

PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA
MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH
UNIVERSITY OF MOHAMED BOUDIAF - M'SILA

FACULTY OF LETTERS AND LANGUAGES
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
N°:.....



DOMAIN: FOREIGN LANGUAGES
STREAM: ENGLISH LANGUAGE
OPTION: LITERATURE & CIVILIZATION

The Quest for Identity in J.D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye*

**Dissertation Submitted to the Department of English in Partial Fulfilment
of the Requirements for the Master's Degree in English**

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2020

Dedication

To A. K, My Beloved Wife

Mohamed

Dedication

This dissertation would have probably never been concluded if I did not have the support and love of my family and beloved ones.

To whomever contributed in getting this work done, I say thank you all.

Imad

Acknowledgements

We thank ALLAH the Almighty for helping us to accomplish this work.

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to our supervisor, Ms. Khaoula Rebahi, for her devotion and dedication at work.

We extend our thanks to our teachers at the English department for the knowledge they poured in our minds and hearts.

We appreciate the time and effort the distinguishable members of the jury will spend reading and reflecting on this works.

Abstract

The Catcher in the Rye is a postmodern American masterpiece. Written by J.D. Salinger, the novel achieved extraordinary popularity among adolescents since its publication in 1951. This dissertation aims at analyzing how J.D. Salinger depicts his protagonist's, Holden Caulfield, quest for identity in a postmodern society. Depending on Erik Erikson's theory of Psychological Development, this qualitative analytical study sheds light on Holden's self-image as well as his view of the postwar American society which causes him identity confusion and feelings of alienation. Moreover, the dissertation discusses Holden's journey towards adulthood and investigates its outcome. Therefore, the significance of this dissertation lies in its focus on adolescents (Holden's struggle for identity which corresponds to one of the most important stages of an individual development.) The findings show that Holden's search for identity was not an easy one as he finds himself constantly overwhelmed by the impact of his family and society. However, despite the circumstances, positive outcomes can be interpreted from the findings as Holden starts to realize what really suits his long quest for identity.

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General Introduction

Literature is defined as a combination of words glued together. However, it has been throughout the ages a tool used to reflect the historical, cultural and psychological aspects of human beings. It has the power to express its writers' ideas, feelings and emotions to mirror what they see in their societies. In the other hand, reading is the channel that links us to this art that enables us to better understand each other as well as several aspects of life in the world we live in.

Since the 1600s, the American literature has passed through several literary eras and waves down to the 1940s and the 1950s, during which the literary world witnessed a shift from Modernism to Postmodernism. At that time, the two World Wars outcomes led the 20th century to be best known as the age of anxiety and uncertainties. It was noticeable that the smell of death and the sense of alienation were hanging everywhere. Many Americans were pessimistic, lost and found difficulties to identify why they existed in such destroyed world. All these issues are argued to be the reasons behind the emergence of Postmodernism as a literary movement, which is defined as “a form of literature that is characterized by the use of metafiction, unreliable narration, self reflexivity, intertextuality, and which often thematizes both historical and political issues” (unknown). In other words, it is argued that the WWII implications: political turmoil, scientific breakthrough, social upheaval, and -most importantly- psychological loss all shaped the literary works of the postmodern literature.

The theme of the quest for identity has been one of the crucial, widely discussed themes in most of postmodern and contemporary writings. As a definition, it is known as the process of forming and developing one's identity that is different from other people identities. This process is argued to be defining an individual not only in relation to others, but rather to himself and his inner image. In truth, the idea of the search of identity in this unstable,

changing postmodern time is different from that of pre-existing concept of identity. Hence, the question that arises: how do individuals form their identities in this fractured world? This delima must be treated with a psychsocial significance due to the circumstances behind the seek for identity have greatly changed in this postmodern world (Milon 9). According to many postmodern critics, identity is now “A fluid concept, an open question, a construct that is built as one moves along, according to one's environment and interest. In this regard, the self is shifting, fluid, dynamic, multiplicity, relativistic, context-specific and fragmented. If we consider this condition of identity beyond post-modernity, then it is nothing more than a complete identity crisis” (Milon 10).

J.D.Salinger is one of the postmodern writers who try to portray, through the use of lost and alienated characters, how the post-war individuals pass through moments of uncertainty and weakness. His only novel *The Catcher in the Rye* was originally written for adults, but it is often read by adolescents due to the deep themes it deals with such as anxiety, alienation and superficiality found in the society. Moreover, Salinger depicts the spiritual dilemma of the American individuals through his adolescent protagonist, Holden Caulfield, who suffers from alienation and obsession with death, and seeks for identity and self-realization.

As a matter of fact, identity is the core theme that the novel is centered on. The narration of Holden Caulfield depicts the psychsocial issues and interior struggles that an emotionally wounded adolescent goes through when he starts a quest to explore himself and the world of adults with very confusing and resisting attitudes and behaviors. The reactions of Holden during this quest and observation of adult world, which is full of phoniness and hypocrisy, reflect the identity crisis he has and the uncertainty between what he wants to be and what his society is based on. The writer is claimed to succeed in engaging the reader in a journey through the experience of this vulnerable character, demonstrating Erikson's theory of

Psychosocial Development that we depend on to achieve our aim behind this research, which is analyzing Holden's quest for identity throughout the novel.

Many researchers have shown their interest in discussing the theme of identity presented in the novel. For instance, in her research paper entitled as "Identity Confusion of Adolescents in Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye*", Amina Megheirbi provided a critical analysis of the novel from a psychoanalytical perspective. She attempted to examine how J.D. Salinger dramatizes both psychoanalytical theories of Erik H. Erikson and James E. Marcia that are specialized in adolescents' identity confusion. In the same paper, Meghreibi claimed that when Holden fails to integrate with the new merging identity of adulthood as a way of preserving his own idealism, a kind of resentment is developed towards everything that represents this threatening new identity. This rejection is manifested in Holden's disgust of all the phoniness and hypocrisy he faces in the adult world and his clinging to childhood (Meghreibi 582).

Aneta Fibingerova is another researcher who showed her interest in studying Holden's case from a psychoanalytical perspective. In her dissertation entitled as "The Portrayal and Self-image of Holden Caulfield of *The Catcher in the Rye*", she analyzed both Holden's self image and the portrayal of his situation. In the self-image section, Fibingerova focused on how the protagonist thinks about himself depending on his statements and implications as a source of evidence to analyze his inner image. In the portrayal part, she shed light on his outer situation through investigating his rebellious, nonconformist personality against his surroundings that led to his fall and hatred of the adult world. Fibingerova found that "Holden's self-image revealed the constituents of his unhealthy self-perception that cause his feeling of self-consciousness and isolation from society and even his family, which grows bigger throughout the progress of the story." As for the portrayal, she discovered that

“Holden’s portrayal speaks of the desperate quest of an individual struggling with the early experience of death to get back to his family and consequently to himself” (Fibingerova 41).

As mentioned before, identity is a central theme in Salinger’s *The Catcher in the Rye*. The protagonist, Holden, faces fragmentation, alienation, identity crisis and does not realize who he is and how he should be. Basically, the plight of this adult individual under such issues is what brings out our curiosity to undertake this research. Therefore, this qualitative, analytical research aims at presenting a critical analysis of Holden’s quest for identity from a psychosocial perspective to examine how the writer dramatizes Erik H. Erikson’s psychosocial development theory. These critical analyses are based on the three following questions:

1. In what ways do Holden’s psychological problems interfere in forming his self identity traits?
2. How does Holden’s perception of the social norms psychologically affect his quest for a proper personal self-hood?
3. To what extent does Holden go in pursuing his identity? How is the quest concluded?

As an attempt to answer these two questions, this dissertation will be divided into two chapters. The first chapter gives a broad vision on the 1950s in America due to its importance as a socio-historical context of the novel. In addition to defining Young Adult fiction and analyzing the relationship between literature and psychology, the same chapter provides a summary about Erik Erikson’s 8 stages of the Psychosocial Development theory because of their importance to further analysis. Meanwhile, the second chapter provides an analysis to Holden’s quest for identity throughout the novel.

Chapter One

Chapter One

Introduction

In this chapter, we shed light on the decade of the 1950s in the United States, which is important as a socio-historical context of *The Catcher in the Rye* in order to have an idea about the several circumstances that surrounded the writing of the novel. In addition to that, we provide an overview about the Young Adult fiction since it is the literary genre that the novel is part of. Furthermore, we attempt to explain the relationship between literature and psychology because, obviously, the novel deals with psychological issues. Finally, we end up the chapter with a summary of Erik Erikson's eight stages of Psychosocial Development theory, which is the theory we depend on in coming analyses in the second chapter.

1. The 1950s American Society and Culture

The decade of the 1950s in the United States of America is best described as “the age of paradoxes”. Ronald Oakley, the author of *God's Country: America in the Fifties*, claims that the fifties were “An age of great optimism along with the gnawing fear of doomsday bombs, of great poverty in the midst of unprecedented prosperity” (Oakley 1986). Indeed, the post-war Americans were still affected by the horrors of the Second World War and the anxieties that the Cold War created. However, in the other hand, the fifties' decade was a time of economic, social and cultural prosperity.

1.1. The 1950s Anxiety and Paranoia

Despite the fact that the WWII battles were not played on American stages, the Americans during the 1950s were, psychologically, still affected by the horrors of the Bloody War. This is because they gave and sacrificed a huge amount of souls in the sake of defeating

autocracy and spreading democracy. Death, injury, sexual violence, malnutrition, illness, and disability are some of the most threatening physical consequences of war, while post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, and anxiety are some of the emotional effects. The terror and horror spread by the violence of war disrupts lives and severs relationships and families, leaving individuals and communities emotionally distressed (Rathi 1). Therefore, the fifties are best known as the decade of anxiety and uncertainties. It was noticeable that the smell of death and the sense of alienation were hanging everywhere. Many Americans were pessimistic, lost and found difficulties to identify why they existed in such destroyed world (Zekkour 2).

In addition to the effects of WWII that were still ongoing, there were the nuclear anxieties that were created by the Cold War, which is central to understanding 1950s society and culture. The US government's decision to develop a hydrogen bomb, which was first tested in 1952, committed the country to an ever-escalating arms race with the Soviet Union. The arms race led many Americans to fear that a nuclear war could happen at any time, and the government urged citizens to prepare to survive an atomic bomb.

The Cold War also created what was known in the 1950s as “McCarthyism and the Second Red Scare” in which many Americans were accused of being communists and a series of investigations were made in an effort to expose them. William T. Walker, the writer of *McCarthyism and the Red Scare: A Reference Guide*, declares: “What was distinctive about this [phenomenon] was its intensity, its duration, and the danger that it posed for the traditional American political and civil liberties; McCarthyism, which took its name from Joseph R. McCarthy, [...] came to reflect a recklessness in advancing accusations without evidence and a disregard for the law and individual rights” (Walker 1).

Therefore, such postmodern context of the fifties sets the Americans into a traumatizing state, where their humanity, privacy, and safety are threatened. The paranoid climate is not only related to the actions of McCarthy, but the cultural and social scene has been one of challenged individuality, confused identity and lost spirituality.

1.2. The 1950s Affluence and Consumerism

The “Fifties” is a prominent decade in the history of the United States of America. After the years of hardships because of the Great Depression in the 1930s, and after its intervention in the Second World War in the 1940s, the USA found itself in the enviable position of being far and away the most powerful nation on earth in the 1950s and on. It witnessed an unprecedented economic prosperity and population growth for the country, which denotes that more people meant more of everything; jobs, workers, goods, and services. In other words, all the ingredients for an economic boom were available and the Americans eagerly accepted the challenge to make their country a prosperous, leading nation (The 1950s 3).

The 1950s is frequently observed, for many Americans, as a time of flourishing and financial success, which denotes an affluent context of materialism and economic mobility. Thanks to the WWII gains and the US government efforts- that compensated its people for their great exertions by providing jobs and opportunities to have a house and a family- the decade has witnessed a noticeable change in the shape of the American family, work and economy. For instance, the passing of the GI Bill in 1944 that would provide veterans of WWII funds for college education, unemployment insurance, and housing. This aid has formed the basis of a more educated, equal and ambitious society. Ten years later, when surveys asked veterans about what difference the GI Bill made to them, three-quarters answered: “The GI Bill changed my life.” (Hackett Fischer 2009). As a proof for that, in 1958, an economist named John Kenneth Galbriath published a book entitled as *The Affluent*

Society, in which he provides a study of post war America. The title reflects the broad-based prosperity that made the decade seem the fulfilment of the American Dream. Indeed, by the end of the decade, 60 percent of American families owned homes; 75 percent, cars; and 87 percent, at least one TV, which was newly invented and impacted the American society through changing their understanding of the world (Boyer et al. 647).

Prosperity means lots of money, and lots of money means more consumption. In her memoir entitled as *Living History*, Hilary Clinton, an American politician and writer, declares that America was flush with emerging prosperity and all that comes with it; new houses, fine schools, neighborhood parks and safe communities (Clinton 2003). For her, the fifties were a decade of rising expectations, the emergence of youth culture, and the unprecedented availability of cultural products.

This affluence of the fifties was in a time that new inventions have been made contributing in affecting the Americans' way of life and thinking. Hence, they resulted in the emergence of a new society characterized by a drive of conformity and gender rules; and has developed a virtual obsession with consumption. To illustrate, millions of citizens have moved from the cities to new, comfortable houses in the suburbs and have purchased new cars. Besides, they have replaced the radio with television sets to live the new cultural experience, and have developed a new fashion of consumption. Eric Forner, the author of *The Story of American Freedom*, considers this consumer culture as a demonstration to the superiority of the American way of life (Forner 1998). Truly, this new capitalist belief of mass culture has largely dominated the country in the fifties, and has urged to gratify a large number of the population. The TV shows at that time have shaped the content of its programs to attract as much spectators as they can. In addition to that, theaters have been receiving a lot of people due to the quantity and quality of the plays they produced, and the sale of books and novels have been very successful. This prosperity and financial comfort encouraged families

to have more children, which led to the emergence of a society full of youths during the fifties and the years after.

1.3. The 1950s Youthful Society

As mentioned above, the 1950s was a decade of unprecedented economic and population growth for the United States. The baby boom that had begun in the years immediately following World War II continued well into the decade. From 1948 to 1953 more children were born than in the previous thirty years, and in 1954 the country experienced the largest one-year population gain in history. The two writers of *The 1950s* book, William H. Young and Nancy K. Young, claim that the structure of the family itself changed significantly during this period. Instead of mother, father, and the two usual children, more and more couples opted for three and four children. Not only were there many people, but many more offspring as well. By 1958, almost a third of all Americans were 15 years old or younger. Consequently, the 1950s is considered as one of the most youthful decades on record (W. H. Young and N. K. Young 7).

It is argued that the teenagers at that time started to build their own cultural and social place among American citizens. In order to practice their freedom and values, they would test the boundaries of sexuality and consumerism. And as members of a postmodern society, the youths of the 1950s went through social problems like the addiction of drugs and psychological issues such as identity crisis, which is a core issue in the adolescence stage

1.4. The 1950s Conformity and Countercultural Movements

The 1950s is often seen as a period of conformity, when people complied with religious instructions and conformed to society's expectations. After they suffered during the years of the Great Depression and World War II, many Americans worked for building a society based

on peace and prosperity. That is why they have not given that value to individuality and happily have confirmed and enjoyed the amenities of the economic prosperity. At the same time, despite these conformist norms and values were religiously, culturally, and socially enforced, the fifties were not as conformist as are usually depicted. Many American people were not satisfied with social norms and religious values. Instead, they have opted not to conform and wanted to break free from the ideas that confined the society. As a result, this has led to an identity crisis and developed anti-society sentiments. This tension has paved the way to the emergence of countercultural movements that call for revolting everything that is conventional in the society. These movements have exposed agony, hatred, revolt and apocalyptic visions of individuality; also they have encouraged a divergent way of thinking from the mainstream and change the status quo.

The Beat Generation is one of the notable, countercultural literary movements that appeared in the United States after WWII. Young writers such as Allen Ginsberg, William S. Burroughs and Jack Kerouac are among the prominent authors of Beat literature (Charters 1992). Their works were published throughout the 1950s, exploring and influencing their country's culture and politics. The focal components of Beat culture are the opposing of standard narrative values, attacking the ideas of Capitalism, and rejecting economic materialism. Meanwhile, they encourage the use of drugs to alter conscious, sexual liberty and nearly anything that seems radical for the society (Charters 2001). Therefore, the members of the Beat Generation developed a reputation as new bohemian hedonists, who celebrated non-conformity and spontaneous creativity.

The writers of this literary movement, mainly Allen Ginsberg and Jack Kerouac, have produced a literature that is more daring, straightforward, and expressive than anything that has been produced before. Their works introduce themes like identity, estrangement, adventure and the rejection of conformity. Jack Kerouac's *On the Road* is a thinly veiled

autobiographical novel of escape in a quest for self-knowledge, freedom, and experience; it marks the creation of American bohemian lifestyle. And in his poem *Howl*, Allen Ginsberg presents an influential piece of writing that portrays a capitalist nuclear-armed America as a beast attacking and devouring its youngsters (Hadjabi 14). Therefore, Andrew J. Dunar, the writer of *America in the Fifties*, thinks that the Beat Generation presents a literature with stories that focus on who are seeking for identity, if not a place, amid the turmoil of mid-century American society (Dunar 261).

Not only the literary writers who present the counterculture of the 1950s, but there was also a group of sociologists who have noticed that while people are enjoying the material wealth and life in the suburbs, others are suffering loneliness that comes from living in a corporate society. David Riesman, a sociologist, educator, and best-selling commentator on American society, was among the first social commentators to identify a movement away from a society and economy based on production to ones based on consumption. In his successful book, *The Lonely Crowd*, Riesman looks at the links between the socioeconomic structures of society and how social character is shaped and defined. Additionally, the same writer argues that when a society is dominated by the other-directed will face profound deficiencies in leadership, individual self-knowledge, and human potential (Homer 12). At this point, Riesman is impressed with how people are too oriented towards their society with very little value to their individuality. John Kenneth Galbraith in *The Affluent Society* seeks to clarify the way in which post-World War II America was becoming wealthy in the private sector but remained poor in the public sector. He protests against the growth of the economy, and how the government advertises useless products to encourage the addiction of consumerism instead of creating a balance between the rich and the poor (Hadjabi 15).

Artists and musicians are considered as fundamental components of the 1950s counterculture as they used their fields to criticize the materialistic culture and the

conventional, conformist mentality in their American society. To illustrate, the most important artistic movement was Pop Art, which was inspired by popular and commercial culture such as advertising, Hollywood movies and pop music. This movement aimed to break the boundaries between high art and low culture as a way to criticize the Capitalist society of the fifties, which was based on a differentiation between the poor and the rich. Furthermore, Pop art used irony and satire to revolt against the dominant approaches to art and to elevate aspects of everyday culture in the middle of the 20th century.

As an artistic aspect, Rock 'n' Roll music also played a significant role in the counterculture of the fifties. Lisa Jo Sagolla, the writer of *Rock 'n' Roll Dances of the 1950s*, defines Rock 'n' Roll music as “An expressive, emblematic, often defiant, and profoundly defining act for the teenagers of the 1950s America” (Jo Sagolla ix). Due to its rebelliousness, Rock 'n' Roll made a great impact on American society and changed the ideas of a whole generation. In the 1950s and 1960s, Rock and Roll not only existed as a musical element, but also made the youth find a medium for expression and exchange of ideas and emotions. Rock and Roll was echoing in the anti-Vietnam War movement, the black civil rights movement, the woman's movement and other movements. With a strong sense of rhythm, Rock youth showcased youth rebelliousness and created a rebellious era (Zhang 58). This new genre of music was highly rejected by elders who blamed it for its childish wrong acts, but teenagers loved it because it gave them a sense of belonging to something new and different and because it somehow broke the boredom of conformity.

It is said that literature is a tool used to reflect the historical and cultural aspects of life. It mirrors people's daily lives and takes the reader towards knowing how they live within a society. This leads us to talk about literature of the 1950s to know more about that decade society.

1.5. The 1950s American Literature

After the end of the Second World War, a new era in the world of literary writing called “Postmodern literature” came to prominence. It succeeded the modernist literature and emerged strongly in the United States during the 1950s through the writings of authors such as Thomas Pynchon and John Barth, took more momentum and fame in the 1960s, and achieved its heyday in the 1970s and 1980s (Bertans).

This post-war literary trend is considered as a part of the third classification of Postmodernism, which is “cultural postmodernism”. This last incorporates film, visual arts, literature, and so on that highlight postmodern elements (Geyh 2). Therefore, like modernist literature or any other literary movement, postmodern literary writing is highly influenced by social, cultural and historical developments. It is viewed as a particular way for a portrayal of the postmodern life and culture.

One of the most represented themes in the postmodern writings is identity crisis of the post-war human being- who suffers psychologically, ethnically, socially and culturally- and his continuing struggle for legitimization in a society full of hypocritical people (Postmodern Literature and Its Background 27). In addition to that, postmodern literature deals with themes that reflect the post-war world such as paranoia, anxiety, and alienation.

This literary wave is well-known for being dependent, both stylistically and ideologically, on some of the literary conventions such as fragmentation, paradoxes, unreliable narrators of stories, plots that are usually non-realistic and unthinkable, parody, dull amusingness and authorial self-reference. Besides, the authors of this literary movement tend to not to use meanings that are clear and complete in their novels, stories and poems, instead, they prefer and adore the use of different meanings, or even a total absence of meaning, inside a single literary work. Hence, according to Ulrich Broich, the postmodern writers deliberately

create the meaning not only through traditional forms and genres, but also through a purposeful utilization of copyright infringement, kitsch¹, and quotations from well-known literary and non-literary texts so they collect them in one work in order to create a dissemination of meaning (Broich 252). All these techniques and themes are a reflection to the postmodern anxious, alienated and psychologically lost individual.

2. The Young Adult Fiction

2.1. Definition

The term young adult fiction (abbreviated as YA) was coined in the early 1960s by the American Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) to classify works for readers aged between 12 and 18. Mostly, the protagonists of YA fictional works are between those age ranges and, thus, the story is told from a teenage perception. However, while the plots are centered on and meant for young adults, approximately over half of today's YA readers are over the age of 18 (Kitchener). Therefore, this literary category is also defined as a soft transition between children's novels and adult literature.

2.2. Historical Overview

Back in time, in 1802, Sarah Trimmer is claimed to be the first writer to make a distinction between childhood and young adulthood. In her children's literature periodical, *The Guardian of Education*, Trimmer introduced, for the first time, the two terms: "Books for Children" and "Books for Young Persons", making YA fiction separated from children's literature. Nevertheless, many literary critics argue that the second half of the 20th century is the time when YA fiction has become an independent, distinct genre of literature with the writing of *The Catcher in the Rye* by J.D. Salinger in 1951, which was not meant to be marketed to adolescents, but it attracted them. Then, in 1967, S. E. Hinton's *The Outsiders* has

become the very first novel published and marketed, straightforwardly, for young adults who were increasing their economic resources and contributing in making YA fiction less of a genre, and more of a distinct category by the end of the 1960s (Trites 1998).

At present time, YA fiction is considered as a vast field of literary and multimedia production as it witnesses a huge amount of novels and book series being converted into movies and TV series. Tahereh Mafi's *A Very Large Expanse of Sea*, Emily X. R. Pan's *The Astonishing Color of After*, Stephenie Meyer's *Twilight*, and Suzanne Collins' *The Hunger Games* are among the best-selling contemporary young adult novels and book series of The New York Times. And it seems that YA fiction is at its golden age, attracting more adult and non-adult readers as well as more critical attention.

2.3. Common Features

Young Adult novels tell the stories that adult writers think adolescents want or need to hear (Thein and Sulzer 47). As a result, one of the most prominent features that we find in most of the young adult fictional works is the use of adult protagonists as first person narrators, such as Holden Caulfield in *The Catcher in the Rye* in which he tells the whole story of the novel from his own adolescent perspective. This feature gives additional definition to YA fictional works as definition of a YA novel as narratives focalized through an adolescent consciousness. At the same time, there are other characteristics related to YA fiction and are going to be discussed in a brief way.

Briefly, some of the most common YA genre styles include science fiction, which is usually set in the future, with the plot posing a number of 'what-if' possibilities, making the reader question how the future could turn out to be. In addition to the use of dystopian stories that are usually set in a more sinister version of our own world, featuring young protagonists who have to struggle against an oppressive system, while tackling adult like death. Besides,

fantasy is popular in YA novels that revolve around magic or supernatural elements and usually contain an adventure or quest narrative. Finally, many YA novels feature some sort of romantic sub-plot, but those that come under the genre of romance feature a romantic relationship at their core. These novels can be set either in a contemporary, past or paranormal world, and usually have an emotional narrative with certain obstacles preventing the lovers from being together or expressing their true feelings (Gibbons et al.).

2.4. Common Themes

Adolescence is an initial stage in a human's life as it comes between childhood and adulthood in which several transitions occur. As a result, it is a common sense to see the following themes in YA fictional works and precisely in our case study, (*The Catcher in the Rye*):

2.4.1. Identity and Self-image

Adolescence is the stage when physical, cognitive, emotional and social transitions occur. It is not easy for a young person to face this range of developmental issues and to establish one's identity during this confusing time of turmoil, which is between childhood and adulthood. Therefore, themes like coming of age and formation of identity are highly reflected in YA fictional works whose protagonists are in struggle with their responsibilities towards their families and societies, negotiating their identities in relation to their peers, and separating themselves from their parents as they seek for a kind of freedom.

In her essay entitled as "Who Am I?: Identity as a Theme in YA Literature", Sara Letourneau, a YA fantasy novelist, points out that at the heart of adolescence, lies an existential dilemma: figuring out who you are. For her, this dilemma, during the transitional period between childhood and adulthood, is most of time awkward, confusing, and frustrating.

In the same essay, Letourneau discusses how the theme of identity is explored in YA literature from different angles. Firstly, she argues that in many YA novels, protagonist get to know that can be what they want to be, but they get frustrated when they realize that this decision is a difficult, complicated choice. This is perhaps because they, for example, regret doing bad decisions in the past and now want to be better, such as in the case of Holden when his little sister, Old Phoebe, asks him about what he wants to be, he answers her that he wants to be a catcher in the rye to save children from falling down. Next, Letourneau adds that YA writers tend to use characters that usually have problems with *self-acceptance*. Due to several circumstances- at home or school and in certain relationships- it is hard for them to express their traumatic pasts, sexual desires, or gender identity with others. Consequently, they decide to be alienated and isolate themselves for fear of rejection despite their yearning for social connection. Most importantly, the same writer argues that most of YA fictional characters are caught in an *identity crisis*, which happens when they are torn between who they are and who others want them to be. This leads them to feel uncomfortable because the others' actions and beliefs are not as their adolescent own beliefs and, as a result, they suffer a painful internal conflict and the so called identity crisis (Letourneau).

2.4.2. Morality and Ethics

According to Rachel Falconer, a professor of English literature at the University of Lausanne, adolescence is the stage when a human starts to construct his identity and personality through establishing his own sense of what is good and right or wrong and bad. At this point, most of YA fictional works are about protagonists who ask existential questions such as “Am I good or evil?” in their process of developing their identities, and their struggles involve a strong sense of weighing their moral and ethical stances. (Falconer 88).

Karen Coats declares that YA fiction is distinguished from preadolescent fiction because the first one is featured by a questioning of a moral universe: where good does not always triumph and the wicked do not always get what is coming for them. Coats builds this criterion on the belief that most contemporary literature is based on the assumption that young adults develop their morals through stages that approximately correspond to ages, and that ambiguity in the moral fabric of represented worlds is detrimental to that development in its earlier stages but quite necessary in developing an ethical framework and a sense of moral agency in the teenage years. (Coates qtd in Risku 44). Thus, the represented works of YA fiction offer adolescents a space where they are able to negotiate their moral ethics and judgements, and the multiplicity of real-life ethical considerations are more manifest in YA fiction than in fiction for a younger audience. Based on this kind of categorization, it has been observed here most of YA works share similarities in the ways in which their protagonists develop their identities and negotiate their ethical standpoints, and the differences of circumstances in their worlds do result in distinctive dissimilarities of interpretations. All this leads us to understand that Struggling Young Adult fiction provide readers with alternative accounts of morality and ethics, and despite the overt similarities in protagonists, themes and narration, its novels have distinctively different takes on morality, identity, and the adolescent as a character (Risku 45).

2.4.3. Individual VS. Institutions

The relationship between individual and social institutions as well as judicial and legal systems is a recurring theme in Young Adult fiction. Roberta Seelinger Trites, the author of *Disturbing the Universe: Power and Repression in Adolescent Literature*, declares that the social institutions that take care of us and educate us, like family and school, in addition to judicial systems and legal regulations that put another kind of power over us, are essential in

the process of growing up and mature into adults realizing one's institutional place and power. Hence, she considers these institutions as an inherent element in YA fiction as she says: *"When we investigate how social institutions function in adolescent literature, we can gain insight into the ways that adolescent literature itself serves as a discourse of institutional socialization."* (Trites quoted in Risku 20). Thus, the relationship between them is critical, and, for her, every adolescent novel assesses some aspect of the interaction between the individual adolescent and these social institutions that shape her or him (Risku 20).

2.4.4. Puberty and Sexuality

As mentioned before, adolescence is a crucial stage in the human being life as he witnesses physical changes that result in psychological effects. To explain more, adolescence starts with puberty that brings endless changes to teen lives, including bodily changes and heightened curiosity about bodies and romantic or sexual interactions. This leads them to seek for answers to their questions from any source available, often friends, trusted adults, or the media. The young adult sexual effects and romantic relationships are highly reflected in the YA works (known as coming of age stories) that have profound influence on their teen readers. Trites states that most young adult books have conflicting messages about sexuality that *"Both reflect and perpetuate Western culture's confused sexual morals"* (Trites 95).

3. Literature and Psychology

Literature is associated with many fields such as psychology, history, philosophy, sociology, man and existence. This expressive medium can be used to interpret various themes such as culture, identity, personality, existence which have consistently been a key target for writers and thinkers. It can be said that there exists a strong association between psychology and literature because they both shed light upon individuals and their reactions,

the way of seeing the world, dreams, miseries, likes, dislikes, society and personal struggles through various approaches and methods. Consequently, writers tend to describe life in accordance with their objectives, values, beliefs, ideologies and attempt to motivate the reader to investigate the unknown world by pushing him to explore the meaning of his existence and targeting his emotions and feelings. Therefore, it is clear that literature is somewhat responsible for leading the reader to question his identity by addressing his consciousness and self-awareness. Moreover, it is worth noting that existence has always been an important theme in literature, art, and scientific study (Aras 251).

The most basic elements in the association between psychology and literature are literary works. They analyze human beings and provide a full description for their internal world. This is mainly due to the fact that literary works are at the same time resulted from a given psychological process. Therefore, works of literature provide insights to psychology through describing psychological behaviors and conditions. Besides, psychology supports literary works through the discussion of the various mental operations. In addition, works of literature profit from psychology in many ways: setting up the reader for the psychological aspect of reality, introducing the characters successfully, and exposing their moods. Both of literature studies and psychology theories concentrate on human emotions and soul. Therefore, both literature and psychology share a cooperative relationship, which is often resembled by the assessment and evaluation processes of literary works while relying on psychological theories and discussing truths that are related to psychology (Badegül 49).

It is believed that during the process of making a literary work authors usually go beyond the visible aspects of day to day life. Therefore, notable contributions of current psychological theories such as the endeavor to use dynamic forces to explain the unconsciousness of life and describing human behaviors and individual experiences.

Consequently, such contributions serve as important assets in interpreting the process of the making and persistence of a work of literature (Santoset al.).

Psychoanalysis can be defined as a set of psychological techniques that are mainly influenced by the theories of Sigmund Freud. Psychoanalytical thinkers and critics do not only focus on the writer's personality and cognition but also concentrate on his literary works that serve as texts that manifest the ability of imagination, which is highly important for writers. Therefore, it must be noted that both of psychology and literature are closely associated to humans' feelings and their ability to imagine. Psychology plays a vital role in the analysis of a work of literature with each branch aiming at focusing an individual in their works and analysis. In this regard, it is essential to direct the attention of the reader towards the psychological novel which gives extra focus on the emotional, cognitive, and spiritual aspects of the novel's characters. In addition, it focuses more on the analysis of characters than it does with actions and the plot of events. Furthermore, Literature, which has always been associated with existence and man, can also be recognized as a generator of inspiration and encouragement for thinkers and intellectuals. For instance, Sigmund Freud, who is a prominent neurologist and widely considered as the father of psychoanalysis method, studied a considerable number of works of literature that included the famous works of William Shakespeare (Aras 252).

4. Erik Erikson's Eight Stages of Psychosocial development

Erik H, Erikson, a notable intellectual and cultural anthropologist, suggested a special theoretical scheme for creating connections between the different stages of human growth, the relations between society and individuals, and the development of maturity in an adult. Erikson depended in his work about families and their children on Sigmund Freud's ideas of psychosexual development. From Erik Erikson's perspective, the social factors that affect

human growth are crucial for the process of creating the identity of an individual's personality. Despite the fact that Erikson's main focus was clinical experience and psychoanalytical paradigm, his theory displays highly important implications for parents, teachers, curriculum designers, school leaders and policy makers (Batra 250).

According to psychosocial theory, all human beings experience eight stages from infancy to old age. Every individual ought to find his own perception of regulation which results from the interaction between the internal voice of young individuals, the influence of social factors, and the individual emotional and physiological impulses. In every stage, the individual learns how to engage new skills and methods of self-understanding and understanding the others, in order to make a feeling of self-regulation. All in all, these stages lead to the creation of a special identity.

4.1. Basic Trust VS Basic Mistrust: Infancy (Age Range: 0–1½ Years)

The first crisis happens during the early months of an infant's life, and it is known as Trust Vs Mistrust. During this stage, the infant is not quite sure about the world around him. Therefore, the child looks towards his parents for security and consistency to overcome his feeling of helplessness. If the child receives sufficient protection and care by his mother (his parents in general), it will lead to the child's natural social growth as he would consequently expect love and safety to be provided by the society around him. Furthermore, the child would learn to trust others, and develop a strong feeling of trust in his physical abilities and his biological motives which will accompany him during the next stages of his life.

On the other hand, if the parents fail to meet the child's requirements, reject him, or cause him harm with the society around him doing the same, the child would develop a strong feeling of mistrust towards everyone else. He would constantly expect bad things from others and will be highly doubtful about the society that surrounds him. In other words, the parents'

neglect of the child will lead to a lack of confidence, which can be generalized in the future to include others and society around the child. It would also lead to a disorder of growth in the following stages with many negative outcomes. To conclude, the successful transition of the child at this stage would acquire him with the virtue of hope. As new challenges arise, the infant would hope and see other people as a real source of support when needed. Meanwhile, Failure to establish the virtue of hope will result the development of fear within the child which would make a major obstacle for the child's development in the next stages of his life (Erikson 223-225).

4.2. Autonomy VS Shame and Doubt (18 months- 3 years)

At the second stage, the child becomes more mobile as he finds out that he possesses a lot of abilities and skills, like putting on clothes, wearing shoes, and how to play with his toys, etc. These newly discovered abilities indicate the continuous development of a sense of autonomy within the child. For instance, children start to display early signs of self-determination at this stage by making some simple independent decisions such as: Selecting a toy which they like, having a say about what to wear, or choosing to walk away from their mothers whenever they want, etc.

Erikson believes that it is highly important for parents to encourage their children to discover their hidden abilities and sharpen their skills within a supportive environment which tolerates failure. For instance, parents should be patient and supportive to their children when they are performing a challenging task.by permitting them to try until they fulfil the given task or ask for help. In other words, a caring parent must not only be supportive and encouraging to his child in order to develop his autonomy but he is also obliged to be protective towards his child so as to avoid the development of constant failure. The parent must settle in a zone of balance between not doing every single task on behalf of the child and

not criticizing him for the failures that may occur while performing a given activity. Specifically, the main purpose is to develop the child's self-control without losing his self-esteem (Mcleod).

All in all, success at this stage would result in the obtaining of the "will" virtue by the child. If the child's independence is continuously supported and encouraged, he would feel assured about himself and his own abilities to help him succeed and flourish in the world which surrounds him. However, if the child receives a lot of criticism, gets strictly controlled, or unable to have the chance to assert himself, he starts to question his ability of survival and might experience shame, self-doubt and becomes highly-dependent on others in the process. (Mcleod).

To conclude, the child becomes in need of independence at this stage, and this is achieved through the enjoyment by the child of a degree of freedom in balance with parental protection. Achieving this need means the natural continuity of growth, while failure to satisfy it leads to a disruption in growth represented by feelings of shame when exposed to new experiences. It also leads to developmental disruption and the failure to solve future crises in a positive way. In addition, the failure to resolve the crisis of confidence is an obstacle to resolving the crisis of independence.

4.3. Initiative VS Guilt (3-6 years)

During the preschool years, children go through the initiative versus guilt stage which is the third stage of psychosocial development. Kids are expected to believe that the world around them is trustworthy, and that they will be able to freely deal with the issues that they may face if they make a successful transition during the previous two stages. It is highly important for children to explore their skills and try new things on their own because it would push them to grow a sense of direction and ambition.

At this stage, kids start to assert power and try to impose control over their surroundings through the active display of initiative in dealing with their daily challenges, completing a given objective or deciding how to approach a given task. Therefore, parents and caregivers must provide children with the sufficient amount of support which would enable them to choose the suitable choices. Also, parents are obliged to encourage their kids to explore the world around them. If the caregivers fail to give enough encouragement and support to children, it may lead kids to feel ashamed about themselves and consequently they become mainly dependent on others to help them (Cheery).

As children start to practice more command and authority over the decisions that might impact their lives, parents find this stage somewhat frustrating. These decisions include: choosing the activities they consider as suitable for them to practice, selecting a group of friends whom they like to play with, and even choosing the way by which they approach a given task. Parents might try to influence their children to favour certain choices, tasks, and friends which they see as suitable, but they are often met with resistance by their kids as they insist on sticking with their own decisions. Despite the fact that it may lead to conflicts between kids and what their parents wish for them, it is essential to give children the opportunity to make such decisions. Nevertheless, parents are highly obliged to continue protecting their children by encouraging them to select good decisions and imposing secure boundaries. Reinforcement and modelling are very essential at this stage because they can help parents and caregivers to safely influence their kids to make good choices. (Cheery)

The successful transition of children at this stage results in leading them to settle with a feeling of purpose but failure develops a sense of guilt within the child. In other words, some kids who cannot fully develop their initiative during this stage might find it difficult to try new things. Whenever they try to put a direct focus toward a given thing, they may believe that they are about to do something which is not right. To conclude, considering the fact that

mistakes are a valuable element in the development of an individual, children with initiative would comprehend the idea that mistakes are investable and all they would do is to try another time. However, kids who develop guilt at this stage would regard mistakes as an indication to their weakness, and may develop the thought that they are simply bad.

4.4. Industry VS Inferiority (6-12 years)

After the stages which include imagination, playing and quick physical growth, exists the stage which motivates the child to find a sense of purpose supported by new skills and tools, consistent imagination and the will to involve and put the mind into action. During this stage, the kid's mental capacities enable him to develop his abstract thinking with the will to imagine, to construct, to apply technology and to gain knowledge via the various systematic procedures. The feeling of industry is the responsible factor for reaching a sense of competence which is necessary to acquire the survival skills needed in a given society and culture. Moreover, Erikson applies the word "industriousness" for the sake of qualifying the word "industry" which is a highly important growth experience that young individuals ready for the coming challenges of adulthood. Furthermore, this experience is responsible for leading the child to reach a sense of purpose and competence which is mainly influenced by social factors but not completely shaped by foreign forces (Batra 262).

In order to become a well-developed adult, the child is obliged to know how adulthood can be made possible. He must cultivate himself about the methods which enable him and the ones around him to survive in their environment. The feeling of Competence allows the child to comprehend the importance of work and its impact on culture in a given society. In addition, the development of this sense of Competence relies on the predecessor elements of Will, Purpose and Hope. If the child was unable to develop the elements of Industry and

Purpose, he may experience feelings of weakness of mind, loss, and inertia in which the individual would feel that nothing matters or appear to be of any value (Batra 263)

The child's danger, at this stage, lies in a sense of inadequacy and inferiority. If he despairs of his tools and skills or of his status among his tool partners, he may be discouraged from identification with them and with a section of the tool world. To lose the hope of such 'industrial' association may pull him back to the more isolated, less tool-conscious familial rivalry of the oedipal time. The child despairs of his equipment in the tool world and in anatomy, and considers himself doomed to mediocrity or inadequacy. It is at this point that wider society becomes significant in its ways of admitting the child to an understanding of meaningful roles in its technology and economy. Many a child's development is disrupted when family life has failed to prepare him for school life, or when school life fails to sustain the promises of earlier stages. (Erikson 233)

The 'tools' which are addressed by Erikson might be the result of previous experiences which involve writing, scientific-based experimentation, sports activities, organizing educational programs, theatre and art, and scientific research etc. Such tools are created during the industry- development phase.

All in all, this stage corresponds to the age of primary school, where the individual's need for a sense of ability appears. This can be seen by his attempt to curiosity, his tendency to accomplish, and his need to appreciate others. As in previous stages, the solution to the sufficiency crisis depends on the continuity of natural growth, which requires resolving the previous crises, as well as encouraging the environment represented by family members as well as the school. The expected result of any of these obstacles is the child's inability to solve this crisis, which leads to feelings of deficiency and inadequacy.

4.5. Identity VS Role confusion (12-18)

This stage is the most important point in this chapter because it tackles the stage which directly involves the novel's main protagonist: Caulfield Holden. During the adolescent stage, past acquired virtues of Purpose, Will, and Hope make the perfect setting by which the teenager depends on to build the anticipated life experiences with a clear scope of Industry, Initiative, and Autonomy. This stage is characterized by unprecedented physiological and biological growth which takes place simultaneously with remarkable changes in the teenager's social attitudes and actions within his family and the wider society. These notable changes push the teenager to reorganize and integrate the past virtues to form a fresh personality with a new set of highly regarded traits. So, adolescence can be defined as the stage which links young adulthood with childhood during which the teenager attempts to comprehend the virtues and morality which he acquired during his childhood and would start investigating new values which he would adopt as an adult (Batra 265)

The growing and developing youths, faced with the physiological revolution within them, and with tangible adult tasks ahead of them are now primarily concerned with what they appear to be in the eyes of others as compared with what they feel they are, and with the question of how to connect the roles and skills cultivated earlier with the occupational prototypes of the day. In their search for a new sense of continuity and sameness, adolescents have to refight many of the battles of the earlier years, even though to do so they must artificially appoint perfectly well-meaning people to play the roles of adversaries; and they are ever ready to install lasting idols and ideals as guardians of a final identity. (Erikson 235)

This stage pushes the adolescent to carefully select friends, interests and what he likes and dislikes about various subjects such as clothing style, travelling, music, movies, and topics of discussion and debate. The teenager must learn this while coping with the issues

related to the biological changes that happens to his/her body. The urgency of finding oneself within a social setting becomes extremely important for the teenager. As a consequence, feelings of belonging establish themselves as equally important. Moreover, considering the frequently changing nature of the teenager's own likes and dislikes, social effects and influences which do not correspond to the teenager's self are either disregarded or considered as menaces (Batra, 266).

To conclude, teenagers may often be considered as hard to predict mainly due to the procedure of discovering their own personal identities. During adolescence, parents and caregivers actively work on making an influence on the way teenagers think about themselves. In addition, a number of outside factors such as: Friendships, social gatherings, school friends, and even local culture contribute to the process of crafting a teenager's identity. Therefore, the teenagers who receive sufficient reinforcement and properly explore themselves would develop a sense of control and independence. However, those who fail to appropriately recognize their desires and beliefs would consequently feel confused and unsure about themselves and their quest in life (Cheery).

4.6. Intimacy VS Isolation (18-40)

The sixth stage of psychosocial development occurs during the young adulthood phase approximately between the age of 18 and 40 yrs. In a highly developed social environment, young adult individuals with past stages' characteristics find themselves faced by a set of chances for self-investigation in a time of new sexual needs: "The young adult, emerging from the search for and the insistence on identity, is eager and willing to fuse his identity with that of others. He is ready for intimacy, that is, the capacity to commit himself to concrete affiliations and partnerships and to develop the ethical strength to abide by such commitments" (Erikson 237).

From the ego-focused characteristics established during the past experiences of a young adult, an ability of sharing ideas, soul, and body arises and results in the mutual development of recreation, procreation, and work. During this stage, the young adult begins to maturely comprehend how to love another person and the commitments that come with it despite of the numerous sacrifices they may find themselves obliged to make:

There are, to be sure, many forms of love, from the infant's comfortable and anxious attachment to the adolescent's passionate and desperate infatuation; but love in the evolutionary and generational sense is, I believe, the transformation of the love received throughout the preadolescent stage of life into the care given to others during adult life. (Erikson, 1964, 127)

During this stage, young adults begin to understand love in a mature way which allows them to combine the strong and weaker characteristics of the experiences they had during the previous stages of their development. If the individual receives a normal and non-interrupted development in the previous stages, it becomes more likely that they engage in long term commitments.

All in all, the most notable conflict at this stage mainly focuses on how an individual builds close and dear relationships with other individuals around him. In other words, the individual starts sharing intimate ideas and thoughts with others by exploring relationships which would expectedly lead to long-term bonds with an individual other than family. Success at this stage would lead to joyful commitments with a safe and kind environment. However, fear of being involved in a serious relationship or a long-term commitment would result in feelings of loneliness, self-isolation and even depression at times. The virtue of Love is the end product of a successful transition at this stage.

4.7. Generativity vs Stagnation

The seventh stage of Erikson's theory takes place during the period between the ages of 40 and 65, which is known as middle adulthood. In this period, adults are motivated to create or take care of things that would probably last longer than they would like working on positive things that would make other people's lives better, or raising children. Such acts of doing positive things that would serve the benefits of the next generations prove to be significant at the generativity versus stagnation stage. Therefore, adults at this stage are characterized by a tendency to develop their familial relationships, committing to other people, and taking care of the future generation. On the other hand, stagnation at this stage is characterized by adults' failure to successfully engage with others, disregarding productivity, and focusing on themselves by putting their interests above everyone else and making no actions to make the self-better (Cheery).

During this stage, life-changing events are less related to age unlike previous and future stages. The significant events which influence this stage like having children, occupational matters or marriage can happen during any point of middle-adulthood. Some adults might experience what is known as a "middle life crisis" in which they look back to their previous achievements and assess their future and at times regret their unfulfilled goals like occupational and familial matters. On occasions, adults may take advantage of this crisis to make positive changes to their lives which would result in greater realization of their life goals. It is significant to point out that the manner by which adults deal with these regrets would highly impact their health. The adults who believe that they wasted too much time and consequently left with no sufficient time to make their lives better might find themselves left genuinely dissatisfied at this stage (Cheery).

In addition, there exist a considerable number of factors which might impact feelings of generativity Vs stagnation. Adults who enjoy a good health, friendly relationships with people and a firm control over what happens in their lives would feel more satisfied and highly productive. However, adults with health issues, bad relationships and no sense of control over their lives are more exposed to feelings of stagnation.

To conclude, this stage takes place during the middle adulthood phase and concerns the crisis of productivity and stagnation. Productivity at this stage includes many fields such as professional career and family like education and having children. Success at overcoming the crisis of this stage leads to equipping the adult's ego with strength and a sense of interest. However, failure to deal with crisis properly would drive the adult to feel stagnation.

4.8. Ego Integrity VS Despair

From Erikson's point of view, the relations between an individual and the society which surrounds him are crucial for his theoretical work .According to his theory, if an adult manages to successfully achieve the positive essential outcomes at each stage of human development, he would intend to repay the society around him through his generativity (Generativity vs Stagnation stage) and by way of expressing a sense of happiness and satisfaction with life (current stage). Accepting the unavailability of how a human life goes, leads to the emergence of the last stage which is old age (Batra 271). Erikson characterizes the final stage by a natural fear of death: "The lack or loss of this accrued ego integration is signified by fear of death; the one and only life cycle is not accepted as the ultimate of life. Despair expresses the feeling that the time is now short, too short for the attempt to start another life and to try out alternate roads to integrity "(Erikson 1963, 242).

On the other hand, wisdom represents the most essential virtue of this stage which produces a crucial link for the succession of generations. It helps with presenting young

individuals with a sense of hope which is crucial for their development and expected growth.

For each generation must find the wisdom of the ages in the form of its own wisdom. Strength in the old, therefore, takes the form of wisdom in all its connotations from ripened 'wits' to accumulated knowledge and matured judgment. It is the essence of knowledge freed from temporal relativity. Wisdom, then, is detached concern with life itself, in the face of death itself. It maintains and conveys the integrity of experience, in spite of the decline of bodily and mental functions. It responds to the need of the on-coming generation for an integrated hermitage and yet remains aware of the relativity of all knowledge. (Erikson, 1964, p. 133)

All in all, the crisis in the last stage of life is a feeling of complementarity. The previous experiences seem very important at this stage as the individual begins to review his life history and the goals he achieved or vice versa, and the opportunities he exploited or the opposite. Positive sensations lead the individual to feel complete and satisfied, and this leads to the ego gaining a new virtue that is wisdom. In the event of failure to achieve this crisis, it leads the individual to feel despair and reject the reality of his life and his problems in this dangerous stage.

Conclusion

In the first theoretical part of the dissertation, we attempted to focus on both the socio-historical of the novel and its literary genre. In addition to explaining the relationship between literature and psychology as well as explaining the eight stages of the Psychosocial Development theory. These points are important for a better understanding of the novel and, thus, analyzing it in the second practical part.

Chapter Two

Holden Caulfield: Inner Struggle and Depression, Outer Disappointment and Alienation

Introduction

Written by J.D: Salinger ,The Catcher in the Rye is an American masterpiece which tells the story of Holden Caulfield; a teenager who sets himself on a wild quest to find his true identity .This chapter sheds light on the adolescent issues Holden faces in his transformation from a child to an adult .This chapter tackles the following highly significant points in The Catcher in the Rye :Holden’s alienation from his society, his protection of the innocent, and his view towards the world of adults.

1. Holden VS Himself: An Inner Struggle

During much of the novel, Holden finds it somewhat hard to comply or appreciate the standards of his society which leads him to look like an alien member of society. He is often portrayed as a character with strongly stubborn behaviors and strange logic which causes him to appear mostly disobedient and disturbed. As a consequence, his inability to conform to the norms of society makes his failure inevitable. From the perspective of some critics and readers, these problems could suggest the existence of a personality disorder within Holden. Nonetheless, Erikson’s theory of psychosocial development indicates otherwise as it considers his feelings of insecurity and self-doubt as an ordinary component of a teenager’s development.

1.1. Holden’s Guilt

Before the events of the Catcher in the Rye took place, a shocking incident occurred to the family of Holden: Allie, Holden’s younger brother died of leukemia on July 18, 1946. Holden used to be so close and very fond of Allie who was younger by two years. "You'd have liked him ... but it wasn't just that he was the most intelligent member of the family. He was also the nicest" (Salinger 38). Despite the fact that Holden turned into a physically ordinary teenager; he was somewhat still emotionally a child. Holden spent a night in his

family's garage after the death of his younger brother where he lost his grip and nearly smashed everything in there: "All the [...] windows with my fist, just for the hell of it. I even tried to break all the windows on the station wagon we had that summer...It was a very stupid thing to do, I'll admit, but I hardly didn't even know I was doing it, and you didn't know Allie" (Salinger 39).

Holden admits that what he did was stupid, which is similar to how he usually criticizes other people and himself in an unfair manner. This act shows his unmanageable rage and overwhelming guilt because he once hoped his brother would die. Therefore, when Allie died, he left his older brother weighed down by feelings of guilt and regret. Furthermore, Holden's feelings of distress and worry towards growing up can be traced back to his association of change to death, and considering it as the final stage for the life-long process of human development.

Holden's assault on the garage can be justified through a thorough examination of his relationship with his family and parents in particular. The assault can be regarded as Holden's way to avenge his brother and his own troubles which were caused his parents who were unable understand him properly nor were, they able to prevent the death of his younger brother. After his attack on the garage, Holden was taken to a hospital for injuring himself. Thus, he was unable to attend Allie's funeral and witness closely the ultimate end of a life process (Dreams of Manhood 71).

Despite the fact that Holden's actions throughout the novel are usually unpredictable and indecisive, they are understandable when it comes to how he reacted to the death of his brother. However, the way he visualized Allie's funeral in particular was shocking because he emphasized how his family relatives were more fascinated in the funeral's decoration rather than mourning the poor little child.

Holden's Silent Guardian

After going through a series of shocking experiences, the last of which was his latest encounter with his former favorite teacher Mr. Antonelli, Holden finds himself in a very nervous and uncomfortable state. So, when he decides to take a walk in the streets of New York City something strange happens to him:

Anyway, I kept walking and walking up Fifth Avenue, without any tie on or anything. Then all of a sudden, something very spooky started happening. Every time I came to the end of a block and stepped off [...] curb, I had this feeling that I'd never get to the other side of the street. [...] Every time I'd get to the end of a block, I'd make believe I was talking to my brother Allie. I'd say to him, "Allie, don't let me disappear. Allie, don't let me disappear. Allie, don't let me disappear. Please, Allie." And then when I'd reach the other side of the street without disappearing, I'd thank him. (Salinger 256- 257)

Holden's late brother, Allie, plays the role of a silent protector in the way that he keeps his brother sane and attached to the known world. Furthermore, Allie is dead and therefore he is forever innocent from the perspective of Holden. He prevents his brother from falling to the darkness of adulthood, and therefore he seeks to offer the same help to the other innocent kids of the world. Moreover, the passage indicates the growing gap in Holden's connection with his family (Fibingerova 13).

This is the motif of the fall reflected in his mind, with Allie as his guardian. He realizes himself falling while he was aspiring to protect others (children) from doing so. He feels his separation from his family, just as Allie is separated now. From this point of view, he might identify himself with Allie.

1.2. A Solo Journey towards Adulthood

Days after he received the news of his expulsion from Pencey Prep, Holden unleashes himself on a lonely journey throughout New York. Instead of heading home, he decides to leave school and randomly wanders throughout the big city days before he was expected home for Christmas. In doing so, he depends on the money sent to him by his grandmother as an asset to finance his spending. During his short journey, Holden encounters many events and interesting incidents that resemble some sort of a path towards maturity and adulthood. Furthermore, despite of the various friendly connections at Pencey Prep and New York, Holden seem to be always lonely and desperately in need to be understood by others "I'm lonesome [...] No kidding" (Salinger 149).

According to the Intimacy vs Isolation stage of Erikson's theory, Holden's isolation is clearly justifiable. During the majority of the novel, He looks marginalized by the world that surrounds him and constantly tries to understand his purpose in life in a society which fails to provide any meaningful support. This is clearly similar to how many young adults perceive their positions in a society that can hardly understand them at times. Therefore, Erikson believes that society's failure to understand its youngsters' might result in pushing them towards feelings of isolation and lonesome which is very similar to what happens with Holden.

As we go through the novel, we start to realize that Holden is actually using his isolation from the world for his own benefit. His interactions with other characters in the novel show that he gets easily confused and exposed when he deals with other people. Therefore, it is safe to say that Holden's isolation is what shields his ego from such interactions and serves to stabilize his chaotic life. For instance, his lying to the nuns and

Earnest's mother about his real identity shows that he is willing to do whatever it takes to protect himself and his ego (Kheirkhah and Pishkar 32).

On the other hand, it can be assumed that his isolation can be a cause to some of his problems too. It can be noticed that Holden does not try to investigate what troubles him nor does he attempt to clarify his emotions towards others. In this regard, Holden is in desperate need for social interaction and love, but his insistence on sticking to his alienation does not allow him to pursue such interactions. This is similar to what does Erikson think about young adults whom he believes are naturally expected to look for intimate feelings in their society.

However, it can be presumed that this alienation has side effects too because it causes Holden a great deal of trouble in his relationships. For example, his meeting with Sally Hayes is a victim to his isolation. Everything was going smoothly at the date until the moment he mentioned his intentions to live an isolated life which scared his date and led to a big disagreement between the couple by the end of the date. Moreover, his numerous attempts to reach out to Jane Gallagher in order to revive the relationship were nothing but a mere consolation to his feelings of loneliness. At the same time, Holden's attempts were not accompanied by a serious action because his alienation prevents him from going through a possible costly adventure.

Therefore, we can conclude that Holden's Alienation is both the source of his stability and emotional liability. At times, he depends on it to protect him from the possibly harmful side effects of his encounters with other people. Thus, it is the element of Holden's life which provides much needed stability and shields his ego from others.

As readers, we can see that Holden's alienation is the cause of most of his pain. He never addresses his own emotions directly, nor does he attempt to discover the source of his troubles. He desperately needs human contact and love, but his protective wall of bitterness

prevents him from looking for such interaction. Alienation is both the source of Holden's strength and the source of his problems. For example, his loneliness propels him into his date with Sally Hayes, but his need for isolation causes him to insult her and drive her away. Similarly, he longs for the meaningful connection he once had with Jane Gallagher, but he is too frightened to make any real effort to contact her. He depends upon his alienation, but it destroys him (Kheirkhah and Pishkar 38).

2. Holden VS Society: Phoniness and Alienation

Adolescence is often argued to be the time when socializing is particularly challenging. That is partly because peer relationships are so important for teens. Besides, they are still discovering, especially during this sensitive stage, who they are and how they want to be in life, and that is why every interaction is significant for them. However, while looking for who they are and what they want to be through interacting with the others, adolescents tend to face psychological disturbances such as anxiety, alienation and identity confusion. As a result, they in a way feel that they are indifferent from the people around them in their societies and hence they tend to somehow isolate themselves in an alienated world that they create in their minds.

Our case of study, *The Catcher in the Rye*, is an exemplary novel that best portrays the socialization of an adolescent individual and his view of the people around him, and how he feels that he is not adapted and keeps on rejecting his society. The innocence of the protagonist of the story, Holden Caulfield, makes him find throughout the whole novel, nearly whenever he interacts with adults or people older than him, that he is not appropriate and does not belong to that society, which is full of hypocrite people who hide their true selves behind a mask of "phoniness", and who do not understand what he feels especially the authority figures in his society such as his parents and his school teacher. This leads Holden to believe

that his society is a misfit one and that he should live isolated far away in the northern East of America in order to protect himself from the pain and disappointment of the adult world.

Despite Holden's alienation from the rest of the fake world and his desire to be away from his phony society, it is noticeable from his several attempts to interact with other people that he admires having conversations with them, precisely the adult ones. For instance, in chapter 8, in his trip to New York on the train, he claims that he enjoys taking late-night trains because at that time only a small number of people would be around him on the same train. However, when he reaches New York City, he starts looking for people to interact with. And, in chapter 19, Holden gets upset when his ex-schoolmate at Whooton, Carl Luce, refuses to talk to him about things he admires to talk about such as sex. Holden says that people like Luce do not like to have “a slightly intellectual conversation” that he hopes for in order to understand several things about life and build his identity, accordingly.

Indeed, throughout the three-day plot of the novel, Holden gets in touch with many other characters who each one of them influences his inner image as well as his view towards the society. However, in this research, we only focus on two main social institutions, which are family and school due to their great influence and contribution in affecting one's identity and to analyze Holden's interactions with them as authority figures. In doing so, we take his parents and his former teachers as a focal point:

1. Family

During Holden's stay at hospital, he was able to feel some attention and care by his family, which he could not have enjoyed during his late younger brother's lifetime. Amid Allie's illness, Holden's parents failed to provide him with a sufficient amount of care despite of his young age. Therefore, this lack of care would develop into a disruption in Holden's

development as a young child according to Erikson's theory. During the Initiative vs Guilt stage of the psychosocial theory of development, Erikson believes that caregivers and parents who fail to set their children with an adequate amount of support or cannot encourage them to explore the world surrounding them are expected to raise kids with guilt and shame issues that may greatly impact their future development. Holden himself pointed out the fragile parenting circumstances of his family at the very beginning of the novel:

IF YOU REALLY want to hear about it, the first thing you'll 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 don't feel like going into it, if you want to know the truth. In the first place, that stuff bores me, and in the second place, my parents would have about two hemorrhages apiece if I told anything pretty personal about them. They're quite touchy about anything like that, especially my father. They're nice and all, I'm not saying that, but they're also touchy as hell. Holden Caulfield. (Salinger 3)

This opening passage told by the only narrator of the story, Holden Caulfield, gives us from the very beginning a hint of the rebellious coming of age personality that Holden has, and shows his negative perspective on his own life. The reason behind this rebellious mentality, condemning parents and social traditions and beliefs, is that he knows that they are unable to understand what he feels and what he wants. Holden looks like that he gives much respect to his parents' feelings, but he describes the things they do, especially his father's job, as phony as the society that they are part of. However, he tries not to put his parents in troubles or to make them disappointed on him.

1.1. Mr. Caulfield

As we read the novel, we can notice that Holden's relationship with his father is not a strong one, and sending him away to study in a high school can be considered as a proof for that. Besides, Mr. Caulfield has standards for his son like passing all of his classes, but Holden is a rebellious character who stands against these standards. And when Phoebe discovers that Holden has been expelled of school she tells him: "Daddy'll kill you", which can be interpreted as that his father's only role is to bring fear and stress upon him. Moreover, in page 140, Holden declares: "My father's quite wealthy, though. I don't know how much he makes, he's never discussed that stuff with me, but I imagine quite a lot. He's a corporation lawyer. Those boys really haul it in. Another reason I know he's quite well off, he's always investing money in shows on Broadway" (Salinger 140). In fact, Mr. Caulfield's job as a lawyer is a focus of criticism by his son who considers it as a phony, pessimistic job to have. The reason behind criticising this job by the protagonist and considering it as a phony thing to do is that most of lawyers are interested in collecting money more than helping people. To illustrate, the following passage found in the end of the novel when Holden speaks with his little sister, Phoebe, shows and explains more his view of his father's job:

Well, a lawyer, like Daddy and all.

Lawyers are all right, I guess, but it doesn't appeal to me," I said. "I mean they're all right if they go around saving innocent guys' lives all the time, and like that, but you don't do that kind of stuff if you're a lawyer. All you do is make a lot of dough and play golf and play bridge and buy cars and drink Martinis and look like a hot-shot. And besides. Even if you did go around saving guys' lives and all, how would you know if you did it because you really wanted to save guys' lives, or because you did it because what you really wanted to do was be a terrific lawyer, with everybody slapping you on the back and congratulating you in court when the goddam trial was

over, the reporters and everybody, the way it is in the dirty movies? How would you know you weren't being a phony? The trouble is, you wouldn't. (Salinger 223)

In the passage above, readers can easily interpret that Holden does not talk about his father himself negatively. However, he attacks the phoniness in his job as lawyer, which lacks credibility and integrity. In other words, in such society, most of the employees of this profession are being phony, and it is a trouble to detect whether they are truly working as lawyers to save innocent people from being jailed or executed, or they are doing so just for the sake of wealth and luxury. Worse than that, even a lawyer himself would not clearly know for what sake exactly he works so as when he says: "How would you know if you did it because you really wanted to save guys' lives, or because what you really wanted to do was be a terrific lawyer, with everybody slapping you in the back and congratulating *you in court*." (Salinger 223). In other words, what really worries Holden is the "phoniness" in his father's job due to its hidden intentions. Thus, he assigns blame to the lack of credibility and integrity in this profession as well as many other professions, which are forced to be so by the human condition and distorted by the Capitalist mentality. This is all linked to the superficiality of the adult world in Holden's society.

1.2. Mrs. Caulfield

Holden's view of his mother is quite different from his father. Actually, he is too sensitive towards her especially since the death of his brother, Allie Caulfield, which made her depressed and frustrated. Therefore, he does not want her to feel disappointed if she receives by any chance Mr. Thurmer's letter about his failure at Pency Prep, which is the fourth school he has gone to. At this point, Holden points out: "I didn't want to be around when they first got it. My mother gets very hysterical. She's not too bad after she gets something thoroughly digested, though." (Salinger 67). And in another scene in the play, he

adds: "She hasn't felt too healthy since my brother Allie died. She's very nervous. That's another reason why I hated like hell for her to know I got the ax again." (Salinger 140)

Another illustration from the novel that marks the sensitivity of Holden towards his mother is when he suddenly remembers Allie's death again, which makes him feel that he has pneumonia. Then, he starts to imagine himself dead and millions of people coming to his funeral. However, the only ones that he feels sorry and sad for are his parents, especially his mother:

Anyway, I kept worrying that I was getting pneumonia, with all those hunks of ice in my hair, and that I was going to die. I felt sorry as hell for my mother and father. Especially my mother, because she still isn't over my brother Allie yet. I kept picturing her not knowing what to do with all my suits and athletic equipment and all. [...] Then I thought about the whole bunch of them sticking me in a [...] cemetery and all, with my name on this tombstone and all.

(Salinger 201)

That is to say that Holden gives importance to his mother's feelings more than his own feelings and other people's, including other family members and relatives. And this describes how he is too sensitive towards his mother who making her depressed and disappointed is not what Holden wants and is able to hold. Furthermore, these troubles lead Mrs. Caulfield to smoke, which is a sign, alongside with being away from them, that Holden is raised in a way that results in an unhealthy relationship with his parents. Hence, he does not trust them and is afraid of talking to them about any problems, and this may be the one of the reasons behind his depression, alienation and a need for psychological help.

2. School Teachers

Schools teachers are very important in a human's life since they teach him/her several things that can affect his/her morals and attitudes. In this novel, Holden encounters two teachers: Mr. Spencer who is his history teacher at Pencey, and Mr. Antonili who was his teacher at Elkton Hills School. The reason behind choosing them is to analyze our protagonist's relationship with them as social figures, and because of the advice and ideas they give to him, which affect in a way his view of the society, his quest for identity, and his understanding of life in general.

2.1. Mr. Spencer

Mr. Spencer is Holden's teacher of history at Pencey Prep. In the first chapter, Holden goes to visit him at his house to discuss several topics with him. When he first sees Mr. Spencer in that picture- wearing old bathrobe, showing his bumpy chests and white, unhairly legs, and unable to serve himself- he gets depressed and wonders why old guys live in such way and in such circumstances. Probably, this scene can be analyzed as that Holden makes a difference between the innocent, pure childhood world and the chaotic, phony world of adult and old people that he does not to be part of. Furthermore, despite the fact that Mr. Spencer is one of the reasons behind Holden's expelling from the school, in addition to being disrespectful and disagreeable during their conversation, Holden treats him politely and addresses him as "sir". This shows us that Holden takes the responsibility for his expelling from the school, in addition to giving us a picture of his good manners towards older people and authority figures. Besides, he prefers to be patient on his rude teacher rather than leaving his house because he feels that he is in need for his instructions and advice.

Speaking about advice, Mr. Spencer says one of the most fundamental and well known quotes of the novel. He tells Holden: "Life is a game, boy. Life is a game that one plays

according to the rules.” Then, Holden replies: “Yes, sir. I know it is. I know it” (Salinger 12). In this regard, Karen Tolchin, the writer of “Optimism, Innocence, and Angst in *The Catcher in the Rye*”, argues that “Holden’s interior monologue automatically corrodes the impact of the advice proffered, [...] [and he] immediately discards the advice, although he does pretend to agree” (Tolchin 33). That is to say, Holden respects his former teacher as an authority figure and appreciates his advice, but he does not agree with it because as he argues: “Game, [...]. Some game. If you get on the side where all the hot-shots are, then it’s a game, all right. I’ll admit that. But if you get on the other side, where there aren’t any hot-shots, then what’s a game about it? Nothing. No game” (Salinger 12). Here, according to Holden, life is a game that one plays according to the rules only when it is preserved for people like his friends Stradlater and Carl Luce, the “hot shots”. However, it is no game for ordinary people like him because there is no sense in the rules in such phony society that differentiates between people.

Furthermore, Mr. Spencer represents the tradition-directed character type of an authority figure that Holden needs in order to direct himself. At this point, He believes that his teacher really tries to help him as it is when his teacher says: “I’d like to put some sense in that head of yours, boy. I’m trying to help you. I’m trying to help you, if I can” (Salinger 20). However, he makes an analogy between Mr. Spencer's attempt to help him and the old guy's speech at Pencey. This happens when talks to Phoebe about Pencey:

He kept talking to us the whole time, telling us how when he was at Pencey they were the happiest days of his life, and giving us a lot of advice for the future and all. Boy, did he depress me! I don’t mean he was a bad guy, he wasn’t. But you don’t have to be a bad guy to depress somebody, you can be a good guy and do it. All you have to do to depress somebody is give them a lot of phony advice. (219)

What makes Holden believe that these two authority figures, Mr. Spencer and the old guy, give phony, inappropriate advice and wisdoms is that they unconsciously repeat advice and wisdoms that they do not even apply to themselves. And for him, it is a phony thing to think and behave in such way. In addition to that, Mr. Spencer, who seems interested in helping Holden, is actually interested in making him hopeless and frustrated about his future. The evidence is found in the following passage:

Do you feel absolutely no concern for your future, boy?

“Oh, I feel some concern, all right. Sure. Sure, I do.” I thought about it for a minute.

“But not too much, I guess. Not too much, I guess.”

“You will,” old Spencer said. “You will, boy. You will when it’s too late.”

“I didn’t like hearing him say that. It made me sound dead or something. It was very depressing. “I guess I will,” I said. (Salinger 20)

As mentioned above in the quote, Holden pretends to agree with that fact and appreciates his teacher’s efforts and thanks him for the words of wisdom. At the same time, he explains to him that they are both from different worlds, and, thus, treating his case should be done from a different angle since he is still an adult with a different, psychological and cultural way of thinking. In addition to offering insight into the precise nature of Holden’s particular brand of cultural resistance, the scene with Mr. Spencer casts light on the inability of the school system to handle students like Holden, which would be an interesting and fertile subject for further study. In a way, Mr. Antolini, another former teacher of Holden’s who has a prominent role in the book, is simultaneously a representative both for and against the merits of education, and it is this dynamic we move on to investigate next.

2.2. Mr. Antolini

Unlike the old-aged, depressing Mr. Spencer, Mr. Antolini is a young teacher of English that Holden feels somehow comfortable to talk to. In fact, Mr. Antolini was Holden's favorite teacher at Elkton Hills and he goes to visit him at his swanky department in order to discuss his flunking out of Pencey Prep as well as what he wants to be, which is something related to his identity as an adult and his quest for it. At the same time, their conversation gives us more clarity on Holden's view of school as a social institution and teachers as authority figures that contribute in his socialization and his understanding of himself.

During their discussion, Holden tells his former teacher that he flunked Oral Expression because he did not like the way his teacher Mr. Vinson grade students, which is based on "If [a] boy digresses at all, you're supposed to yell 'Digression' at him as fast as you can. It just about drove me crazy. I got an F in it." claims Holden who adds: "Oh, I don't know. That digression business got on my nerves" (Salinger 238). In this regard, he gives an example of his classmate Richard Kinsella whose classmates kept yelling "Digression!" at him because his speech was at first about their farm and then it railed through speaking about his uncle being in hospital. Mr. Antolini argues that a student should stick to his speech topic, but according to Holden:

I mean I guess he should've picked his uncle as a subject, instead of the farm, if that interested him most. But what I mean is, lots of time you don't know what interests you most till you start talking about something that doesn't interest you most. I mean you can't help it sometimes. What I think is, you're supposed to leave somebody alone if he's at least being interesting and he's getting all excited about something. I like it when somebody gets excited about something. It's nice. (Salinger 240)

The passage above shows the impulsiveness of Holden as an adult character that does not think or plan for his future. Besides, it reminds us of his words to his little sister Phoebe when he suddenly tells her that he would like to be a catcher in the rye to protect children from falling off a slope. This objective is not a reasonable, well thought plan for a career future and, at this point, when Holden is asked if he is going to apply himself when he goes back to school, he comments: "It's such a stupid question, in my opinion. I mean how do you know what you're going to do till you do it? The answer is, you don't. I think I am, but how do I know? I swear it's a stupid question" (Salinger 276). So, Holden's thoughts of the speech of his classmate Richard Kinsella make it clear how he lacks a set of planned goals for his future, and this is one of the main, confusing problems that happen to an adult during his quest for identity.

In this regard, Mr. Antolini recognizes that his former student is different from his colleagues since he has a lack of interest in planning for his future as well as a lack of interest in the values of academic education. Therefore, he tries to convince him to apply himself to his studies due to its benefits as a way to understand himself and save himself from being in an inconspicuous path that may lead him to a special kind of fall:

This fall I think you're riding for, it's a special kind of fall, a horrible kind. The man falling isn't permitted to feel or hear himself hit bottom. He just keeps falling and falling. The whole arrangement's designed for men who, at some time or other in their lives, were looking for something their own environment couldn't supply them with. Or they thought their own environment couldn't supply them with. So they gave up looking. They gave it up before they ever really even got started. (Salinger 243)

That is to say that Mr. Antolini believes that Holden is in a kind of psychological breakdown, which he describes as "special kind of fall" in which a person keeps falling and

falling without even reaching the bottom. Therefore, he tries to prevent Holden from being in this special kind of fall through advising him to apply himself to education because it can help him get knowledge that he needs in order to figure out his identity as well as his life's purpose. That is because once he discovers and accepts who he is, he can understand how he plays into humanity and what his purpose in life is. However, when Holden sees Mr. Antolini trying to make what seems to be homosexual advances through patting or petting him, he becomes mad and leaves his house immediately. This incident increased Holden's alienation and hatred towards his society, which he already describes it as a "phony society" that he feels unable to fit in. As a result, he feels more distant in his relationship with others and more confused about his future. And, finally, he finds himself clung to the innocence of children whom he feels a deep empathy due to they still have not been corrupted and shaped according to the beliefs of the society. Hence, Holden decides to be a catcher in the rye to prevent them from falling in the adulthood corrupted world.

3. Holden: A Protector of the Innocence

According to Erikson's theory, young adults are bound to search for their purpose in life. During much of the novel, Holden is constantly seeking to find out about what his role would be in the future. Therefore, when he receives the news of his failure at school, he sets himself on a wild journey which leads him to discover a lot of things about himself and the society of New York City.

3.1. Coming through the Rye

In the sixteenth chapter, the secret behind the title of the novel is discovered. When Holden goes to find phoebe, he crosses path with a little kid singing an incorrect version of the "coming through the rye" song. He finds the lyrics and the singing to be so beautiful and admits that listening to it makes him less nervous and more relaxed. The innocence of the

child is emphasized through the peaceful and calm image portrayed by the description of Holden:

The kid was swell. He was walking in the street, instead of on the sidewalk, but right next to the curb. He was making out like he was walking a very straight line, the way kids do, and the whole time he kept singing and humming. I got up closer so I could hear what he was singing. He was singing that song, "If a body catch a body coming through the rye." He had a pretty little voice, too. He was just singing [...] you could tell. The cars zoomed by, brakes screeched all over the place, his parents paid no attention to him, and he kept on walking next to the curb and singing "If a body catch a body coming through the rye." It made me feel better. It made me feel not so depressed any more. (Salinger 115)

This scene represents the manifestation of children's innocence according to Holden. From his point of view, the child who chooses to walk by the street rather than the sidewalk like his parents refers to the fact that the kid and his parents live in two different worlds: An innocent world, free of complexities and unfaithful acts, and an adult phony world.

3.2. The Wish of Holden

After an exhausting day in New York City, Holden goes to his family house to secretly visit Phoebe. At first, she feels extremely happy for seeing her older brother whom she did not see for long. However, her feelings of joy turn to disappointment when she discovers that he has been expelled from school again. The little sister gets very angry with her brother to the point that she refuses to speak with him. This gets into Holden's nerves because he highly regards his little sister as the most important person in his life due to her attributes of childish innocence and unique cleverness. Therefore, he decides to open himself up for her to discuss his experiences at school with her which is something he does not do much during the novel.

Many teenagers, like Holden, do not open themselves easily towards others and prefer isolating themselves. This serves as a defensive mechanism for adolescents which protects their egos according to Erikson's theory of psychosocial development.

Holden tries to make his sister to sympathize with his cause but his efforts prove unsuccessful. Instead he is left feeling amazed with her high level of intelligence when she cleverly brought the fact that he does not have any clear directions in life. Holden tries helplessly to refuse the thought but he finds himself unable to support his defence. Phoebe's point of view makes him depressed at the truth that comes up with it which eventually motivates him to discover what role might match his interests and wishes.

You don't like anything that's happening."

It made me even more depressed when she said that.

"Yes, I do. Yes, I do. Sure, I do. Don't say that. Why [...] do you say that?"

"Because you don't. You don't like any schools. You don't like a million things. You don't."

"I do! That's where you're wrong—that's exactly where you're wrong! Why ... do you have to say that?" I said. Boy, was she depressing me?

"Because you don't," she said. "Name one thing."

"One thing? One thing I like?" I said. "Okay."

The trouble was, I couldn't concentrate too hot. Sometimes it's hard to concentrate.

(Salinger 220)

Phoebe's question highlights the identity crisis of adolescence which is mainly tackled by Erikson's theory of psychosocial development. During this stage of development, teenagers find themselves, like Holden, anxious about what is their suitable role in life. At first, Holden tries to evade answering her question by criticizing their father's job as he exposes the phony aspects in being a lawyer. After that, he suddenly recalls a kid's version of the "Comin Through the Rye" song:

I thought it was ‘If a body catch a body,’” I said. “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, but that’s the only thing I’d really like to be. I know it’s crazy. (Salinger 224-225)

The song that Holden heard is adapted from a poem by Robert Burns called “Comin’ Thro the Rye”. When he thinks about the lyrics, he imagines himself near a high cliff with children playing all around a field. Therefore, when his sister asks him what he would do with his life, he tells her that he wants to be a catcher in the rye, a person who is responsible for saving kids before they reach the edge of the cliff. In Holden’s imagination, the field in which children play is not a place for adults and their phony unfaithful ideas. It is somewhat similar to the fictional Neverland island of Peter Pan which is a safe haven for innocent children that keeps them safe from the corruption of the world of adults. On the other hand, the cliff refers to the phony corrupted world of adults which he thinks he should keep innocent kids away from.

According to Erikson’s theory of psychosocial development, it is a crucial part of an adolescent development to find a role in life that matches his identity and interests. The process can be quite challenging for teenagers like Holden as they find it uneasy to determine what suits them best. Therefore, it is common to see teenagers shift to different roles as they believe they need to experience more to find their chosen course of life.

3.3. Painful Realization

Holden's wish of becoming a protector of innocent kids is surprisingly inspired from an unexpected mistake. The lyrics of the song are completely different from what he had in mind because the song's correct lyrics actually say: "If a body meet a body coming through the rye" which ironically means the opposite of innocence. Therefore, when Phoebe corrects Holden's version of the song, his intention of becoming a catcher in the rye is dealt a great blow. Furthermore, this misunderstanding also indicates that pure innocence might only exist in Holden's imagination.

You know what I'd like to be?" I said. "You know what I'd like to be? I mean if I had my [...] choice?"

"What? Stop swearing."

"You know that song 'If a body catch a body Comin' through the rye'? I'd like-"

"It's 'If a body meet a body coming through the rye!'" old Phoebe said. "It's a poem. By Robert Burns."

"I know it's a poem by Robert Burns."

She was right, though. It is "If a body meet a body coming through the rye." I didn't know it then, though. (Salinger, 224)

Holden's misunderstanding of the song exposes and questions his belief about childhood's innocence. They might be the group that would likely act innocently in many situations but it does not mean that they are purely or exclusively innocent. Actually; some children in the novel do phony acts that are far from being innocent at times. For instance, Holden, himself, is constantly lying and cannot help stopping it. He gives a false name one time and then lies to his old schoolmate's mother in another occasion. His acts seem to be often phony but he fails to see it. Moreover, when Phoebe accidentally ruined her classmate's jacket with ink, he pushed her down which shows that even kids can get nasty at times. Another example is The Caulfield's family servant who was made half-deaf by her kid

brother during childhood. Despite all of this, Holden chooses to turn a blind eye to the fact that kids' acts are not always completely innocent.

When Holden encounters bad language written at the walls of phoebe's school, he gets furious by the act but feels powerless to do anything significant about it. He imagines school as a castle that protects innocent kids from the evil side of the adult world. However; finding the inappropriate expressions at the walls of the school and the museum shows Holden that children are not safe anymore. Children like phoebe are constantly vulnerable and this is why Holden seeks their protection. Moreover, Holden starts noticing how helpless he is in the external world which is very different from what he had in mind (Mochidome 93).

But while I was sitting down, I saw something that drove me crazy. Somebody'd written [...] on the wall. It drove me damn near crazy. I thought how Phoebe and all the other little kids would see it, and how they'd wonder what [...] it meant, and then finally some dirty kid would tell them-all cockeyed, naturally-what it meant, and how they'd all think about it and maybe even worry about it for a couple of days. I kept wanting to kill whoever'd written it. (Salinger 260)

The profanity on the wall of phoebe's school brings up Holden's biggest fear. It makes Holden realize that children's innocence will inevitably come to contact with the phony ideas of the world of adults. The insulting writings indicate that kids might find themselves pushed to maturity sooner than they naturally should be which makes him worry for his beloved sister. As a result, Holden becomes really depressed and frustrated when he realizes that children can never be separated from the corruption of their society.

The last scene at the park holds key hints about J D Salinger's novel. Just like the museum, Holden is fascinated by the carousel which looks constantly beautiful and untroubled by time which is a trait he likes very much. Holden sits and observes kids trying to reach for the gold ring which represents the children's tendency to do risky acts to satisfy their curiosity and try new things. Later, after enjoying her ride, Phoebe invites her brother to join her but he declines. Holden's refusal demonstrates his first steps towards accepting his inevitable maturity (Fibingerová 15).

According to Erikson's theory of psychosocial development, some teenagers, like Holden, may find it somewhat difficult to quickly succeed in their quests for their identities, but it is certain that they would reach maturity at some point of their development:

Then the carousel started, and I watched her go around and around. There were only about five or six other kids on the ride, and the song the carousel was playing was "Smoke Gets in Your Eyes." It was playing it very jazzy and funny. All the kids kept trying to grab for the gold ring, and so was old Phoebe, and I was sort of afraid she'd fall off the [...] horse, but I didn't say anything or do anything. The thing with kids is, if they want to grab the gold ring, you have to let them do it, and not say anything. If they fall off, they fall off, but it's bad if you say anything to them. (Salinger 273-274)

This moment represents an epiphany moment in Holden's life. He comes to realize that the idea of becoming a catcher in the rye is nothing but a fantasy of his own imagination. He concludes that separating kids from the rest of world is something impossible. Despite the fact that his motive has always been for the good of the innocent, he discovers that pain is a crucial component of a normal development. By letting his sister go for the gold ring, Holden admits that taking risks, such as casually exposing kids to some aspects of the adult world, is important for gaining experience which would undoubtedly be needed in later stages of

development. Moreover, Harper also claims in his book: *Desperate faith: A study of Bellow, Salinger, Mailer, Baldwin and Updike*, that conflicts and risks are something unavoidable (Harper 8).

In the final chapter of the novel, Holden realizes that the role he set for himself is nothing but a mere fantasy. Therefore, he decides to reconsider his options while being in recovery and decides to go back to school life by next fall. According to Erikson's theory, it is common for teenagers to fail in finding an appropriate or a realistic role from the first attempts. Some of them might try several roles before finding the one which suits them best. In the case of Holden, his decision to go back to school shows signs of early maturity and illustrates that he is probably ready for perusing a more realistic identity for himself. Holden may have given up the idea of becoming the catcher in the rye but the end gives the impression that his quest for identity was somewhat successful (Mochidome 91).

Conclusion

Holden's path towards maturity was certainly not an easy one as he was faced by many challenges from his surroundings. His family and school connections contributed differently to his quest for identity: Some influential characters like phoebe were vital for correcting the course of his journey while some other characters failed to do him any good .Furthermore, Holden's own experiences and traits helped in shaping the course which he set for himself .In the end , Holden managed to realize that being the catcher in the rye is an unrealistic which leads to the conclusion that Holden's wild journey helped in making him more mature . It pushed him to readjust his view towards the world and reconsider other plans by the end of the novel. As a conclusion, it can be safely said that Holden's quest was not a failure after all.

General Conclusion

Published in 1951, *The Catcher in the Rye* is widely regarded as one of the most successful novels of the postmodern era due to its great popularity especially amongst the ranks of teenagers. It is a postmodern masterpiece in which J.D. Salinger successfully manages to manifest the quest of teenagers for their true identities. For much of the novel, Holden Caulfield is torn apart between staying an innocent child; a choice he clearly prefers for the majority of the novel, and the inevitable outcome of growing up; an outcome he ultimately fears since he often fails to understand the nature of the adult world. Therefore, for the sake of finding his role in life, which would eventually shape his identity, he unleashes himself on an unexpected journey of self-discovery. Following his expulsion from Pencey prep school, Holden decides to aimlessly wander around New York city where he visits odd places and encounters different people doing the most unusual acts. Despite it being a short-lived adventure, it proves to be crucial for Holden's development.

Erik Erikson's theory of psychosocial development backs the fact that adolescence is one of the most significant stages in an individual's growth. During this stage, some teenagers find themselves trapped in no man's land between the world of adults and childhood due to the environment they live in. Thus, their transition may not look as swift as their peers because they struggle to comprehend being grown up nor could they accept the norms of the adult world. During adolescence, teenagers start questioning their life roles so they investigate their environment to find the perfect identity which suits their interests and traits. Once they find what they want in life, they set themselves on a quest which would shape their identities.

Considering the importance of this revolutionary work of literature and the amount of success it has amongst teenagers, this dissertation aims at investigating Holden Caulfield's search for the identity which matches his characteristics and interests. In doing so, the paper

uses Erik Erikson's theory of psychosocial development as a reference for analysing Holden's journey towards maturity and investigating his connections with the other characters of the novel.

This dissertation is an attempt to answer the questions given at the general introduction. Therefore, it concludes that Holden's quest for identity came to face multiple obstacles starting from factors associated with his family and school connections to his own experiences and psychological development. Despite of all of these factors, Holden managed to carry on the quest. However, by the end of the novel, Holden realized that a major adjustment in the quest's course was needed when he realized that the catcher in they rye's role was an impossible fantasy.

The structure of this dissertation is divided into two chapters with the first chapter being dedicated for the theoretical study. This chapter sheds light on 1950's America which due to its significance as a socio-historical context for Salinger's novel. In addition, it discusses young adult fiction and investigates the connection between psychology and literature. Moreover, the second part of the first chapter overviews Erik Erikson's eight stages of psychosocial development. It briefly discusses each stage of the theory with additional focus on the adolescence stage of development.

The second chapter represents the main and practical part of the paper which seeks to give answers to the already mentioned research questions of the paper. Depending on Erik Erikson's theory of psychosocial development, this chapter puts the main protagonist of the novel; Holden Caulfield, at the heart of the study. It investigates the nature of his connections with the people surrounding him like his parents, siblings and school and the way he views the world around him. Moreover, it explores the internal psychosocial issues Holden faces

during his transformation from childhood to maturity. Then, it analyses the changes that Holden go through in his quest for his new identity.

The Catcher in the Rye is a rich work of literature which has always been under spotlights since its publication in 1951. Unsurprisingly, this revolutionary piece of writing is still providing researchers with a rich number of literary topics to discuss. For instance, this paper focuses mainly on the psychosocial aspects of Holden's journey towards maturity while minding Erik Erikson's theory. However, despite our efforts we can say that there is still room for researchers to exploit on the themes of adolescence and identity formation in this literary work. For example, J.D. Salinger's exceptional portrayal of adolescent characters in the novel provides a good point for future researches.

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الحارس في حقل الشوفان رائحة من روائع الدب المعاصر . عمل ساليانجر شهد شعبية كبيرة في صفوف المراقبين منذ أول إصدار للرواية في 1591. هذه المذكرة تهدف إلى تحليل كيف قام ساليانجر بتقديم سعي الشخصية الرئيسية نحو إيجاد هويته داخل مجتمع معاصر . يهدف هذا العمل النوعي التحليلي من خلال الإلغتماد على نظرية إريك إريكسون للنمو النفسي إلى اجتماعي إلى تسليط الضوء على انعكاس هولدن على ذاته ونظرتة للمجتمع الأمريكي المعاصر الذي تسبب له في التخبط حول هويته والشعور بالنعزال والإغتراب . هذه المذكرة أيضا تناقش سعي هولدن نحو النضوج وتتحرى عواقبه . إن أهمية هذا العمل تكمن في التركيز على كفاح المراقبين مثل هولدن في سبيل الهوية والذين يمثلون أحد أهم مراحل النمو البشري . النتائج تظهر أن بحث هولدن عن هويته لم يكن بالشئ الهين لأنه يجد نفسه مرارا وتكرارا مضغوطا وسط تأثير عائلته ومجتمعه . رغم كل هذا إلا أنه يمكن ترقب نتائج إيجابية عند الخوض في مخروجات هذا العمل حيث أننا الحظ بدء هولدن في التفكير بطريقة سليمة حول ما ينفعه سعيه إلى هويته .