Abstract

The present paper discusses the novel "The catcher in the Rye" by Jerome David Salinger. The main character is Holden Caulfield who experiences a similar sense of alienation and an inability to deal with growing into his gender role as adult in his society.

This study focuses on isolation and escape from reality. The Protagonist who fails to connect with people. Holden has friends but he cannot continue his friendship, he quarrels with his friends and becomes lonely.

Holden is unable to solve his problems and he continuously escapes from them. He escapes from his school because he fails in four courses out of five. Thus, he escapes from his reality and does not face his problems.

The paper contains an introduction which expresses the main themes in the novel. Moreover, it sheds light on the protagonist which deals with the problems that face him when growing up. It presents Holden's loneliness and isolation from society and his inability to deal with problems.

It is also consists of the use of symbols in the novel "The catcher in the Rye" and The autobiographical elements in it and conclusion.

1-Introduction

The aim of this research is the analysis of "The Catcher in the Rye's" main character, Holden's isolation and escape from reality and his problem of growing up into the adults age. growth is difficult. The whole novel is about the boyhood of Holden. It is difficult to grow into an adult properly. The most significant overarching theme of the novel is the a
adolescent struggle of the main character. Holden no longer wants to be a child, but also does not yet know how to be an adult, which results in his breakdown.

Holden remains a lonely and alienated boy. Holden has friends but he cannot continue his friendship. His nature and loneliness brings about emotional breakdown. He quarrels with his friends and becomes lonely. He stays alone in hotels and hostels. He likes his sister only. He decides to go away from his house (Hamilton, 1989:7).

Holden is unable to solve his problems and so he continuously escapes from them. He escapes his school by failing in company of others by arguing with them or insulting them. He asks Sally to escape with him but she refuses and so he insults her and she leaves him. So, Holden desires to escape to another country. Such an escape is found in modern novels (Cowan, 1991:43).

Another theme expressed in the novel is the search for The hat which makes him look unique. No one has such a hat. Therefore, by wearing the hat, he becomes an individual.

Jerome David Salinger was born in New York City on January 1, 1919. His father, Sol Salinger, was Jewish and his mother, Marie Jillich, was of Scotch Irish descent. Since his parents were of different religious backgrounds, One Christian and the other Jewish, theistic belief was never really emphasized. Salinger had only one sibling, a sister named Doris, six years his senior. The family was upwardly mobile and moved several times during Salinger's childhood to increasing affluent neighborhoods.

Salinger's academic career could best be described as mediocre, for he was never really inclined toward academics. He was particularly weak in mathematics. He attended a public school on the upper West side in Manhattan and spent his summers at Camp Wigwam in Harrison, Maine. At camp, he was involved in the theater, even though off stage he was a quiet and solitary young boy. At the age of thirteen, Salinger was enrolled in the McBurney School, but within a year flunked out and was sent to the Valley Forge Military Academy in Pennsylvania. While he was there, he became interested in writing. He produced his earliest short stories before he graduated in 1936 (Bryan, 1990:37).

Holden calls others "Phonies" which means that others pretend to be what they are not. But Holden himself pretend to be what he is not. He also lies about his age and his identity in order to overcome adverse circumstances. He also tells Mrs. Morrow a lie that her son is very clever and good-natured. He also tells her he has a brain tumor (Shaw, 1991:25).
There seems to be a glimmer of hope for Holden. He reads good literature like the novels of Thomon Hardy and Somerset Maugham. He loves his sister and his parents. At one place he comments: "They are nice and all" Holden also has qualities like sincerity and modesty.

Salinger uses careful symbolic references throughout the novel. A thorough understanding of these symbols and how they operate in the novel is essential to fully comprehend and learn from Holden's journey within the story. The most important symbols in the novel creates meaning in the story. Symbols and symbolic elements require detailed examination in relation to the center Metaphor and within the context and meaning of the whole novel (Burns, 1858:265).

Thus, the novel deals with various themes and fits itself into the mould of a multi-theme novel. The Salinger's use symbols to clarify the theme to the reader. The fact makes the novel a fine modern novel.

2- The problems faced by a young boy to become a grown up man.

One of the major themes of "The catcher in the Rye" is the fact of the difficulty in growing into an adult. This is told through the example of the protagonist, Holden Caulfield. Holden seems stuck in adolescence in terms of psychological and emotional development. In this respect, he is unable to advance. He envies other young boys and adults who have less problems than him.

"The protest movement was an attempt by many individuals involved in mass activities to force a America to examine its institutions, myths, systems and images as harbinger of in authenticity and to restructure them so that societal boundary situations no longer existed" (Smith, 1988:2).

Prior to this period, the struggles of people like Holden was hardly recognized by society. The struggle involved in growing into one's gender role to face adulthood with its fixed expectations, was not in focus on the social agenda, So this became a personal and lone some struggle.

In order to protect his ego, he refuses to accept his defects and face himself. But Holden always points out the shortcomings of others. He thinks that the world is responsible for his problem and not he himself. Holden's refusal to struggle with his weakness makes it difficult for him to mature and grow emotionally.

Holden is presented as a common school boy of modern times. Most of the school-boys today are reluctant of study and sports. They like to enjoy life and do not bother about the losses caused by their habits. Holden has failed in four courses out of five. He is almost expelled from his school. He has already left a couple of schools. The history teacher's comments show that Holden is very poor in history. Holden also loses the
fencing foils and, therefore, the match does not take place. Thus, Holden neglects study and other important activities regarding study.

Holden likes the modern American school- boys, and has certain bad habits. He spends time in hotels. He drinks scotch and soda. He smokes cigarettes and sees plays and films. He also calls girls in his room in hotel, he is too young to enjoy sex. Once he calls a girl and pays her 5 dollars but the girl demands 10. He does not give it and then is beaten by the elevator man. He drinks wine and calls Sally Hayes. He wishes to help her on the Christmas festival. Sally knows that he is too drunk and so stops speaking on the phone. (Mordue, 2006: 5).

Thus, Holden is unable to fit into his role as young man, as he is flunking out of school, and is unable to find a desirable direction in his environment.

3- Holden remains a lonely and alienated boy

Loneliness and alienation are two important themes in J.D. Salinger's novel "The catcher in the Rye". Holden uses alienation to protect himself from becoming emotionally attached to others and how Death plays a key role in his feelings of loneliness.

Holden has friends but he cannot continue his friendship. He can hardly make any friends except his sister Phoebe and Jane Gallagher. Consequently, he feels lonely and depressed. It is his isolation that brings about his emotional breakdown. Holden quarrels with his friends and so they leave him. He is seen lonely in the novel. He is an 'alien' in his own house. He fears his father so that he lives in hotels or in hostels. He does not remain at home because he has failed in some courses. He wants to leave his country for ever but Phoebe persuades him from going abroad (Alsen, 2008: 161).

Holden is disturbed and confused because of these expectations that he feels are constantly put upon him and that in many ways prevent him from developing according to his own values and to figure out who he really is. He does not believe in and is reluctant to live by society's 'phony' rules, but is then struck by a strong sense of alienation, since there is no place for him to belong. He is therefore tempted into delusion and dreams of running away and finding a place for himself outside of all this 'nonsense' as he expresses it to Sally Hayes.

"what we could do tomorrow morning we could drive up to Massachusetts and Vermont, and all around there, see. It's beautiful as hell up there---- we'll stay in these cabin------ camps could get job somewhere---- we could get married or something---- Honest to God, we would have a terrific time! Wuddaya say?" (smith, 1988: 132)
Holden proposes this to Sally. He is fed up with everything and does not know how to live with himself or in his society, but from his society. In many ways readers will recognize that Holden is not only running away from his society, but from his own traumatic past as well. Holden has a past he has not dealt with in a satisfactory way. His difficult surroundings mirror his troubled psyche. Society has certainly not improved for young America since Holden's time and there are many contemporary issues in society that can be related to Holden's situation (lundquist,1979:38). Therefore, the theme of loneliness and alienation is very important in The catcher in the Rye. Holden is too afraid to open up his heart to anyone because he is afraid of losing them, but he is also suffering from extreme loneliness at the same time. His brother's death has impacted Holden's emotional state.

4-Holden escapes from his problems

Holden is unable to solve his problems and so he continuously escapes from them. He escapes from his school by failing in company of others by arguing with them or insulting them. He asks Sally to escape with him but she refuses and so he insults her and she leaves him.

Holden represents the adolescents of his age who do not like study but develop bad habits. Consequently, such youngsters have to face several problems to grow into adults. They cannot overcome the obstacles in their ways and get frustrated. Holden changes his schools and he is flunked from the latest one. He does not wish to graduate from his school but escape to some remote place (lundquist,1979:44).

The protagonist of "The catcher in the Rye" struggles to grow up and tries to accept the life around him. He is a young schoolboy. He has to grow up and join the world of the grownups. However, he is reluctant to make efforts to join the world of the grownups. He desires to escape from it. He likes to leave everything and enjoy eating, drink and sex (J.Miller,601:2003)

He tells his sister that he desire to leave everything and go to some other country. He cannot adjust with anybody in life. He repeated calls other 'phony' which means the people who make difference between rich and poor people. The entire plight of adjust himself with society. Holden is filled with his struggle for growing up and adjust himself with society.

The novel also tells us about the educational career of Holden. The fact reminds us of another "buildungsroman" novel' A portrait of the Artist as a Young man by James Joyce. The novel records Stephen's development from a 'creature' to a 'creator' In "The Catcher in the Rye", however, there is no educational development as such. Holden is
continuously driven away from his schools. He fails in four out of five subjects and is almost flunked from the school (Salzman, 1991:14). Thus, Holden's efforts do not lead him toward development but to failure. Consequently, he desire to escape from his problems which faced him.

5- Holden 's transition from childhood into a adulthood

Holden Caulfield is facing difficult of growing from childhood into adulthood. It's process of painful. He experiences the painful transition from childhood to adulthood, which is a special and critical phrase in a person's life. Holden belongs to neither of child and adults worlds. In the end his choice is to be neither immature nor the evil of adulthood. He is put a dilemma As an a adolescent, Holden actually searches for idealism, Sincerity, and decency. He thinks that the children world are innocent and the adults world are full of injustice, hypocrisy, deceit. He is not willing to enter the adults one, standing on the cliff near the field of the rye. Holden considers children as the only thing that is good in the world, While in the adult world, everything is corrupt (trowbridge, 2000:22).

Holden is usually against both the materialism and ugliness of our society or against the realities of the adult world. Holden's only real friend, his sister Phoebe, Adolescent idealism is found in Holden searches for sincerity, for honesty people. His repeated insistence, 'I mean it I really do, gives credence to this search. Holden, as many adolescents, is extremely sensitive to the god and evil in society. He may always be criticized for being too sensitive about the realities of society to live in it. The idealistic rebellion of adolescent is a good thing when it is harnessed to idealistic even though unworkable in the hard world of reality. There must be some virtue in rebellion against a false, laying, and deceitful society. Painful as it may be to find their own realistic place in society(Bloom, 1990:32).

Holden no longer wants to be a child, but also does not yet know how to be an adult, which results in his breakdown.

Holden has a desire to save young children, as he was never able to save his young brother, for which he has had a guilty conscience ever since, The novel ends where Holden remains a child only and He stays as a school boy only. Holden has failed in four courses out of five. He feels frustrated and so desires to leave home forever. But at the end he, for Phoebe, decides to remain at home only (Salinger, 1991:172).

6- Symbols" The catcher in the Rye"

"The catcher in the Rye" is full of symbols. Actually symbol refers to the objects, character, figures used to represent abstract ideas or concept. The symbol also carries the theme. We can find that the title "The catcher in the Rye" is symbolic Rye is a kind of crop field on the top. Salinger,
the great American novelist has used certain symbols in this novel which may be explained as follows:

First, the "red hunting hat" stands for Holden's individuality. The hat is certainly an oddity at Pencey Prep and New York city. Holden also wants to be the same. He wishes to be different and unique. The hat thus becomes a red badge of Holden's individuality. The hat also symbolizes Allie, Holden's dead brother whose hair was red (Salinger, 1991:205).

Another symbol is the carousel or the merry-go-round. It represents the carefree days of childhood. Holden seems emotionally stuck in childhood. He is unable to develop into a young man. He goes from one school to another. As a result, he is going in circles. It seems that Phoebe too will end up like Holden.

Ducks in the Lagoon is the next symbol in the novel. They stand for Holden as they too remain in isolation within boundaries. Holden cannot break free to the adult world. Holden wonders what will happen to the ducks in the winter. He also wonders what will happen to him after his latest expulsion from his school. The readers do not know whether he will "fly off" or return to begin the cycle of failure again (Alsen, 2008:162).

The museum is also used symbolically as reference to something else. The museum symbolizes Holden's desire for stability and security. Holden has never forgotten his childhood in which he received security and enjoyed friendship of Jane Gallagher. Nothing in the museum changes and Holden's childhood too is like it. That is why, Holden likes to visit the museum (Seng, 2013:208).

Moreover, the broken record may be used symbolically to refer to the broken heart of Holden. Before going home to talk with Phoebe, Holden buys a record with a song entitled "Little Shirley Beans" However, while walking towards central park, he drops it and it is broken into pieces. Perhaps the record represent Holden. After his latest failure, he goes home "in pieces" He is emotionally broken.

Holden confesses his ideal of being the catcher to Phoebe when she accuses him of not liking anything and asks him what he would like to be in the future:

Anyway, I keep picturing all these little kids playing "Some game in this big field of rye and all. Thousands Of little kids, and nobody's around—nobody big, I mean--- except me. And I'm standing on the edge of some crazy cliff. What I have to do, I have to catch Everybody if they start to go over the cliff—I mean if They're running and they don't look where they're Going I have to come out from somewhere and catch Them. That's all I'd
do all day. I'd just be the catcher In the rye and all. I know it's crazy" (Salinger,1991:173).

Looking at the imagery of this passage first, Holden sees himself standing on a cliff, anchored in between. This view makes a distinct division of polarities, which are referenced throughout the entire novel. Metaphorically, it symbolizes how Holden traps himself between the two worlds- the one of the innocent childhood and the other of the phony adulthood, representing the common threshold of adolescence. He cannot go back since he is no longer a child and he is aware of that.

The fencing foils have symbolic significance too. Holden is the manager of Pencey Perp's fencing team. So, he has the charge of the fencing foils. The foils are the long swords used in the game. They have blunt ends to prevent injury. However, Holden forgets the foils on the a subway. As a result, the match between Pencey Perp and its opponent cannot take place. The loss of the foils represents Holden's reluctance to graduate from a school and becomes a part of the competitive business world. He thinks that the competitive business world is run by Phonies(Stauch,2013:25).

Then the ice skates, hockey skates, which are perhaps brought by Holden's mother for him, represent society and socialization. This is because the user of them is part of a team. On the other hand, the skates which Holden wanted, i.e the racing skates, represent Holden's isolation that the user competes as an individual (Trowbridge, 2000:22). Symbolism in" The catcher in the Rye" accurately conveys the feelings of the main character, Holden, in essence, it is used to reveal information pertaining to human sentiment.

7- Autobiographical Elements in" The catcher in the Rye"

"The Catcher in the Rye" is a typical novel by J.D. Salinger, a well-known American novelist. Like several modern novels, the novel has autobiographical touches. The autobiographical elements may be stated as follows.

The setting of the novel which is realistic and autobiographical. Both Holden and Salinger are from the New York city. Salinger graduated from a boarding school named Valley Forge Military Academy which is the same part of Pennsylvania where the fictional Agerstown is situated. Then Salinger attended several colleges but did not graduate from any. This is similar to the fact that Holden attends various schools but cannot a graduate from any. The hotels and bars allude to various real hotels and bars in the New York City (Graham,2007:415).

Moreover, there is ample similarity between the protagonist, Holden, and the novelist, J.D. Salinger. Both felt it hard to enter the world of
adults. Both Holden and Salinger were born and brought up in the city of Mashik. The parents of both are well-to-do and are of different religious faiths. Holden undergoes a psychiatric treatment and Salinger was hospitalized for stress after serving in the second world war. One more point of the resemblance between the two is their tendency to be isolated from others. Holden cannot maintain his friends and becomes lonely. He has only two dear ones, Phoebe and Jane. Salinger too lives reclusively in New Hampshire (Rohrer, 2009:44).

Finally, the other characters like students, cab drivers nightclub Patrons, and people in the streets too resemble the people of America. Thus, all the characters allude to real persons in life.

Conclusion

"The Catcher in the Rye" is a remarkable novel by J.D. Salinger. The novel is obviously symbolic, focusing on the main themes and perhaps the main problems of the protagonist. Holden's isolation comes from the fact that he has already been discarded from the innocent world of children and he is not willing to enter the adult age. He fails to connect with people or places around him. The whole novel is about the boyhood of Holden, It is difficult to grow into an adult properly.

Holden represents all modern American school-boys in modern times. Most of the school-boys today are reluctant of study and sports. They like to enjoy life and do not bother themselves with the losses caused by their habits. They drink scotch and smokes cigarette and see films, and They call girls to enjoy sex. Holden has failed in four courses out of five. He is almost expelled from his school.

Holden calls others phonies, which means that others pretend to be what they are not. The people who make difference between rich and poor. Holden has friends but he cannot continue his friendship because he quarrels with his friends and become lonely.

Holden is unable to solve his problems and so he continuously escapes from them. He escapes from his school because he has failed in four courses. He is unable to fit into his role as a young man. He is unable to find a desirable direction society, as he fails to connect with people or places around him.

Salinger has used imagery and symbolism in many parts of the novel to express themes more accurately.

References


Rohrer, Finlo. 'why does Salinger's catcher in the Rye still resonate. 2009