

Alienation and Loneliness of American Postmodern Characters in Salinger's Masterpiece *Catcher in The Rye*

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Abstract

The alienation, loneliness and loneliness of modern man among crowd of the society are the main themes of Salinger's masterpieces which need to be clarified the combination of the two significant literary and social factors in this paper, namely, modern man and alienation, loneliness, and their exploration in Salinger's works of are not much investigated in the literature. Salinger's was one of the greatest literary masters in the last century who influenced and inspired literary masters.

Keywords: loneliness, alienation, American literature, Salinger

INTRODUCTION

Salinger was born (1919–2010) in New York City in 1919. The son of a wealthy father, Salinger grew up in Manhattan and spent his youth was in various prep schools before his parents settled on the Valley Forge Military Academy in 1934. Salinger had his first short story published in 1940; he continued to write as he joined the army and fought in Europe during World War II. Upon his return to the United States and civilian life in 1946, Salinger wrote more stories, publishing them in many respected magazines. His landmark novel, *Catcher in the Rye*, set a new course for literature in post-World War II America and his short stories, many of which appeared in *The New Yorker*, inspired the early careers of writers such as Phillip Roth, John Updike and Harold Brodkey. He had not published any work in 34 years until 1999 when he published his new novel *Harper Watts*. He produced a lot of novels, short stories, and novellas, among which the most prominent is *The Catcher in the Rye*, which has been outstanding at three aspects: anti-tradition, first person technique, and stream of consciousness. Over a long time, criticism is centered on the novel on the moral degeneration, nihilism, sex description, and excessive use of vulgar language, etc.

CATCHER IN THE REY

Nowadays, the language style has become a characteristic of the novel. Many scholars study *The Catcher in the Rye's* language features and artistic style around the world. This novel has a significant status in American literature. This thesis aims at revealing its

language features: anti-tradition, the first-person technique, and stream of consciousness.

Anti-Tradition Language is a chronicler of the times. *The Catcher in the Rye* is not only a successful description of the status of the United States after the World War II and the mental state of the American youth, but also accurately and vividly record the language habits of the American youth. American critic Donald once said: Upon returning home, he made another attempt at college, this time at Ursinus College in Pennsylvania, before coming back to New York and taking night classes at Columbia University. There, Salinger met a Professor Whit Burnett, who would change his life. *The Catcher in the Rye* is set around the 1950s and is narrated by a young man named Holden Caulfield. It is not specific about his location while he's telling the story, but he makes it clear that he is undergoing treatment in a mental hospital or sanatorium. The events he narrates take place in the few days between the end of the fall school term and Christmas, when Holden is sixteen years old.

MODERNISM

Spanning the first half of the 20th century or more, modernism has been associated with the twentieth-century reaction against realism and romanticism within the arts. Modernism is often used to refer to a twentieth-century belief in the virtues of science, technology and social change. Writers of this period tended to pursue more experimental and usually more highly individualistic forms of writing. In this period, time is not conceived in a static model which separates past, present, and future as discrete elements in linear order; rather, these elements are viewed as influencing and changing one another.

POSTMODERNISM

Postmodern writers envisioned that there is no connection between the past and the present and that past events are irrelevant in the present. In contrast with the modernists, the postmodernists tried to give the other a voice and abrogated any distinctions between high and low culture. Postmodernist works exhibit incongruence, incoherence, a world of surfaces without depth or roots. In postmodernism, the ideas of order, sequence, and unity in works of art are sometimes abandoned. Fragmentation in postmodernist literature is meant to reflect the reality of the flux and splintering of human life. Postmodern writers often leave their stories open-ended, without any satisfying conclusion.

Postmodern stories and novels rely heavily on irony, parody, pastiche and satire. Postmodern authors often reject the boundaries between the different genres. The postmodern texts reveal skepticism about the ability of art to create meaning, the ability of history to reveal truth, and the ability of language to convey reality. All that skepticism led to fragmented, open-ended, self-reflexive stories that are intellectually fascinating but often difficult to grasp. The stylistic techniques of postmodernism include the frequent use of intersexuality, Metafiction, temporal distortion, magical realism, faction, reader involvement and minimalist techniques of reduction, omission and suggestion. These

techniques can be found most clearly in the works of such writers as Samuel Beckett, Kurt Vonnegut, Jorge Luis Borges, John Barth, Vladimir Nabokov, Jane Rhys, Don DeLillo, Salman Rushdie, Thomas Pynchon and many others.

Postmodernism challenges the basic assumptions of "modernism" concerning the role of reason, rationality, or scientific reasoning in guiding our understanding of the human condition. Mary Klages (2001 Webpage) distinguishes between "modernism" which refers to the movement as outlined above and "modernity" which she uses to refer to the period which started with the Enlightenment in the mid-eighteenth century. Modernity is fundamentally about order, coherence, stability, rationality, objectivity and scientific truth.

ALIENATION

The Latin term *alien is* means, 'to remove or take away.' So, to separate legally a person's possessions or rights to property (or liberty, in the case of slaves) becomes a kind of alienation, and because some kinds of property or rights could not be taken away, they came to be known as inalienable..."

1 *Webster Essential Vocabulary* describes multi aspect meanings of *Alienation* e.g. to transfer land ownership to another; to estrange; make unfriendly; to cause to be detached or withdrawn; to cause a change of affection; to sell a piece of property to another is to alienate.

From above references one can figure out the following aspects of alienation which will be focused in this article.

- In ordinary sense it indicates "turning away" / "Keeping away" from related ones.
- In legal terms it denotes the shift of possessions from a person / party to someone other, either as gift or by purchase and sale.
- In Psychological researches and Psychiatric practices, it signifies digression from routine or normal way.
- In Modern Sociological investigations and also in Psychology it man's feeling of alien-ness towards society, nature, people or even from one's own-self.

Alienation is a state in which a person feels one-self alone, estranged, worthless and meaningless. This may be the result of sociopolitical setup or due to capitalist surroundings but it is accepted fact that a person who suffers this has to bear a psychological agony. In our history of religions, it has been reported that had 'rat Adam complaint loneliness and asked God for a companion. This makes clear that loneliness makes a man estranged from one's own surroundings. This estranged situation, for some thinkers is purely psychological, for some ones it is an intellectual phenomenon but for Karl Marx it is a material and social process which affects human beings. In modern time, psychologists have explored its variety of forms and their effects on persons and society. This research paper presents its meaning, history, types and its effects on individual as well as on society.

Plotinus' Concept of Alienation

His concept of alienation 'emanates' from his own "Theory of Emanation", according to this theory, the universe and all other things and beings emanated from the indivisible Unity (The GOD). The One is so perfect and His perfection "Over-flows" and step by step everything "emanates" and "overflows" from Him. The further you go, the more steps of emanation occurs, the more things came into existence but the more alienation takes place.

On the contrary, the more you becomes nearer the ONE, the alienation diminishes the more, till you shade off into the unity of The ONE. It means that the more alienation, the more your existence and the less alienation, the less or nothing you are. Alienation in the Old Testament Some philosophers traces the roots of this concept into *The Old Testament* and uses the term "Alienation" and "Reification", which means such an action that can transform the humanistic attributes as the properties and aspects of material things which are independent and unrelated to humanistic properties and humans as beings and that govern the lives of human beings.

Types of Alienation

This alienation in labor or earning appears as the following types of that alienation *e.g.* alienation in the process of production, alienation from the produced objects which the workers produced by their labor and alienation from other workers, from the rest of humanity and even alienation from nature also.

1. Species Alienation (means Man's estrangement from his species being or essential nature).

To explain this type of alienation, we have to consider the theory about human being presented by Karl Marx. In this, he considered *Man*, not as an isolated entity or individual without any social life. What an individual calls his own private and inner life, it is in fact, shaped previous history. Negating previous philosophers' view, he holds that reason alone does not constitutes the essential nature of man. He takes man as a whole, in all plenitude of his being. He agrees with Hegel and Feuerbach that man is a universal being. But his reference is contrary to them.

Labor is what distinguishes man from lower animals. Animals also do labor but their activity is strictly under compulsion. Man can only produce when he is free and his production is in conformity with the ordains of beauty and commensurate with the laws of nature.

The production of anything freely, is the expression of essential nature of man. He becomes alienated from his species being when his laboring activity is degraded to animal or mechanical function in "Estranged Labor".

2. Alienation from other People

This form of Alienation is in fact corollary to the 3rd form. Thesis an instant and abrupt effect of man's estrangement from his work or labor. It effect man's life and its relating activities. Man feels alienation from his own species-being, relative and associates. This

expands from man to man and to the society also. Because if a man feels confrontation with or within his own-self, then he is in confrontation with others also.

3. Conclusion of Marx's views about Alienation

Marx concludes that estranged labor gives rise to private property. If labor, (the result of labor e.g. production) confronts the worker as an alien, hostile and independent power, in whose service is this labor done? It is obviously, in the service of the *Non-Workers* or *the Capitalists*. He elaborates that because of alienation, society splits into two classes e.g. "the toiling masses" and "the non-workers" and he terms them as "*the haves*" and "*the haves-not*" classes.

4. Alienation: Its Aspects and Impacts

Alienation as an experience and as a behavior or more clearly as an aberration of human psychological mode of dealing others in a society, is seen everywhere in the world, not only in developing countries but also in developed states also. It is manifested as mental disorders, depression, criminal thinking, anti-social thinking and slogans, rebellious behavior, discontentment and even physical and health problems. This also causes deviations from social norms which are expected to be practiced in society. Recently Discovered Types of Alienations. Here are some modern and most common as well as dangerous forms of alienations.

LONELINESS

Loneliness is part of the human condition that affects all ages, but older people are particularly vulnerable. Experiences commonly associated with ageing, such as loss of family and friends, poor health, decreased mobility and income; as well as trends in wider society, such as greater geographical mobility, reduced inter-generational living, less cohesive communities, mean that older people may become more socially isolated, potentially leading to increased loneliness.

SALINGER, CATCHER IN THE REY LONELINESS, ALIENATION

Throughout the narrative, Holden shows how much he struggles to follow the norms of society. This makes him appear as an outsider. The character is depicted as having strong resistant behavior, which makes him look troubled and rebellious. His problems to conform socially cause him to fail. For some readers, these could indicate symptoms of a narcissistic personality. However, when Holden interacts with the nuns and Ernest's mother, he enjoys their company but gets nervous and therefore he lies in order to protect himself. Holden shows empathy in many ways. He shows that he understands regarding his mother's grief and he shows generosity towards the nuns. Furthermore, Holden feels guilty about the inexpensive suitcase, and he tries to come up with a solution to make his roommate feel less embarrassed. He shows that he is very upset about the way James Castle was treated. In addition, he feels protective of Jane when she goes on a date with Stradlater. All these personalities, such as generosity, guilty, or the feeling the need to protect are signs of Holden Caulfield not being a narcissist. However, Holden's unbearable loss of his younger brother Allie makes it difficult for him to behave as is expected of him. He tries to hold on to the memory of Allie. Therefore, he channels the

love he feels for his sister Phoebe into a dream where he is the savior. He wants to protect her simply because he loves her and he does not want anything bad to happen to her. The fact that he finally allows her to be the one that catches him instead of the opposite is a sign of hope. Even when society fails him, Holden does not surrender. (Hayward, 2018)

Morteza Yazdanjoo believes (2016) Stylistic features of Holden Caulfield's language in J. D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye*: a corpus-based study drawing on corpus stylistics techniques, this paper argues that quantitative approaches, quite frequently ignored in the realm of literature, potentially generate new insights which could possibly substantiate literary interpretations. Such an interdisciplinary method creates a more objective framework to empirically analyze aesthetic dimensions of a given text. Using Matrix, online software developed by Paul Rayson, this study seeks to examine stylistic features in J. D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* with the aim of decoding its main thematic motifs and the characterization of Holden Caulfield, the central character. The protagonist's idiosyncratic use of language, which represents his supposedly "rebellious" individuality in a transitory stage of his life, plays a crucial part in delineating his role in the novel.

Keyword, sematic prosody and clusters are singled out to decode the ideology behind Holden's mode of speech. The paper also highlights the importance of context and co-text in dealing more effectively and realistically with the quantitative data thus obtained. As a novel approach, corpus stylistics both bridges the historical gap between qualitative and quantitative studies and provides a relatively objective framework for literary interpretations. It imparts practical analytical toolkits to the realm of literature to substantiate critical approaches which are sometimes accused of being overly subjective. In addition to quantitative data, corpus methodology includes qualitative techniques like sematic prosody and phraseology. Such a comprehensive methodology paves the way to empirically unearth the subtle dimensions of literary texts. Paul Rayson's W Matrix facilitates automatic analysis and interpretation of textual structures and meanings. In *The Catcher in the Rye*, a dialogic novel in the Bakhtinian sense of the word, different discourses interact with each other. On the one hand, Holden Caulfield strives to break away from sociocultural norms which he believes are prescribed to deprive him of his individuality.

This paper examines and compares *The Catcher in the Rye* (1951) by Jerome David Salinger and *The House on Mango Street* (1984) by Sandra Cisneros. On the first sight, these two pieces of literature seem utterly different: *The Catcher in the Rye*, set in the late forties, is a story told by Holden Caulfield, a depressed, alienated 16- year-old boy of upper-middle-class origin who strongly disapproves of the world around him and desperately tries to escape the falsity and arrogance that surrounds him.

The House on Mango Street, which is often considered a feminist novel (Saldívar-Hull 87; Wissman 159; Daniels 127), is a collection of poetic short stories about a Mexican American girl, Esperanza Cordero, who is growing up in the suburbs of Chicago during the early sixties. Yet, this analysis suggests that these two novels share a number of common features and that the experience of the main characters is not as different as it appears. Both Holden and Esperanza challenge their gender roles; they unsuccessfully

seek guidance within their peer group or family; both plan to run away or at least long to be alone. Another view that they share is the opinion on class division and human relationships, especially their perception of love, sex and death. Even though there are significant differences between the main characters, such as gender and social and ethnic background, the thesis argues that both Holden and Esperanza have quite similar experience of “growing up” and that factors such as their gender or society in which they live do not make a considerable difference between their perceptions of adolescence.

Here it has been tried to find out whether these two novels can be somehow linked with each other through the features of Bildungsroman that they both contain. Especially the position of *The Catcher in the Rye* within the genre of Bildungsroman is often challenged. The first section deals with the question whether Holden and Esperanza should be approached as Bildungsroman characters and to what extent their development embraces the traditional conception of Bildungsroman.

The work then goes on to compare Holden's perception of his life and Esperanza's view of her life and analyze the similarities and differences in their behavior and attitudes. The first theme that is examined is gender roles, stereotypes connected to them and the characters' opposition to them. Then, the thesis focuses on the socio-economic status of Holden and Esperanza and shows that even though the characters come from strikingly different surroundings; neither of them is comfortable with their position within the class structure. Next discussed theme is the relationships between the characters and their parents and siblings, for the family members are important for both Holden and Esperanza, even though the reasons and manifestations of their importance are different. Then, the focus moves to the presence of friends and potential role models and their usefulness to the main characters. Following theme is Holden's and Esperanza's perceptions of love, sex and death. The work interprets the ways in which the two young people experience their first romantic encounters, their view on the matters of sex and also how Holden and Esperanza cope with death. This subsection also shows that these three themes are interconnected for both Holden and Esperanza. The final part of the chapter is focused on the motives of quest and escape, which resonate quite strongly through both novels.

Karel Capelle in his article (2011) the “new American picaresque” at mid-century. In Jack Kerouac's an analysis of *On the Road* and J.D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* “One's destination is never a place,” Henry Miller observed, “but rather a new way of looking at things”. In fact, on many occasions the act of traveling and wandering has connotations of discovering or rediscovering the self and the country one inhabits. American literary critic Rowland A. Sherrill noticed that since the early 1950s, a remarkable number of Americans have hit the road and felt compelled to write about their journeys through America upon their return home. Sherrill himself contributed a great deal to the critical scrutiny of these “road books” with his wide-ranging and sophisticated study recorded in his *Road-Book America* (2000). Moreover, he interpreted this reinvigorated American “road literature” that started blossoming in the aftermath of the Second World War and flourished all throughout the second half of the century as “a powerful reappearance and significant transformation of the old literary form of the picaresque narrative, a form

apparently equipped for grappling with American life in the second half of the twentieth century and into the new millennium". His work will serve as a vital source for this dissertation, yet whereas he takes into account post-war literature in its entirety, it will be added to Sherrill's work by specifically focusing on mid-century America as fertile breeding ground for what he calls the "new American picaresque." For this reason, it will be zoomed in on two of the most compelling novels that were published in the 1950s. J.D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* (1951) and Jack Kerouac's *On the Road* (1957), both (in)famous for content and style, are commonly placed among the most influential as well as controversial novels that were written in the early post-war era. Their remarkable literary merit has mainly been attributed to their skilful representation of the fifties, a decade that was characterized by alienation and budding rebellion.

Chen (2009) an Analysis of the Adolescent Problems in *The Catcher in the Rye*. *The Catcher in the Rye* was written by famous American writer J.D. Salinger. This study mainly analyzes the adolescent problems Holden Caulfield confronts on the journey from childhood to adulthood. These adolescent problems include Holden's protection of innocence, his disgust for the phoniness of the adult world, and his alienation from society. This study concludes that these adolescent problems produce great impact on him. Holden behaves almost erratically and impulsively and has negative attitudes towards almost everything and everyone he meets.

The Catcher in the Rye, Salinger's masterpiece, tells the painful story of a high-school boy growing up in the world of decadent New York. Young Holden Caulfield is expelled from school because of his poor academic performance. He is afraid to meet his parents earlier than they should expect him, so he decides to stay in a New York City hotel. There he meets pimps, prostitutes and "queers." Soon he becomes aware that the world of adults is a "phony" one. After his meeting with a friend, Holden sneaks back home to see his kid sister Phoebe. She is a loving kid, but her talk about their father "killing" him sickens him. Creeping out of home, he goes to see his former teacher, Mr. Antolini, only to find that his respectable teacher is a homosexual. And he escapes from Antolini's house. Holden feels himself sinking. Then he decides to go west and spend the rest of his life there. When he goes to say goodbye to his sister Phoebe, she insists on going with him. This unexpected act of love drives him out of his dream and his nightmarish three-day adventure in New York. Finally he goes home, falls ill, and recovers in a psychiatric ward in California. It is there that he recounts his sad story of growing up in *The Catcher in the Rye*.

J. D. Salinger's masterpiece *The Catcher in the Rye* is one of the most important books to emerge in American literature after World War II. The focus of intense censorship arguments for the period of thirty-five years and the source of utter confusion and distress to many literary critics, *The Catcher in the Rye*, published in 1951, has managed to hold the interest of passionate American readers for many decades. (Dizdar, 2012)

Salinger worked on his novel step- by step, starting early in his youth. Although Salinger wrote many short stories, *The catcher in The Rye* is his only novel. It could be considered the culminations of some of the major themes that appeared throughout a number of his stories. Yet, some of these themes form the basis of only individual chapters in *the catcher*. The Caulfield family is the subject of two Salinger's major stories: "I'm crazy" and "This

sandwich has no Mayonnaise." The basis of *The catcher in The Rye* as an sequence of distinct short stories, as well as Salinger's fondness for that from explains the pace and relative lack of narrative continuity in the novel. Different setting or different characters do not reappear in more than one or two successive chapters. The first chapters of the novel, which are located at penecy, are the only ones that maintain the same characters and setting for an extended period. Holden, as narrator, is the only character that recurs throughout the entire story. Characters such as sally Hayes or Mr.Antolini appear in one only chapter and then almost disappear. Moreover, as Salinger reiterates thematic elements all through the novel, such as Holden's complaining about phonies all the time, many of the characters can be viewed as short stories in themselves. (Mirela, 2008)

The first thing I did when I got off at Penn Station, I went into this phone booth. I felt like giving somebody a buzz. I left my bags right outside the booth so that I could watch them, but as soon as I was inside, I couldn't think of anybody to call up. My brother D.B. was in Hollywood. My kid sister Phoebe goes to bed around nine o'clock--so I couldn't call her up. She wouldn't've cared if I'd woke her up, but the trouble was, she wouldn't've been the one that answered the phone. My parents would be the ones. So that was out. Then I thought of giving Jane Gallagher's mother a buzz, and find out when Jane's vacation started, but I didn't feel like it. Besides, it was pretty late to call up. Then I thought of calling this girl I used to go around with quite frequently, Sally Hayes, because I knew her Christmas vacation had started already--she'd written me this long, phony letter, inviting me over to help her trim the Christmas tree Christmas Eve and all--but I was afraid her mother'd answer the phone. Her mother knew my mother, and I could picture her breaking a goddam leg to get to the phone and tell my mother I was in New York. Besides, I wasn't crazy about talking to old Mrs. Hayes on the phone. She once told Sally I was wild. She said I was wild and that I had no direction in life. Then I thought of calling up this guy that went to the Whooton School when I was there, Carl Luce, but I didn't like him much. So, I ended up not calling anybody. I came out of the booth, after about twenty minutes or so, and got my bags and walked over to that tunnel where the cabs are and got a cab. (P, 77)

It has been universally accepted that the climax of Salinger's literary creations is represented by *the catcher in the rye*, which seems to have a unique power on the young readers who discover it for the first time, and also for Salinger's fans who usually identify themselves with Holden Caulfield and his experiences and feelings. Salinger's use of colloquial language is present throughout the novel, and it offers humor, pathos, understanding and insight, and a unique view of the world. Holden caulfeild knew the difference between phoniness and truth. The major theme, and the subject of the novel, is growing up. The theme can also be considered the author's attitude about his subject, and that is why, in a broad sense, could be the difficulty of growing up, the lonely and difficult passage from innocence to experience. Salinger's novels is shaped as a circle, since it begins in California, in Holden's rest home when he starts telling about the experiences that lead to his breakdown, and it ends when Holden returns to his rest home again, completing the circle. Salinger manages to intensify the circular structure of the

novel by repeating the same symbols and themes at the conclusion of the novel that be used at the beginning. And this demonstrates the maturation and development of Salinger's writing technique. (Mirela, 2008)

Holden cannot be more emphatic about his hatred towards the socioeconomic difference that shapes his and his roommate's consciousness.

His awareness of the situation is obvious in his attempt to find a way (throwing his suitcase out or trading it with Dick) to deny this difference.

Had the difference been derived from the economic status only, it would not have been that difficult to eliminate it. But a deeper realization is still to come:

But it was a funny thing. Here's what happened. What I did, I finally put *my* suitcases under *my* bed, instead of on the rack, so that old

Slagle wouldn't get a goddam inferiority complex about it. But here's what he did. The day after I put mine under my bed, he took them out and put them back on the rack. The reason he did it, it took me a while to find out, was because he wanted people to think my bags were his. (P, 129)

Salinger's use of point of view in *the catcher in the rye* is an example of subjective, first person narrative. Holden is the one who tells the reader everything about what happens to him and about his feelings. By using this technique, Salinger manages to connect the reader directly in the novel and to create depth. The language used in the novel has paramount importance. Salinger's colloquial and slang language helps to increase Holden's portrayal and to control the pace of the novel. Many critics have noticed that Holden's brusque speech serves to show his inarticulate and rebellious personality. Donal Costello in "the language of *the catcher in the Rye*," managed to encapsulate the numerous instances of Holden's speech, demonstrating the importance of Salinger's use of italicized words or syllables, Holden's use of the same word in many different contexts, all the subtle aspects that force the reader to pay close attention in order to understand the exact shades of meaning Holden intends. Some of the most important symbols that can be identified in the novel are the song by Robert Burns, the red hunting hat, and the sports images that appear throughout the novel. The title, which comes from a mishearing of the song, indicates Holden's great desire to have a transcendent moral purpose, to save children from any loss of innocence. (Mirela, 2008)

THE LONELY CROWD AND THE CATCHER IN THE RYE

"[F]or me, the weight of the book is in the narrator's voice, the non-stop peculiarities of it, his personal, extremely discriminating attitude to his reader listener, his asides about gasoline rainbows in street puddles, his philosophy or way of looking at cowhide suitcases and empty toothpaste cartons — in a word, his thoughts." —Salinger, in a letter to a filmmaker about the prospect of making *theCatcher in the Rye* into a movie (Itzkoff 2010).

The year 1950 saw the publication of *The Lonely Crowd: a Study of the Changing American Character*, a seminal sociological study of American character by David Riesman, with

contributions from sociologist Nathan Glazer and poet Reuel Denney. It became a surprise bestseller and one of the few works of sociology with sales exceeding 75,000 copies during the 1950s — a fact which, Haney (2008, 210) argues, “imbues its high sales figures with added significance” —and total sales of 1.4 million copies by the early twenty-first century (McGrath 2002), which makes it the best-selling book by a sociologist in American history.

Written in 1948–1949, while it is “inseparably linked ... to the 1950s ... [its] social science perspectives shaping [it] are ... more representative of the 1930s and 1940s than of the 1950s”, as Wrong (1992, 381–382) notes. Whitfield (1997, 586) reports on the affinity between *The Lonely Crowd* and *Catcher*, noting that it was such that Riesman even assigned *Catcher* to his students as a case study when teaching at Harvard University. Being a work that both continues to be relevant to this day as well as being inextricably linked to the time *The Catcher in the Rye* was released, it makes for a befitting source for contextualizing my study of the book (published in 1951 and written some years before that).

The central and arguably the most influential contribution of *The Lonely Crowd* to the field of sociology is Riesman’s explication of historical and universal types, both of which I shall briefly expound here. I will begin my discussion of Riesman’s theories by presenting his so-called *historical types*; that is, the tradition-directed, inner-directed, and other-directed character types. (EeroHelenius, 2014)

ALIENATION AS A FORM OF SELF-PROTECTION

Throughout the novel, Holden seems to be excluded from and victimized by the world around him. As he says to Mr. Spencer, he feels trapped on “the other side” of life, and he continually attempts to find his way in a world in which he feels he doesn’t belong.

As the novel progresses, we begin to perceive that Holden’s alienation is his way of protecting himself. Just as he wears his hunting hat to advertise his uniqueness, he uses his isolation as proof that he is better than everyone else around him and therefore above interacting with them. The truth is that interactions with other people usually confuse and overwhelm him, and his cynical sense of superiority serves as a type of self-protection. Thus, Holden’s alienation is the source of what little stability he has in his life. (Pishkar, 2012)

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.

In psychoanalytical literary criticism, it is of interest to study when and why an author lets a character speak freely and share dreams and thoughts in a narrative. This is important because it is used in order to analyze a character by interpreting their thoughts or dreams as well as the spoken words. When characters in a narrative share their innermost thoughts by talking about their dreams, fears, needs or desires, a literary critic can use that information to analyse the personality and the relationships with others (Barry 101). Literary critics look for feelings and motives that are buried in the unconscious, from the character's personality or from the author. Barry explains that Freud meant that dreams are used as an "escape-hatch or safety valve" which the repressed feelings could use to find a way out into the conscious. Freud meant that the repressed emotion used the dream as a disguise (101). In other words, the dreams allow characters to show the real meaning and wishes as dreams are not censured the way spoken words are. Barry compares this with a person who is dressing up in order to look like someone else, and thereby uses the disguise to have access to what was denied before (101).

"Well--take me to the Edmont then," I said. "Would you care to stop on the way and join me for a cocktail? On me. I'm loaded." "Can't do it, Mac. Sorry." He certainly was good company. Terrific personality. (P, 79)

I was changing my shirt; I damn near gave my kid sister Phoebe a buzz, though. I certainly felt like talking to her on the phone. Somebody with sense and all. But I couldn't take a chance on giving her a buzz, because she was only a little kid and she wouldn't have been up, let alone anywhere near the phone. I thought of maybe hanging up if my parents answered, but that wouldn't've worked, either. They'd know it was me. My mother always knows it's me. She's psychic. But I certainly wouldn't have minded shooting the crap with old Phoebe for a while. But there was one nice thing. This family that you could tell just came out of some church were walking right in front of me--a father, a mother, and a little kid about six years old. They looked sort of poor. The father had on one of those pearl-gray hats that poor guys wear a lot when they want to look sharp. He and his wife were just walking along, talking, not paying any attention to their kid. 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 for the hell of it, 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.

If you want to know the truth, I don't know what I think about it. I'm sorry I told so many people about it. About all I know is, I sort of miss everybody I told about. Even old Stradlater and Ackley, for instance. I think I even miss that goddam Maurice. It's funny. Don't ever tell anybody anything. If you do, you start missing everybody. (p, 276)

CONCLUSION

According to Barry, Freudian psychoanalytic critics consider the overt content in the narrative to be associated with the conscious mind. The covert or the hidden meaning in the work however, is associated with the unconscious mind. Barry writes that the hidden meaning in the text is “what the work is ‘really’ about” (107). The unconscious mind is what Freud calls the id, and the conscious mind is called the ego. A third level in a human’s personality is called the super-ego. This is known as the conscience in Freudian psychoanalysis. These three levels are all different parts of a personality. Barry explains that the unconscious motives of the author or of the characters in a narrative are important in psychoanalytical literary criticism, because they show the real character. The message from the author can be interpreted through the speech or actions of the character. Focus is on the unconscious because what we experience in our conscious mind is only a fragment of the whole picture. Our instincts and fantasies are in the unconscious. The unconscious is revealed in dreams, and that is why it is important for Freudian psychoanalytical critics to understand how to interpret dreams (Barry 107).

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