another statement may also include his lack of manhood as well. He has a sense of academic failure compared to Stradlater, and the mention of Jane Gallagher's name reminds him of the strong feelings he had for her, and these feelings even discourages him to go downstairs and say hello to Jane Gallagher.

Holden feels rather bored and alone. He often thinks of Jane and himself and the year when they were together. As she is together with the adult and experienced Stradlater, Holden carries his mood into an anxious position. Holden's mind preoccupied with the memories of Jane Gallagher, who is an innocent figure throughout the book.

## CHAPTER 5

This chapter bears the typical restless behaviour of adolescents: Holden and his friend. On Saturday night they do not eat much at their evening meal, they are quite able to eat a couple of hamburgers, and they are all young enough to enjoy playing around in the snow. Holden, in fact, enjoys the childishness of a snowball fight, and wonders around with a snowball until the bus driver makes him throw it away.

The reader might analyse that Holden is generous in spirit as well as with his possessions; he lends his jacket to Stradlater and his typewrite to a boy down the hall, and invites Ackley to go to town with him and Brossard because he knows what loneliness is like.

On their return, Ackley insistently tells his sexual fantasies to Holden and Holden actually is aware of Ackley's virginity. Holden wants to get on with writing the essay for Stradlater. This trial brings him the past and a source of comfort to Holden as he allows himself to dwell on a subject which he usually keeps deeply hidden, his dead young brother, Allie.

At this point, the reader begins to feel sympathy for Holden, because of his honest and his attempts to make sense of the world he lives in, we are told of the single most important event

in his life which shaped a great deal of his personality. Holden's brother Allie had died of Leukaemia three years ago. It is mentioned with a doubtful casualness and half-buried under a morass of apology. The reader directly falls into a sympathy and warmth as he mentions Allie's baseball mitt and Allie's bits of poetry on this mitt. This baseball mitt will be related in the following chapter, p. 36.



## CHAPTER 6

This chapter follows the development of Holden's neurotic fears about Jane Gallagher and illustrates his growing lack of communication with these around him. All evening, Holden thinks of Stradlater's date and this long anxiety allows his fears to grow out of proportion. Jane Gallagher seems to become a symbol of youthful innocence, envisaged as a small girl caught in the clutches of a sex-friend. Holden simply rejects to realise that Jane is now older, a free agent, and that Stradlater is a quite pleasant young man.

Holden, in this respect, seems to be reflecting his own fears about growing up, these fears fill his mind. When Stradlater returns, Holden assumes a cold attitude, his sentences are curt. Holden is hostile and waits for Stradlater to mention Jane. Just as Stradlater rejects his essay, Holden tears it up. Holden is obsessed with a nightmarish fantasy that he can not put a name to and eventually he concentrates all his obsessive worries on the sexual act itself. His voice is shaking when he asks Stradlater about Jane.

On the other hand, Stradlater is unaware of Holden's tension and this shows the lack of communication between them. Stradlater is playful and Jovial in response to Holden's questioning. Holden quietly loses control; all his neuroses culminate in desire to hurt Stradlater. This emotional minute would be an anticlimax. Holden's impotent fury makes him goad Stradlater with words when force is useless and the inevitable results is punitive although Stradlater forces himself in order not to lose his good-nature.

Holden becomes more conscious of his own childishness and his lack of control as well, though he does not stop himself from behaving badly. He is aware of that he is trying to provoke Stradlater right from the start, when he is saying outrageous things, but he enjoys this sensation of losing all his inhibitions.

On the contrary, Stradlater is rather confused as he does not understand that what made Holden to behave like this. Stradlater extremely tolerates this strange behaviour of Holden. Stradlater is slightly aware of his young room-mate is being hysterical. He treats Holden as an over-excited child, holding Holden's wrists, telling him to be quite, warning him several times to stop. Once the fight is over, Holden continues to behave like a child - he refuses to get up

off the floor and the result characterises itself by leaving Holden with his bloodied face in the mirror. Holden is in search of more attention and he directly goes to Ackley, in this position Holden is extremely miserable but this behaviour of Holden is actually refers to the recognition in all human beings.

## CHAPTER 7

Salinger reflects the sensation of a room in darkness with the use of few examples. Holden firstly slips on a shoe, he cannot find the light switch, and the ghostly appearance of Ackley's spot cream is well noted.

Although Holden is in Ackley's room for some companionship and attention, he does not really want to communicate with Ackley. He is rather confused with his feelings. In a way he imitates Ackley's behaviour as he treats him badly. He does not tell Ackley the reason of the fight and he seems careless to Ackley's well-intentioned about staunching the bleeding. Holden seems to be enjoying the sensation of being tough, and playing down the fight. When Ackley loses interest Holden is deprived of his audience and is ironically rude.

Holden is disturbed with the idea of Stradlater's sexuality and Jane as the victim of his lust. Holden, then remembers and of his memories with Stradlater, Stradlater's, and seductive technique on an occasion when they double-dated in the car that Stradlater used that night. Holden's agitation is absolutely real; his feelings of despair are overwhelming; but it must be observed that there is no basis for such a strongly emotional response. Jane Gallagher was never more than a friend to Holden. She is now two years older and may welcome Stradlater's advances.

In fact, Holden is apparently upset about something that is in his behaviour and life; the development of his own sexual impulses, which he can not control and that is why he wishes to mask, and the loss of boyhood innocence which is associated with his dead brother Allie and childhood. He breeds hatred and fear on to Stradlater because he sees in the eighteen-year-old the man he will soon become, and also the embodiment of the sexual appetite which he fears and relishes at the same time. He even wonders, briefly, about becoming a monk.



He decides to leave Pencey as soon as he can, in the view of his conflicting feelings. He is lonely, friendless, an academic failure. His nature impulsive. He does not tell his plans to anyone.

It should be apparent that Holden has no need to worry about possessions or money, e.g. although he has his Camel's hair jacket stolen, he lends a reversible coat and a jacket to rich Stradlater. He wears sheepskin slippers. Therefore this shows his economical satisfaction.

Even his departure from Pencey was on an anticlimax; a study in futility. He is already worried with the thought of his mother's disappointment, after shouting his defiant farewell to wake up all the boys, he slipped and fell on the stairs.

## CHAPTER 8

This chapter opens with Holden's experience on the feeling of inertia and depression as an aftermath of his earlier hysterical outburst. He waits for the train just about midnight and time has no meaning for him. He again reminds the reader the theft of his coat, and also his physical state. His face bruised and covered in blood which he had half-heartedly wiped off with a handful of snow. He is too depressed to enjoy the ride or read a magazine. The writing is subdued to reflect Holden's state of mind.

He, then, enjoys the company of women, and finds attraction in details that others might find annoying; for instance, his comment that women often leave their luggage in the aisle where others can trip over it. He seizes on the arrival of Ernest Morrow's mother as a diversion from the lassitude of his own mind. He finds her attractive and enjoys a mild flirtation with her, indulging his imaginations and letting his invention run riot. He has already mentioned his desire to tell lies, and begins by giving her a false name; that of the janitor. This is a magnificent and astonishing idea which is quite audacious in its simplicity. It will immediately be obvious to her son, or any of the boys, who it was speaking to inspired by this, the rest of their conversation builds up to heights of burlesque effrontery. He answers her questions about Pencey enigmatically, and tells her a series of lies, those improve her son's

popularity and sensitive at school, and the negative emotion turn out to be a positive imaginative entity.

Throughout the conversation, Morrow's mother treats Holden as an adult; even when Holden offers her cigarettes in a non-smoker compartment and drinks although he is apparently underage, on the contrary Morrow's mother remonstrates gently. Holden thinks that she probably has some doubts about her son's behaviour, and actually he regrets deceiving her.

Holden does not tell the truth about anything. This immature behaviour but it represents a desire to improve upon reality. He tells the things which would be pleasing for any mother.

## CHAPTER 9

It is again typical of Holden's confused state of mind that he both wishes for company and also to be alone. He directly deals with his thoughts on each person separately and never pauses to consider that in many ways he is simply finding excuses for his inaction. At this point, his yearning for attention and his need for solitude are equally balanced.

Several people are mentioned in the order in which Holden leaves them. His writer brother D.B. who was mentioned at the beginning of the book is loosely followed by his sister Phoebe. Then comes Jane Gallagher, whose symbolic importance is now high in Holden's thoughts, and Sally Hayes, whose photograph was on his chiffonier at Pencey. Lastly the name Carl Luce is mentioned, but instantly rejected.

It is rather amazing to observe Holden's determination to communicate being quashed by the monosyllabic taxi-driver. He peruses the conversation and even invites the driver for a drink on the way, but he is rebuffed. Holden fails at imitating the clichés that he imagines taxi drivers might use. On the other hand, he imagines that he appears extremely sophisticated and also asks the driver the name of the musicians playing at various hotels. Holden worthy of his notice whereas that does not occur to Holden.

Holden gets attracted with the glimpse of other people's lives as he watches them from the hotel window and all that makes him to think about sex. He acknowledges that he does not



understand it, and yet it fascinates him. Although he immediately thinks of Jane Gallagher, he finally finds a reason for not contacting her and it is absolute that he is ashamed of his own emotions which are completely out of control. Then he decides to phone a woman whom he thinks she is a prostitute.

The phone call to Faith Cavendish is another disappointment with the rejection of her. Faith does not have the mood to play Holden's childish games. But she is respectful to realise Holden's youth and she does not seem overinterested in meeting him. The phone call leaves Holden with a feeling of being more isolated.

## CHAPTER 10

In this chapter, Holden is evidently very attached to his sister Phoebe although she is younger than him, and Holden gives a remarkably detailed picture of her. He admires Phoebe in all aspects. The colour of her hair reminds him of Allie's hair colour. His mind is again back to the past, as he thinks of the Sunday's in the park when he, Allie and Phoebe used to sail Allie's boat. However this time memories do not arouse a storm of emotion. Holden has found in the prospect of action a cure for his depression.

His memories of Phoebe and the mention of her misspelling the name of her heroine are endearing because they are so true to life.

In the Lavender room it is obvious that Holden regards himself as being much more adult than his years. He is so sure of himself that he is not in the least perturbed by other, and he generous and gentlemanly to a fault; he has higher standards than the three women he entertains; he judging them and noticing what they say and do all the time he is with them, he finds Marty's key references to "the little girls' room very boring, and disagrees with her enthusiasm for the clarinet player, whom he considers ordinary.

Although Holden imagines that he is suave and adult, the waiter refuses to sell him alcohol and the three women at the adjoining table find it very amusing that he is trying to flirt with them. He does not let their behaviour upset him; he sees them as stupid and ignorant





## CHAPTER 11

Holden reminisces about Jane, and the reader is allowed to know why she is held up as an ideal. The contrast of past happiness balances present misery.

Holden is calmer and admits that it is unlikely that Stradlater actually had intercourse with Jane that evening away from the depressing atmosphere with the fantasies which are receded and replaced by pleasant moments of the summer that he and Jane had spent two years before.

Again, it is the details that conjure up the atmosphere of that summer. The most memorable one is mentioned to Stradlater in chapter 4 and 6: that she kept her kings in the back row. We learn little of Jane herself. All that we know of her is presented to us through the filter of Holden's recollections. Their relationship was not physical as Holden does not mention about Jane's physical appearance because Holden loves her.

The charm of this reverie is intensified by contrast with the deserted hotel lobby and the revolting chair. Holden is now ready to face the world.

## CHAPTER 12

This chapter falls into complementary halves; taxi ride and Ernie's night club.

At the beginning of the chapter, reassured by his memories of Jane, Holden longs for the peace of home and the company of Phoebe. But fear of his parents is still too strong to allow him to return. Holden's next encounter is with cab driver and it is obvious that Holden has a complete failure to communicate with Harwitz, i.e., the cab driver who is unprepared for the subject-matter and it takes him sometime to adjust mentally. He seems to be listening only the half of what Holden says. He also misunderstands Holden's question, and there is an apparent lack of communication.

This situation represents a confrontation with the less rarefied, seamier side of life for Holden, who is used to expensive seclusion of school and home. Holden finds himself regretting for asking the cab driver such a question as the taxi driver becomes personal and nasty.

This confrontation has its foundation firmly in black comedy.<sup>15</sup> Set in a taxi in the middle of the night, the concept of Holden and Harwitz trying but failing to communicate on such an extra-ordinary subject is study in character analysis. The two of them are entrenched in their own worlds with their own preconceptions. For Holden this represents another link in the chain of people he cannot relate to.

Once Holden enters the night club he is in another part of society; surrounded by those to whom he regards as Phoney. There is nothing he likes about the night club, a fact he admits with honesty. He is caustic about the respectful attention that Ernie's piano playing evokes from the crowd of fans. He views the entire entertainment in terms of too simplistic and rigid to appreciate the Ernie's respectful, humble denotes his acceptance of the applause, with no reference to his self-esteem. Later on, Holden resents the ease with which he manages to be served with alcohol; it is clear at this point that nothing is going to please him.

Judging by his behaviour all evening, his loneliness and searching for company, particularly female company, it is surprising that Holden does not value the chance encounter with Lillian. Holden feels he must leave and, though he was far from enjoying the evening at Ernie's feels a sullen annoyance that they have spoiled his fun.

## CHAPTER 13

This chapter further illustrates the gap between reality and Holden's fantasies. He thinks about the theft of his gloves at Pencey and fantasises situations in which he shows cowardice and he then realises that he assumes to mask his inferiority when he faces with more resolute people. He is afraid to go into the bar after meeting a couple of men who inhibit him. He does not have the strength of character to resist the pimp in the lift and simply say no to his suggestion of prostitute.

The episode with the prostitute is one of the most memorable on the book. It demonstrates Holden's extreme youth, his inability to match performance with fantasy and he is genuine

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<sup>15</sup> Black Comedy, the term is a translation of "comédie noire" which we owe to Jane Anouilh (1910-88). It begins in an "absurd" predicament. At its darkest such comedy is pervaded by a kind of sour despair: we can not do anything so we may as well laugh. The wit is mordant and the humour sardonic.



similarity in spite of some rather annoying characteristics. Structural the book has been leading up to this point from the start with its mentions of sexual adventure, its comparison of 'Holden's experience. We are prepared to share Holden's first sexual encounter following. The indications earlier in the book.

We have been reminded continually that his emotional development is consistent. Holden immediately regrets having agreed to have a prostitute at all. But he is too weak to lose face by declining at this stage. Before the prostitute arrives, he explains away his virginity in a confused way.

Holden has no experience to match her professionalism and he has now entangled himself in the adult world to such an extent that he must inevitably lose face in order to extricate himself. He is searching for love; she is selling sex.

Holden has gained from that depressing scene the courage to stand up to her, and he does so twice although he finds her quite formidable. He is not so cowardly as he supposes.

## CHAPTER 14

Holden, as he lacks formal religious belief, has Allie to call upon in moments of deep need. Thought of Allie, which though sad are reassuring remind him of Childhood. Then he thinks, naturally enough in such a context, of religion.

The further humiliation Holden has to undergo from the unpleasant pair, the prostitute and her pimp, shows that he has evoked forces he cannot control in this hostile adult world. This pimp enjoys abusing Holden physically. Although they have a deal for only five dollars; Sunny is taking another five out of his wallet is theft despite her denial. It is noticeable that Holden can not admit his failure of manhood to Maurice.

Although he does not fight back; in spite of his pain he continues to abuse Maurice verbally until. He is knocked flat on the floor. This is a repetition of the conclusion of his earlier fight with Stradlater; which he is quick to appreciate.

This time, his reaction is a flight into fantasy. There is no Ackley to appreciate his "toughness", he imagines a violent alternative ending to the fight, and festoons it with the image of Jane Gallagher. This is a merciful release. His imagination is his escape and his healing. Reality at this point is too hurtful to bear. In spite of his hatred of the movies, they serve a useful purpose.

## CHAPTER 15

In this chapter Holden makes arrangements to meet Sally. He refers Casually to necking her, as though to prove himself that he is indeed knowledgeable about sex. Although he despises Sally, and considers her pretentious and stupid, he needs company. Holden finds Sally attractive. Sally is evidently easy to deal with that to look forward to, Holden is ready to leave the hotel.

Not surprisingly, he intends to avoid meeting Maurice but he still uses the elevator instead of being tempted to go down the stairs. Represents a modest advance in bravery, he still can not face returning home to his parents. Resourcefully, he puts his cases into left luggage at Grand Central Station until he can make a decision.

Several themes are discussed here; Holden's attitude to money is examined as he now notices that he has little of it left. His lack of a feeling of personal responsibility also comes through strongly in his remark that he knows his mother will be distressed to hear of his expulsion. He insists on making quite a large donation to the nuns. At the end of the chapter he remarks that money makes him sad.

Holden next explores the nature of friendship. He explains it in terms of symbols he can understand. He implies that people of the same social standing find it easier to get along.

The last theme in this chapter concerns religion: Holden can not come to terms with religion, it is partly because of his dead brother, yet he is aware that it is a strong force that fascinates him. He enjoys talking to the two nuns, as they are straight forward and honest. They are people who are certainly not phoney. He wonders how nuns approach some of those topics and personalities in literature, particularly of course, the love scenes. He concentrates on his own



highly idiosyncratic view of "Romeo and Juliet". He is then correct when he surmises that the nuns wish to stop discussing the play. It is evident he has little value to say.

## CHAPTER 16

This chapter further conveys the difference between the world adults, which Holden does not wish to enter -because of what he perceives as its phoniness and the world of childhood, from which he is now excluded because of his age. The two worlds are explored and contrasted, using the various characters Holden meets as representatives.

Holden tries to define what it is that he appreciates so much about the nuns, and comes to the conclusion that he likes their complete disregard of themselves and appearance. The child that he is watching, totally absorbed in this own world, humming "*Coming through the Rye*" as he walks his straight line in the gutter, is for Holden a reminder of innocence. Holden now has a great need to be with Phoebe, his own gateway into childhood. He is delighted to be able to buy her record he knows will please her.

Holden does not like what he has seen of the adult world. He is depressed by the cinema queues; movies are not a substitute for life.

When he buys theatre tickets he muses on the hypocrisy of acting, and finds the same fault that he found with Ernie, the piano-player. We also notice that he is becoming more adult-he is beginning to realise that he is getting short of money, and thinks of taking subways instead of taxis.

He is now regarded as an outsider by the children in the park; they are polite but dismissive to him. The children on the seesaw do not want him to join in their game. This does not depress him, for he has no desire to be a child again; he wants to carry clear childhood vision into adult life.

He realises that he is an adult when he finds he has no desire to re-enter the Natural History Museum. The static quality of the museum contrasts with the hanging nature of life.

## CHAPTER 17

This chapter considers the relationship between men and women. It also continues the subject of phonies. He has little time for his own sex. He finds male conversation and habits uncongenial, though he does acknowledge that perhaps there is more to some people than might appear on the surface.

His reaction to Sally's arrival is compound of admiration for her attractive appearance and dislike verging on contempt for her loud voice and her qushing mannerism. They are quite incompatible, but this is hard for Holden to accept. They have moments of physical pleasure.

Holden does not greatly enjoy the play; he is not satisfied with acting that is true to life. His writing over the phoniness of the movie actor in the Foyer and his dislike of the acquaintance Sally meets there is more understandable. There is certain amount of justification for Holden's attitude: Sally and George are theatrically exaggerating their reactions.

At Sally's suggestion that they go ice-skating, although he takes a perverse delight in noting how badly they both skate.

Sally represents all that Holden dislikes in social life. She enjoys the theatre, friends, decorating the Christmas tree and is thoroughly conventional about graduation and marriage. He mentions some of his unpleasant experiences during the past hours too, but Sally does not understand. To her, he seems incoherent. Holden talks wildly about running away, leading on idyllic life in the backwoods with Sally, staying in log cabins and being self-sufficient. Escape is Holden's instinctive reaction to problems he can not solve.

Holden is now caught in the middle of seesaw himself, between the childhood which he has turned from, and the adulthood which he despises, but towards which he is inexorably



travelling. But Sally's pedestrian, prosy response to his invitation to join his private, idyllic world is understandably sufficient to bring all his barely concealed dislike of her to the fore, and he behaves for the only time in the book in a less than polite way. He swears at her.

## CHAPTER 18

The author here views Holden and some of his ideas with an ironic eye. Holden ponders on the amazing differences between his assessments of people –which he is sure are always right- and those of girls who, in his opinion, cannot tell conceit from inferiority complex.

Jane Gallagher is to remain a memory, an unattainable dream throughout the book. Holden considers phoning immediately on his arrival in New York. Holden does not find inconsistent his wanting to spend an evening with someone he has twice said he does not like; but Carl is surprised at the call. Holden considers Carl, who is three years his senior, an intellectual.

Notice also that another character is prepared for here. Mr. Antolini is mentioned for the first time, being one of the few names in Holden's address book, the introduction of the character later on.

Another discussion on phonies and the movies is introduced at this stage. It provides an opportunity for a good deal of adverse criticism. The film was proceed by a cabaret, very much in the style of the fifties. He is depressed by thoughts of how much practising the roller skater has had to do, and cynical about the Christmas set piece. He cannot relax and enjoy the entertainment because he is so concerned about its "phoniness"

He is far from being a "sacrilegious atheist". Actually, he takes religion very seriously; defending it from mawkish sentimentality. He identifies Jesus' opinions with his own and not Sally Hayes' views.

The chapter ends with a digression on the army. Holden's opinions are based on various comments and observations made by DB., who although in the army during the Second World

War, never experienced actual combat. DB. disliked the army, but not with the intensity of hatred felt by Holden who even thinks it is Phoney of D.B. to admire "A Farewell to Arms"<sup>16</sup> Holden ends the chapter emotionally, he would rather die, he says, than fight. This thinking was quite unfashionable when the book was written, predating the refusal of many young Americans to fight in the Vietnam war.

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<sup>16</sup> "A Farewell to Arms" novel written by Ernest Hemingway



## CHAPTER 19

This chapter deals with the meeting between Holden and Luce, and Holden's receiving yet another rejection. The French cabaret singers are falsely cute, their songs are suggestive and sleazy, the barman is a snob and the clientele are phoney. Holden also describes them as "filthy", which implies homosexuality.

Although Luce has been described earlier to us as intelligent and intellectual, what absorbs Holden as he waits for their reunion is the role of sexual mentor that Luce has played to ignorant, gullible schoolboys in the past.

Luce is self-assured, Holden appears a gauche schoolboy by comparison. The questions he asks Luce, all associated with sex, are immature. But he does not deserve the patronising comments Luce makes. He remarks bitterly that Luce will not discuss serious matters with him. Holden's final plea for company is marked and unkind. It is noticeable that Holden does not remark on Luce's phoniness although to the reader that is his most striking quality.

The chapter finishes with a pointer to the end of the book, Luce advises Holden to visit a psychiatrist. This gives us an external confirmation of Holden's predicament. Luce has had some psychiatric help himself.

The meeting with Luce has been failure. Their lack of communication confirms Holden's sense of isolation.

## CHAPTER 20

Holden has now been rejected by everyone he has met. At the beginning of this chapter he works through his repertoire of reactions to difficult situations.

He makes eyes at the cabaret singer-just as he did at the three women in the Lavender Room. He sends an innovation to the singer to come and join him in a drink, just as he did at Ernie's. He drinks, even more heavily than he did at Ernie's. wants to telephone Jane Gallagher, but can not bring himself to, just as when he first arrived at Penn Station, and again

after the fight with Maurice. He telephones Sally Hayes instead, which is what he did after the fight with Maurice.

Holden is isolated, though Sally is remarkably pleasant to him after the way in which they had parted. The pianist whom he meets in the toilets, and the hatcheck girl, are both sympathetic but also aloof. Holden's physical state reflects his mental one. He is isolated, lonely and aimless. He feels unwanted, too, and tells the pianist he has no home. He is crying from depression. By the time he breaks the record he bought for Phoebe. He is weak, shivering, his wet hair freezing. The park is frightening; he feels he has nothing left. His mind turns morbidly to funeral, though his understanding of death is, like his understanding of love, still immature.

The image of Allie, lying alone in the cemetery in the rain while everyone else rushed for cover, illustrates clearly that Holden does not consider his brother dead at all, while he is showing his fear of death. As he throws away his remaining few coins, we realise that he has been getting rid of his worldly possessions, in preparation for abounding the life he finds so unfriendly.

The thought of his little sister Phoebe is the one force that can set him into motion. Once he has decided to go home, much of his paralysing depression lifts and he sees more clearly.

## CHAPTER 21

This chapter and the next two show Holden at home, in the one environment in which he feels secure. His return is not without problems. He compliments himself on his burglar-like technique. he has to approach his sister's room carefully, and search for her.

All the remarks he makes about her before he wakes her are approving and humorously relaxed. He admires her clothes and her neatness, he enjoys reading her notebooks are true to life, reflecting Phoebe's desire to adopt a more interesting middle name for herself. Phoebe is positive, energetic, enthusiastic and affectionate. She is delighted to see Holden. She is excited about her part in the school play and the film she has been to see that afternoon. In my ways she is similar to Holden himself. Like Holden, she is emotional in her reactions, though his methods of expression are more restrained. She is violent about he dislike of Curtis



Weintroub and unrepentant about spoiling his jacket. Holden assumes the adult, disapproving role for the first time in the book. Holden knows that his parents are not going to kill him, but is still child enough to fear their disapproval. Phoebe is so disgusted with him that she does not speak to him for a time.

In the conversation with his sister Holden reveals a facet of his personality that is most pleasing. He is no longer in conflict or competition. Holden is more aware of her than himself: his remark about her childish behaviour to Curtis Weintroub illuminates his attitude to Phoebe. He sees her as an equal, rather than as a child.

## CHAPTER 22

In this chapter Holden puts forward the central theme of the book, his concept of the "*The Catcher in the Rye*".

First however, his isolation is emphasised. He has a tangible punishment in the mind. He has been threatened with being sent to a military school it is obscene that his problems can not be solved by discipline, then Holden slightly realises that he has misjudged his parents.

Phoebe continues in the parental role when she finds out about Holden's notion of becoming a cowboy, she points out that he cannot even ride. Holden finds that she is the only person he can talk to who will listen to what he says.

He tries to express all the things that made Pencey so intolerable to him. What he does not realise is that it is life he is finding difficult, not only the school. He tells Phoebe about the cliques and pettiness of people, and the phoney way in which inferiors have to defer to their superiors.

As Phoebe says, Holden cannot think of very much that it is pleasant or desirable: his mind is totally concentrated upon the negative. His vision has narrowed so much that he is left with his memories of James Castle who committed suicide in desperation rather than give into social pressures.

The timeless quality of myth is drawn in the figure of "**The Catcher in the Rye**". Holden envisages himself as the protector of youth and innocence, guarding thoughtless children from falling over a cliff edge. Symbolically, Holden still has accurately portrayed himself as being part of childhood but not belonging to it. It is a strange image, but a vivid one.

The real world is there, but no longer so meaningful. Phoebe is prosaic and natural. Holden still has a last friend to turn to, one of his ex-teachers, Mr. Antolini.

## CHAPTER 23

Mr. Antolini was mentioned in chapter 18 as being one of the few people in Holden's address book. We are now given a little more information before Holden goes to his apartment in the next chapter. Holden was particularly impressed that Mr. Antolini picked up the body of James Castle. He also feels that he can speak freely to him, and says immediately that he has "flunked out of Pencey". Mr. Antolini invites Holden over, though it is very late and he had already gone to bed.

Holden seems to be subconsciously courting detection. He does not want to leave, and dances with Phoebe; he is relaxed and beginning to enjoy himself. He knows the maid is in the house and could have heard the music. When their parents return they see the light, and his mother smells the cigarette smoke. As Holden says at the end of the chapter, it would have been easy way out if he had been caught at that point. We are aware of his physical tiredness as well as his depression.

We catch our only glimpse of Holden's mother in this chapter. She is firm but kind to Phoebe; there is no discernible reason why Holden should hide from her.

Phoebe wittily lies without hesitation about the cigarette. She is generous; she offers Holden her Christmas shopping money. She does not want Holden to go away; her voice sounds strange when she says he will not see her in the play at school, because she has realised he fully intends to go to California.



For Holden, Pencey and home are places where he is established in a community, and had people to talk to. He left both places of his own free will, the ending rounds of the three chapters, with the reference to lift boy who was duped at the beginning of the episode.

## CHAPTER 24

The progress of Holden's illness is mentioned more frequently from now on to the end of the book. He feels dizzy when he got outside as he lacks food and sleep and the bitter cold is having a great effect on him and he takes a cab rather than walk the distance from his home to the Antolinis'. His tiredness is stressed several times, and he is finally overcome, yawns and has to sleep.

Mr. Antolini is friendly with Holden and his family for same time. We are told that he has been taking an interests in Holden when they are both at Elkton Hills school, is in touch with D.B. and dined with Mr. Caulfield only two weeks previously. He is witty, and uses some of the same over-dramatised speech forms as Holden himself. He often ironic. He is a clever man as well as a perspective one. He gives an excellent advice to Holden and realises that Holden is under stress and does not comprehend the full depth of his nervous exhaustion.

It is important that Mr. Antolini is seen to have a wife with whom he is on good terms, so that he encounters at the end of chapter remains ambiguous.

One of the subjects discussed in this chapter is literary style; digression in particular. Holden acknowledges that he likes digressions, and this is the style he adopts as he prefers on unstructured approach. The technique is definitely the "stream of consciousness"<sup>17</sup> that is used in "*The Catcher in the Rye*" and it is more complex than it appears. All of Holden's memories of people and place have had to be incorporated into the narrative, and this accounts for the occasional hesitancies and changes of subject within the chapter.

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<sup>17</sup> "the stream of consciousness", refers to that technique which seeks to depict the multitudinous thoughts and feelings which pass through the mind

The conversation between Holden and Mr. Antolini is approximately similar to the one with Mr. Spencer. They both try to communicate with Holden and advise him. In both cases Holden goes willingly to their homes, and meets their wives.

Mr. Antolini over-dramatises Holden's situation, but his intention is good. He makes the same mistake as Mr. Spencer, in trying to fit Holden into a social life mould that he has outgrown. Holden is not confused or sickened by human behaviour; he is worried by its phoniness. He is not interested in causes or material success. He wants peace.

The way which Holden reacts to Mr. Antolini's speech is the same behaviour as in Mr. Spencer's room. He makes remarks on how drunk Mr. Antolini is. He interrupts him to make minute corrections, like the exact name of Mr. Vinson. He agrees with what Mr. Antolini is saying as he did same thing to Mr. Spencer.

The importance of the incident in the night lies in the Holden's interpretation of Mr. Antolini's caressing his head rather than in Mr. Antolini's motives. The scene is left deliberately ambiguous. It is debatable that Mr. Antolini is half-drunkenly allowing submerged homosexuality to surface. He did not actually do anything apart from patting Holden's head; an innocent gesture in itself.

Throughout the book Holden's fear of any sexual activity has been constantly stressed. He is physically repelled by anything homosexual; he even does not like to talk about this, such is his distaste. It is not that surprising that he runs.

## CHAPTER 25

We are now made aware of Holden's illness as he reaches the crisis in his conflict. He feels feverish, his eyes hurt, he has a headache and sores in his mouth. He cannot eat, yet he wants to vomit. He has diarrhoea and faints in the toilet. He also has the sensation, noticed first when he crossed to Mr. Spencer's house. Now, however, the feeling is so intense that he has to call upon Allie for help. This behaviour of him is rather neurotic, and the diagnosis for this illness might be recognised as neurosis.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Neurosis (medical) mental illness that causes depression or abnormal behaviour, often with the physical symptoms but with no sign of disease, "a neurosis or psychosis almost invariably caused, as we now know, by sexual repression".



His physical state is a reflection of his mental confusion as he wonders whether he was right in running so hostile from Mr. Antolini's house or not. Holden is aware of the tawdriness of the Santa Clauses and the girls without makeup; and he notices the incongruity of the men swearing as they unload a Christmas tree. The children in the streets remind him of other happier Christmases with Phoebe. He plans a farewell to Phoebe.

He thinks of Sally Hayes for a while. He begins, appropriately, by writing a note to Phoebe asking her to meet him at the museum. The cabin will be place where no one is allowed to behave phenyl. This is the most important rule. It will be open to his family.

When, in search of Phoebe, Holden revisits the primary school. He notices the details that were the same when he used to go there. The stillness of a school in lesson time makes him feel even more isolated and lonely. He is outraged to see the graffiti on the wall, particularly because he has recently identified himself with *catcher in the rye*, protector of innocence. He suggests that in school of all places children should be free from taint. He tries to rub it out, but when he sees another absentee on a wall in the museum he begins to realise that one person is incapable of preventing corruption. He is also aware, in the tomb in the museum, where he had hoped to find peace, that no place is free from the taint of the vulgar; not even his own gravestone. He is therefore subconsciously aware that there is no escape from the world. The two little boys, who are evidently playing trout from school, amuse Holden for a while.

The arrival of the Phoebe with the suitcase sparks off the resolution of his inner conflict. When he realises her plan to accompany him, he knows he can no longer run away. He cannot take her with him and his back on her. Holden rejects her company and then Phoebe refuses to return to the school, and is more determined than Holden ever manages to be. This worries him because he knows he cannot control her when she is in this mood.

The final scene is very visual. Phoebe is in the roundabout while Holden watches her, getting soaked in the rain. But his mind is at rest. He has resolved to go home and returns the responsibility for his life to his parents. It is an idyll picture, because of the contentment that radiates from the two of them. He is almost crying with happiness. Holden has tried to direct

his life along more ambitious paths and failed. He is only sixteen. He needs a period of calm and predictability which is symbolised by the carousel.

## CHAPTER 26

This is a short note at the end of the book. The reader is made aware that Holden is now getting proper treatment, and that his stay in the rest home is only temporary. He is going back to school in the autumn. He makes no promises to do better than before in his studies, but there is a little hope. Holden does not hate anybody; he misses even the people who treated him unfairly such as Ackley, Stradlater. He does not indulge in recriminations but lives for the present.

This short chapter rounds the book off structurally and in time, by referring to Holden's present whereabouts, and the visit of D.B., which were briefly alluded to in chapter 1. But we are left with no conclusion. Life is not something that rounds itself off, or ties up the loose ends. We are given no further information about any of characters we have met. This gives the book the effect of truth. It is as though our conversation with Holden Caulfield is now at an end.



## THE CHARACTERS

### Holden Caulfield

A teenage idealist who becomes submerged in the seamy side of adult society and almost succumbs.

He is like all teenagers, a mixture of moods and attitudes, searching for secure values. He is trying to establish his own personality in a world of conflicting attitudes in which he feels there is no guidance. He is intelligently aware of choices available, but appears to have received no formal instruction on religious, moral or social values.

He is virtuous: it is his very goodness and openness that lead him into difficulties. He expects others to be like himself. He is sympathetic and thoughtful. He is interested in individuals, not the system. He feels sorry for Sunny, the prostitute. He appreciates the vulnerability of nuns and children, but finds himself alone in his high ideas, such as honesty (which he expressed as lack of phoniness) and consistency, are not achieved by the adult world he soon must join, and he becomes steadily more depressed.

Holden hates hypocrites or phoneys. But meets few people who are honest. To him everyone is involved, even his teachers, people in the night clubs, Sally Hayes who admires them and is one herself, he sees Hollywood the phoniest place of all. He likes to read books which are colloquial and speak to him with a digressive style. He even thinks of Jesus as a contemporary and considers what he would do in various circumstances. Allie, James Castle and Jane Gallagher are the few people who are not phoneys for Holden. War is the greatest phoniness of all.

Although Holden is innocent he is not naive. He refers to the value of his coat, his cases, his typewriter, even his pens. But, they do not interest him, for instance he does not worry about his coat but regrets the cold. He is as anti-materialistic as it is possible to be while living in society.

Sex fascinates and repels Holden at the same time; he longs to find out what is all about. He enjoys women's company and look forward to a full sexual life. Sunny's efforts to arouse him he considered dirty; Mr. Antolini's touch on his head causes flight. Sex, so prized by the adult world, he finds worthless. He admits that he does not know what is all about. Jane Gallagher fulfills his romantic, idealistic soul. His lack of experience in sex relation brings him a neurotic attitude, the reader might be suspectful of him being a neurosis.

Holden is aware of the importance of social standing he knows that he and Sally are more likely to get on because their families are so similar; he cannot share a room with someone who is insecure about status.

Society robs Holden of everything; of both his brothers and his parents' presence; Stradlater borrows all he has, his clothes, his mind and even his girl. Maurice cheats him. The tangible expression of his grief at Allie's death, the mitt, is spurned by the insensitive Stradlater. The vivid motif of this novel epitomises the only future Holden can see for himself. Phoebe is the only touch-stone left to him. The thought of her naturalness, her sanity restores Holden to confidence in life.

It is hardly surprising that Holden feels isolated. He is a loner. Everyone in whom he confides, rejects him. When he stands up for his rights he is knocked down. People do not listen to what he says. Harwitz talks about fish instead of ducks. Mr. Antolini misinterprets his reason for dropping out of school. The isolation reaches its height in the desolate scene by the lake. Holden is more at ease when the burden of efforts at communication have been removed from him.

He questions life constantly, trying to make sense of its contradictions. Allie's death made him react at first with uncharacteristic violence, then in images of rare imagination. The ducks, the hunting hat and the Catcher show a personality of strength and sensitivity. His disgust at the word on the wall and his eventual realisation that people, even his own sister, cannot be forever protected but must face the hazards of life, enable Holden to reach a precarious equilibrium.



Perhaps the most touching of Holden's characteristic is that although he comes perilously close to breaking, seeing himself isolated, friendless and autistic, he never shows bitterness. His essential goodness is not harmed. Human behaviour saddens but does not anger him. In many ways he exhibits the essence of Christianity which he struggles to express in his certainty that Jesus would never have hated anyone enough to send them to hell.

### **Mr. Spencer**

Mr. Spencer is an ageing teacher, although not as old or decrepit as Holden imagines, who is genuinely fond of his students. Holden likes him enough to apologise for his poor history paper. Mr. Spencer finds pleasure in small things, like buying the Navajo blanket. His strident voice and pedantic speech annoy Holden who does not like Mr. Spencer's habit of calling him "boy". He uses outmoded idioms, repeats himself, and laughs at his own jokes. He senses that he is not in total communication with Holden, but fails to understand why. In some ways Mr. Spencer is quite child-like; he picks his nose while Holden is watching; he talks of life being a game. In his attempt to bring home the seriousness of Holden's failure, he is unpleasantly sarcastic, detailing the number of schools that have expelled Holden and reading out his exam paper. Holden is interested in the individual and integrity at all costs; that is why they cannot communicate.

### **Robert Ackley**

Ackley is an insensitive teenager who does not know how to make friends. He rarely goes out and has no social life. He is jealous of Stradlater's success with girls. He fantasises about sexual adventures although Holden is sure of his virginity. He touches Stradlater's and Holden's belongings, sits on the arms of the chairs, and cleans his fingernails in Holden's room. His behaviour is immature, he is insensitive and he fails to notice Holden's many hints that he is unwanted. He regards Holden as immature and takes little notice of what he says. His room smells, both Stradlater and Holden comment on his teeth. He snores and has bad breath. His physical cleanliness is minimal. The only person he can relate to appears to be Holden. He is

patient on being awakened by Holden. He is concerned over the bleeding. He is steady fast about his religion, and high-principled enough to refuse Holden permission to sleep in his absent room-mates' bed. As Holden says, Ackley has so many problems that in the end one can only feel sorry for him.

### **Ward Stradlater**

He is handsome and conscious of his own good looks. Holden remarks acidly that he spends a great deal of time looking in mirrors. He is sexually experienced and seductive according to Holden, who becomes extremely apprehensive about Jane's date with him. It is apparent that he is Jealous of Stradlater. He selfishly borrows Holden's jacket, hair cream, and commandeers his time to write an essay. On his return from the date, Stradlater's insensitivity is bare. He is unaware of Holden's inner turmoil, until Holden tears up the essay and attacks him. He is unimaginative. He seems arrogant and narcissistic. He initially remains calm when Holden attacks him, disregarding his puny blows in the knowledge that his superior strength will win. However, gradually and understandably, Stradlater loses patience when Holden becomes more abusive.

### **Phoebe Caulfield**

She is a link with Holden's own childhood. He is proud of her. He is surprised when he considers that she is already ten; it is love for her which rescues him from suicide and it is his realisation that she is growing up and must be allowed to reach for the gold ring that changes his self-destructive spiral and allows him to go home. Although a strong symbol, Phoebe is constantly portrayed as natural, often down to earth, as when she pours cold water on his idea of becoming a cowboy by telling him he cannot even ride. She is childishly serious about her dancing, and childlike too, for instance, her reaction to Holden's expulsion when she repeats incessantly her fear that her father will kill him. She dramatises many of her feelings, turning her back on Holden, not speaking to him at night and again the next day when they quarrel. She is demonstrative in her affections, holds hands with her brother, insists on accompanying him in his flight and carefully keeps the broken pieces of the record.



Like Holden she has marked enthusiasm; recounts the plot of the film she has seen, loves writing and is passionate about her part in the school play and the behaviour of her friend's mother at the cinema. Holden says she is clever, and she is certainly astute; deceiving her mother, reading Holden's expression when he intends leaving her for good, asking him about his future in an adult way, and diagnosing the negativism of which he has so far been unaware.

Holden says that she is one person whose judgement he can trust: she is quick to perceive phoniness in films and people.

### **Sally Hayes**

She is very attractive, and enjoys being admired. She is a socialite; impressed by boys who attend the prestigious universities, and she boasts to Holden about their asking her out. She is impressed by the names of well-known actors like the Lunts, and incapable of distinguishing the good of from the second rate. She enjoys just the cabaret show that Holden finds offensive because of its hackneyed sentimentalism. She is a phoney. He says her letter inviting him over to decorate the tree is playing and when he phones her she pretends that she does not recognise his voice. She has a narrow, tunnel vision, and cannot envisage Holden's dissatisfaction with the life she finds so pleasant. She cannot imagine any other life style. She sets up a conflict within Holden because physically he desires her but on all other levels he despises her.

### **Carl Luce**

Luce is an arrogant poseur, included in the book to place Holden again in context as an immature sixteen-year-old, to provide him with another rejection and also, strangely, to point the way to a psychiatric cure. He enjoys the power of enlightening younger boys about its perversions. He is an object of attraction to Holden though he does not like him. Luce is patronising about Holden's ignorance, rejecting Holden's moral code as childish. He is certain that his owns the only one. He enjoys boasting about his sophisticated lifestyle, Chinese mistress and new found interest in Oriental philosophy. Holden's questions are unanswered by him. Luce is clever but unsympathetic and self-centred.

### **Mr. Antolini**

Mr. Antolini is a pleasant, relaxed figure, genuinely fond of Holden. Consequently his betrayal of Holden is cataclysmic, resulting in almost complete mental turmoil. He has an agreeably humorous attitude to Holden, although Holden finds his wit apperceive at times: there are indications in the dialogue that Mr. Antolini is a little over intimate in his manner when he compliments Holden on his composition-writing, e.g., when he remarks on his good looks, but he also adopts an intellectual approach; when they are talking about digressions or when he is explaining to Holden that he is going to face a difficult future without an education. If his advice is to be viewed as serious, though irrelevant to Holden, then he stroking Holden's hair in the night might well suggest homosexuality. If he was drunk then neither his advice nor his later behaviour can be taken seriously. The scene is ambiguous: the reader must decide if Mr. Antolini is nursing homosexual tendencies or cherishing a paternal wish for a son he will never have.

### **Mrs. Marrow**

Holden meets her in the train when he leaves Pencey. She is the mother of one of the boys there. She represents female attraction without challenging Holden's sexuality. Holden can safely flirt with her. Mrs. Marrow is desirable; although forty-five, she is good-looking, richly ornamented with rings and an arched. She is susceptible, it seems to Holden's flattery about her son.

### **Faith Cavendish**

She is produced yet another rejection for Holden, the second in the hurtful trio of females who prove to him that he is not as mature as he thought. She is interesting for her abrupt changes in manner as various key signals are given to her. She begins nastily, in what she assumes is her true voice. The first key-word is Princeton, a prestigious university. At the mention of its name, she immediately becomes ladylike, frosty but no longer vulgar. We are left with the impression that she would have met him if Holden had been less pressing, and if he had not had a total rejection.



## **Sunny**

She is the prostitute sent to Holden's hotel room by the bullying pimp of lift boy. Through her Holden realises he is not interested in sex without love. Sunny is businesslike, common and bored. She is amazed that Holden wants to talk to her. Her voice is thin. Holden finds her quite unnerving. She lacks interest in life. It seems that she is piqued by his rejection of her. Her spiteful return with Maurice to extort money. Through her he loses face, but also learns that sex without love is worthless. In fact, Holden's encounter with her strengthens his idealism.

## **The Nuns**

Like Mrs. Marrow, they appear when Holden needs them most. They are not clearly differentiated, though the one with the glasses and the kind smile does most of the talking. Not only do they represent innocent womanhood after the sleazy deviousness of Sunny, they provide a contrast with all the social, veneered mothers Holden knows they are not phonies.

## **Mrs. Caulfield**

She is only glimpsed once through the door of a cupboard. We are allowed only fragmentary knowledge of her. Holden never refers to her less than affectionately, yet he never states a wish to return to her: it is always Phoebe who represents security we are told that she still grieves over Allie and can become quite hysterical. What we hear of her conversation with Phoebe through the cupboard door displays her maternal concern. She worries over Phoebe's language, asks about her trip out with a friend and scolds her for smoking a cigarette.

## **Allie Caulfield**

Holden's intelligent, guileless younger brother who had died of Leukaemia aged eleven, three years previously. His tragic death explains much of Holden's depression and loneliness. It explains Holden's lassitude and lack of ambition in life. On the other hand his continuing

presence in Holden's thoughts is a substitute for religion. Holden talks to him at times of severe stress. Allie was intelligent, he was sensitive and contemplative, writing poems on his baseball mitt, had a strong sense of humour, and friendly nature that he was never angry. Holden cannot forget him.

### **Jane Gallagher**

She is a shadowy character, seen through recollections as a holiday two years previously. She rapidly becomes a symbol of innocent girlhood and romantic love in its most idealised form. Holden's feelings of sexual inadequacy rapidly turn into anger and Jealousy against Stradlater for going out with her. The girl herself is portrayed as an unchanging innocent, victim of man's desires. Jane is sketched in as being fond of sport, ballet, interested in poetry, sensitive and reticent. She never divulges why she rubs a tear into the checker board, nor does she repeat the stroking of Holden's neck that he finds so seductive. She can be seen as a symbol of Holden's fear of the loss of childhood.



## STRUCTURE A

### The Picaresque Novel

“*The Catcher in the Rye*” can be termed a picaresque novel. It is narrated in the first person, using colloquial language and it explores society through a series of episodes. It begins at the end, in the style of “*Moll Flanders*”<sup>19</sup> looking back over a year in Holden's life. The structure is circular, although each episode follows a linear pattern. However, the digressions fudge this, so that the total effects is rich and complicated. This book is more concerned with character than plot, whereas most picaresque novels describe events.

The novel works through a series of rejections, none particularly shattering though all emotionally violent, which lead to disintegration of Holden in the park, and through that to an illuminated but precarious peace, echoing the mood at the beginning of the book.

#### A.1 Conflict

Each of the rejections can be seen as a conflict, but they provide little suspense because there are so many of them. Holden creates conflict situations, quarrelling with his school friends, his girlfriend and his teachers. He is, as Phoebe points out, going through a negativistic phase. He is conflict with the whole society; he hates urban life, civilisation, crowds and phoney.

#### A.2 Suspense

There are few areas of suspense in the book; all are disappointing; the understated language does not allow for histrionics, and the effect of each is prosaic. In the Sunny scene he nerves himself for action, but already regrets agreeing to her visit. In the Phoebe scene he awaits discovery by his physical mother, but she does not suspect his presence, and in the park when Holden seems ready to give up he is not attracted by the idea of suicide. A certain amount of pace is given to the structure by Holden's flight. He constantly runs, from Mr. Spencer, Pencey, Maurice and Mr. Antolini.

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<sup>19</sup> “*Moll Flanders*” Eighteenth century English novel written by Daniel Defoe

### A.3 Climax

The scene by the roundabout is predictable from the moment when Holden tells Phoebe he is going home. It is sentimentally satisfying. The vividly drawn picture of the round about is soothing. Holden's realisation from mental agony is euphoric: but on a deeper level, he is giving up his dream of escape, compromising with the life: accepting less than the finely-honed standards he had set himself, and joining the rest of society. He betrays himself.

### A.4 Dramatic Irony

This operates on quite a complex level because it involves Holden looking back and judging himself. While occasionally making prescient remarks to the reader. E.g., he says that he must have been stupid to have asked Sally to join him in his cabin, or he tells us that we would have liked Phoebe, or gives advice like avoiding going to the cinema. The time-setting further complicates the book; we know Holden came to no harm because he is recounting events on past. The ending is an ironic anticlimax to his dream of a more honest society.

## B. Style

### B.1. Language

Much of the appeal of "*The Catcher in the Rye*" lies in its accessible, slangy language. Although the idioms may not be our own, there is no mistaking either the emotion or the meaning. Holden speaks for teenagers everywhere.

The novel has been praised for its closeness to fifties pre-school slang. Obviously some references are dated, but a surprising number are still in currency today.

Salinger achieves the voice of Holden Caulfield by a remarkable consistency of language. Many sentences trail off vaguely, suggesting that he loses the thread of his thoughts. He generalises wildly about people, how nobody listens to him, for instance, and exaggerates a good deal – about the speed of D.B.'s jaguar or the number of magazines advertising Pencey prep. This gives his conversation a breathless, imprecise effect. Hell, for example, describes



both heat and cold. The word "madman" is applied to his sister and coathangers. He refers to many people as old, regardless of age. Expletives are used with thoughtless indifference to meaning. He too is disgusted by the word on the wall-which in itself draws attention to the dilution of his own swearing. He insists he is speaking the truth as though not accustomed to being believed. Italics emphasise certain words conveying their tone or emotion. This all increases the impression of actual speech.

The various levels of diction blend, adding to the realistic effect. On one level, Holden uses teenage diction, limited vocabulary and sometimes a list of clichés where one would do. His grammar is shaky, particularly in the verb "to lie". Throughout the novel, much more self-consciously he speaks to his teachers. Holden's changes in dialogue are quite marked, but fall naturally into context. Salinger shows an unerring ear for speech patterns: the voices of Harwitz and Sunny are quite unmistakable. On the whole, adults speak more formally than Holden, but his vocabulary is extensive, and he occasionally uses a surprisingly complex word. Luce is the most formal speaker in the book, followed by Holden's mother when she speaks sternly to Phoebe.

## **B.2. Levels of Diction**

Various levels of diction and attitudes operate within book. They overlap at times, creating a perspective from which the reader can access Holden objectively. E.g., adults either ignore or mother him. The three of woman from Seattle refuse to take him seriously, waiters do not serve him alcohol, but although Holden notices, he misinterprets the reasons. The first one is aloof, and stonewalls all Holden's advances, even his attempts at flattery in imitating his idioms. Harwitz is impatient, only half-listening. Holden has to repeat everything. The children in the park are laconic. Phoebe is excitable, Mr. Spencer pedantic. Each character has his own speech-rhythms.

Deeper levels are explored. Holden is unaware of Luce's phoniness. Although the overpolite, cultured idioms of Luce's voice are faithfully reflected. The past is revived several times in contemplative tones.

He speaks to Allie as to children or a saint. Almost a lyrical quality is established with the mention of the ducks and the catcher fantasy.

Salinger is not sufficiently detached from his hero. The reader is made aware of the attitude of others; Sally and Phoebe comment on his language and immaturity waiters, taxi-drivers and Sunny are patronising. The hatcheck girl and Mrs. Marrow gently mother him. The nuns treat him. The nuns treat him with concerned, soothing calm.

### **B.3. Imagery and symbol**

Occasionally an image recurs, like the madman, or the idea of being killed by Joy as much as by pain. Some stand out from the clichés, like the comparison of Ernest Marrow to a toilet seat and the cold to a witch's teat. There is a mutilation motif; Holden favours the man in the Bible who cut himself with stones, teases Ackley by saying he is blind, and does not wipe off the blood until he arrives at the station.

It is as if he relishes being hurt. Another motif is that of falling. The catcher exists to save children from falling over the cliff. James Castle died jumping from a window; Mr. Antolini predicts a horrible kind of fall for Holden. These two ideas convey much of Holden's mental state.

Much greater use is made of symbol. Objects take on a symbolic value when they are treated with reverence and care beyond their value. The book is punctuated with circular objects, symbolising completion. The roundabout, the gold ring, the record and even the hat provide Holden with comfort.

The most powerful of these objects is the roundabout, eternally travelling yet going nowhere. Its music reminds Holden of childhood, and Phoebe symbolises that by taking his place. She grabs for the ring in spite of possibility of falling-mentioned interestingly in conjunction with the ring symbol. Life is fraught with the dangers, Holden realises, but is essentially valuable and worth striving for. The record links Holden to Phoebe when he is still searching for her – not only does it symbolise their unity but also harmony, pleasure; they dance when they are together. He breaks it, when at his lowest ebb, but tellingly saves the place which later treasures. The hat is mentioned a good deal. Holden bought it when he was being ostracised;



it is an affirmation of his individuality and a source of satisfaction to him. He fiddles with it when worried by Stradlater's date with Jane, puts it on backwards in fundamentalism, and say he will use it to shoot people; wearing the hat he is worried by it going to the station, in the taxis and on the long walk back to the hotel. After giving it, unflawed, to Phoebe, he receives it back in a touching gesture from his sister. The baseball mitt is like a holy emblem. If Allie is a saint, then the mitt is a relic.

People are symbols too. Jane is almost pure symbol, virginity, purity, the unattainable-Phoebe is an earthier, vivid, child, who will grow up robustly.

#### **B.4. Viewpoint**

The action is seen entirely from the viewpoint of the first person narrator, Holden Caulfield. He acts and comments, digresses and reminisces in a "stream of consciousness" style which does not entirely blind the reader to an external assessment of his character. A streak of sentimentality has been mentioned by several critics. It is sentimentally of him to keep Allie's glove, and of Phoebe to keep the shattered record. His compassion for the pimps and love of the nuns can be considered sentimental too, and indeed at the end when Phoebe is on the roundabout, Holden admits to his deepest feelings. At other times, he transmutes emotion into physical pain, or action. Physical pain he dispels with the magic of the movies, inward hurt he soothe by a trip to a night club or cinema.

Although many parts of the book have their humour, Holden himself has none. The occasional flash of black humour or bathos, such as his ignominious flight from both Pencey and his parent's apartment, is directed against himself, and shows on inward bitterness.

#### **B.5. Digressions**

Holden says to Mr. Antolini that he prefers digressions to the logical progression of ideas, and in "*The Catcher in the Rye*" he works on this principle. The digressions add depth to his biography, extend his experiences and the number of people he knows. They are also interesting in themselves. Several of them, like the digression on James Castle, are parables, giving insight into his principles and philosophy. They range in length from a casual sentence

or two, like the reference to the Navajo blanket, to an entire chapter about the past (chapter 11). Each digression has independence, and in its way memorable. They vary in tone from the cynical references to Ossenburger who makes a living out of death, to the sunlit way in which he describes Allie waiting by golf course.



## CONCLUSION

Consequently , 'The Catcher in the Rye' was an incredible material for my graduation thesis since it reflects the face of a generation that has **beaten** a period's motto during 1950s. Holden Caulfield , the main character of the novel with his neurotic and incomprehensible mannerism , enlightens the past of a generation 'Beats' and brings out a serious suspicion for the following generations of United States . This fiction also focuses on the human psychology with the logic of action and decorates it from an individual's indifferent point of view whereas he is precisely a sensitive and emotional being between the hands of corruption. At this point '*The Catcher in the Rye*' gains an ironical status achieving to indicate indifferent American Youth mannerism . In its narration '*The Catcher in the Rye*' bears the term 'Stream of consciousness' and this narrative technique , again reflect the unclear minds of this generation completely confused with their future phobias . This fiction , generally confused on the teenager school boy and this certain aim achieved by Salinger in an extraordinarily harmony with its narration.

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