

JIHOČESKÁ UNIVERZITA V ČESKÝCH BUDĚJOVICÍCH
FILOZOFICKÁ FAKULTA
ÚSTAV ANGLISTIKY

BAKALÁŘSKÁ PRÁCE

**SYMBOLISM IN THE *CATCHER IN THE RYE*
BY J.D. SALINGER**

Vedoucí práce: Richard Stock, Ph.D.

Autor práce: Jana Šojdelová

Studijní obor: Bohemistika – Anglistika

Ročník: 2.

2014

Prohlašuji, že svoji bakalářskou práci jsem vypracovala samostatně pouze s použitím pramenů a literatury uvedených v seznamu citované literatury.

Prohlašuji, že v souladu s § 47b zákona č. 111/1998 Sb. v platném znění souhlasím se zveřejněním své bakalářské práce, a to v nezkrácené podobě elektronickou cestou ve veřejně přístupné části databáze STAG provozované Jihočeskou univerzitou v Českých Budějovicích na jejích internetových stránkách, a to se zachováním mého autorského práva k odevzdanému textu této kvalifikační práce. Souhlasím dále s tím, aby toutéž elektronickou cestou byly v souladu s uvedeným ustanovením zákona č. 111/1998 Sb. zveřejněny posudky školitele a oponentů práce i záznam o průběhu a výsledku obhajoby kvalifikační práce. Rovněž souhlasím s porovnáním textu mé kvalifikační práce s databází kvalifikačních prací Theses.cz provozovanou Národním registrem vysokoškolských kvalifikačních prací a systémem na odhalování plagiátů.

České Budějovice, 1. 5. 2014

.....

Acknowledgements

I would like to sincerely thank my supervisor Richard Stock, Ph.D. for his valuable suggestions, insight and help. I am grateful for the constant support from my family and friends, and their willingness to listen to my endless “catcher” talk. Finally, my thanks also belong to J.D. Salinger and Holden, for making me feel understood and not alone.

Anotace

Nejpodstatnějším motivem románu J. D. Salinger, *Kdo chytá v žitě*, je všudypřítomný boj hlavního hrdiny Holdena Caulfielda s dospíváním, který ho nakonec po neúspěšném hledání svého místa ve společnosti dožene k nervovému zhroucení. Tato obtížná situace, hledání identity, jíž čelí prakticky všichni lidé, je podpořena Salingerovým pečlivým použitím symbolických odkazů v celém románu. Důkladná analýza symbolů a jak v románu fungují, je nezbytná pro plné pochopení Holdenovy cesty dospíváním a jeho jednání. Cílem této bakalářské práce je tedy nastínit, jak nejdůležitější symboly v knize vytváří smysl příběhu. Většina z těchto symbolů se objevuje opakovaně, a tak vyžadují důkladné prozkoumání v rámci kontextu centrální metafory a smyslu celého díla. Stejně tak je potřeba zvážit, jak na tyto symboly pohlíželi i ostatní kritici a jak interpretovali jejich význam ve vztahu k obsahu.

Annotation

In J. D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye*, the most significant overarching theme of the novel is the adolescent struggle of the main character, Holden, who no longer wants to be a child, but also does not yet know how to be an adult, which results in his breakdown. This difficult situation that virtually all humans face is masterfully investigated by Salinger's careful use of symbolic references throughout the novel. A thorough understanding of these symbols and how they operate in the novel is essential to fully comprehend and learn from Holden's journey within the story. To that end, the aim of this Bachelor's Thesis is to delineate how the most important symbols in the novel create meaning in the story. Symbols and symbolic elements require detailed examination in relation to the central metaphor and within the context and meaning of the whole novel, since most of them occur repeatedly. It is also necessary to consider how other critics have regarded these symbols and the associated meanings and messages inherent in the novel.

Content

Content.....	6
1. Introduction.....	7
2. Central metaphor.....	8
2.1 Idealism and search for identity	9
2.2 Coming through the rye	11
2.2.1 Death.....	11
2.2.2 To “meet” vs. to “catch” and the dilemma of sexuality.....	15
3. Form and distribution of symbolism.....	20
3.1 Emotional decline and its stages	21
3.2 Recurrent symbols.....	23
3.2.1 Central Park ducks	24
3.2.2 The red hunting hat	26
3.3 Setting	29
3.4 Binary opposites.....	30
4. Analysis through the stages of Holden’s emotional decline	33
4.1 Separation.....	33
4.2 Alienation.....	37
4.3 Isolation.....	42
4.4 Reconciliation	47
4.5 26 th chapter and the ambiguous farewell.....	50
5. Conclusion	53
Works Cited.....	55

1. Introduction

The *Catcher in the Rye*, novel by J.D. Salinger, is generally perceived as an ordinary story of Holden Caulfield, a teenage boy, who is expelled from yet another school and spends two days aimlessly wandering through the wintertime New York City. The story can be satisfying enough after the first reading, however many readers often tend to criticize the novel for the lack of plot, development, its episodic nature or first person narrator motivation, and other. Nevertheless, we have to keep in mind that it is a journey of a confused young man who going through a significant changes and has a difficult time accepting that growing up is an inevitable part of one's life. There is a reason and meaning behind Holden's hunting hat and its wearing style, questions about the ducks, fondness for the nuns and Museum of the Natural History, or going to the movies, which ironically, he hates as much as anything that is or seems to be phony.

In other words, all of the seemingly random events hold some symbolic meaning. That is the beauty of the novel and Salinger's writing - it enables you to gain more understanding upon its repeated revision, and discover an intriguing web of symbols and hints that support novel's main themes motifs and constitutes the entire work as a whole. Reading the novel's episodes, characters, setting and figures for symbolic meaning promises better insight, although still some critics simply deny the novel's symbolic value or analyze symbols out of the context of the novel as a whole.

In this thesis, I propose that these symbols need to be read in relation to the novel's central symbol of the "catcher in the rye". Therefore, the aim of this thesis is to re-examine the use of symbols and symbolic elements in *The Catcher in the Rye* in relation to the overall meaning of the novel and especially to the novel's central metaphor. First, it is thus necessary to thoroughly focus on Holden's catcher fantasy and its attributes. Consequently, we need to explore how the symbolic elements are used in order to convey meaning through the conflicts set out by the central metaphor and examine their influence on the pattern of the symbolic structure of the entire novel. This examination would provide a clear picture of the real "plot" of the novel: the structure of Holden's emotional decline. Finally, I will carry out a full analysis of the novel through the stages of Holden's emotional decline.

2. Central metaphor

To fully understand and appreciate the novel's story with its crafted symbolism and structure, it is necessary to pay a close attention to what is generally considered the novel's central metaphor, Holden's ideal and fantasy of being the catcher in the rye. The catcher fantasy is distinctly presented to the reader three times throughout the novel; most obviously in the very title "The Catcher in the Rye", which alone shows its major significance. Secondly, in the chapter 16 where Holden hears a little boy singing "if a body catch a body coming through the rye" and finally later in chapter 22 when Holden describes to his sister Phoebe his catcher fantasy, the iconic and most remembered image of the field full of children with Holden, as savior who protects them from falling over "some crazy cliff". However, references and connections to this central metaphor are scattered over the whole span of the novel, which makes it a powerful key to the whole story and understanding its symbolic structure. Upon analyzing this metaphor of being the catcher and its closely accompanying events as well as thoughts Holden communicates to the reader, much about Holden's personality, his inner state, motives and conflict is revealed. And moreover, the central metaphor is an essential resource for the structural pattern supported by the symbolism and interrelated imagery so masterfully crafted by Salinger.

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

Anyway, I keep picturing all these little kids playing some game in this big field of rye and all. Thousands of little kids, and nobody's around--nobody big, I mean--except me. And I'm standing on the edge of some crazy cliff. What I have to do, I have to catch everybody if they start to go over the cliff--I mean if they're running and they don't look where they're going I have to come out from somewhere and catch them. That's all I'd do all day. I'd just be the catcher in the rye and all. I know it's crazy, but that's the only thing I'd really like to be. I know it's crazy.

(Salinger 173)

While the title foreshadows the basis of the novel beforehand, placing this passage later in the book is quite convenient. The reader is at this point already aware of Holden's attitudes and character traits as well as the recurring imagery. When paying attention, we can see the pattern and layers provided in the catcher metaphor, which are as if

summing up the main themes and motifs. These are usually representing Holden's inner conflicts and are presented to the reader through various adolescent related issues of growing up that are idealism, looking for own identity and its crisis, isolation and alienation, death and sexuality.

Looking at the imagery of this passage first, Holden sees himself standing on a cliff, anchored in between. This view makes a distinct division of polarities, which are referenced throughout the entire novel. Metaphorically, it symbolizes how Holden traps himself between the two worlds – the one of the innocent childhood and the other of the phony adulthood, representing the common threshold of adolescence. He cannot go back since he is no longer a child and he is aware of that. At the same time, he is reluctant to move further. This depicts the major conflict as it puts next to each other two alternatives and sets up the novel's integral and eminent feature of binary opposites such as childhood and adulthood, life and death, real and unreal, genuine and artificial, falling and catching. These binary oppositions also depict Holden's "concept of good and evil" (Trowbridge 25). Such as what is reflected in his fantasy, to him there is life and playing games on one side, on the other impending danger of falling off a cliff, which here implies possible death.

What this passage conveys, is obviously Holden's need and desire to shelter children, and therefore innocence in general, from the harsh reality of the adult world in which he himself is not capable to find his place. He finds a virtue and good in the innocence of children and he is constantly contrasting it with the impurity and hypocrisy of adulthood, which is a way how to justify his inability and reluctance to make a successful transition to mature life. In a sense, this can be considered the core of the novel that is metaphorically condensed in just one paragraph.

2.1 Idealism and search for identity

As it has been established, Holden's catcher fantasy embodies the main themes represented by typical adolescence related issues. The fantasy itself displays Holden's idealism because it depicts an unrealistic state he resorts to from a place of despair. When speaking about ideal, Trowbridge, in fact, describes Holden's journey as "a plight of the idealist in the modern world" (22). We can directly see a clear example of Holden's idealism when Phoebe urges him to name "something [he'd] like to be", first suggesting traditional professions such as a scientist or a lawyer (Salinger 172). Nevertheless, Holden immediately rejects such options. He is on a "search for truth in

the world that has been dominated by falsity” (Trowbridge 22). Holden establishes that being a lawyer is honorable if you are advocating on the side of the innocents. But he dismisses the possible virtues and is convinced that the dishonest motivation is prevailing:

Even if you did go around saving guys’ lives . . . 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 on the back . . .the way it is in the dirty movies? (Salinger 172)

Here it is suitable to point out another type of binary concept of the notions of “what is” and “what ought to be” (Trowbridge 22). Holden can clearly distinguish the two polarities of the notional good and evil. However, he poses an interesting question of how one would really know if he is doing the good deeds from the goodness of heart or if he is doing it selfishly for money, praise or recognition. Holden laments: “The trouble is, you wouldn’t” (Salinger 172). Therefore, he is not sure how he is supposed to know the truth. He is no longer a carefree child as are those he wishes to protect, he is already aware of the other side and its dangers. Simultaneously, he thinks he sees the real world for what it really is; full of injustice, hypocrisy, deceit and perversity, yet he fails to see the other side of the coin. The only proposition that is left in his case is to “strive to find his ideal world or attempt to reform what is into what ought to be” (Trowbridge 22). In the real world, his ideals are, however impossible for him to attain so it keeps Holden trapped in between because he is unable to see pass the binary.

The decision of becoming the catcher, represents his searching for own identity. It shows his desire to shape his self-image in order to deal with the hostile environment in both of the two worlds; a dangerous cliff in the rye field being the metaphor for the unavoidable and the awaiting world of the adulthood. Holden’s identity in this manner becomes a center of attention several times throughout his journey. He often uses different names and generally lies about his true identity when the situation enables it. When on the train to New York, he becomes Rudolf Schmidt. He pretends to be ill and have “tiny little tumor on the brain” (Salinger 58). Other times, for example, when he introduces himself to a prostitute, he wants to avoid being intimate with her so he states his name is Jim Steele and says he has undergone a severe operation.

In order to blend with the environment, he often, either in humorous childlike play or in a form of deceit, pretends to be someone else. These efforts are then usually

resulting in failure. This is pushing him to the corner and he isolates himself from own initiative or due to the misunderstanding by the outside world. Alienation becomes a means how to cope with this misunderstanding and also becomes a self-protection from the most piercing adolescent issues of sexuality. As shown in his fantasy, Holden deliberately creates isolation for himself in the idealistic realm where it is possible for the pure to linger to exist than to eventually let go and leap over to the unknown.

In addition, Eberhard Alsen then simply sums up the catcher fantasy in stating that it “shows the kindness and unselfishness of his character” and moreover, he explains that “the surreal nature of the metaphor also reveals Holden’s unwillingness to face the real life choices” (Alsen 161).

2.2 Coming through the rye

The emphasis on contrasting Holden’s idealistic and unreal escapist fantasy world with his inability of facing choices and situations in real life shows yet another possible attribute of the binary oppositions. He creates his fantasy based on the misheard lyrics of the song sung by a little child, which is in fact real poem. Salinger is using this parallel and “represents the fusion of binary opposites . . . through a pairing of elements of the novel with elements that have foundations in the real world” (Takeuchi 326). Perfect example of this pairing is again provided by the central metaphor. Before Holden describes his catcher ideal, he asks Phoebe if she knows the song “If a body catch a body comin’ through the rye” (Salinger 173). She immediately corrects him, saying it is a poem by Robert Burns with the words “if a body meet a body” (173). Each of them is alluding to a distinct source. Holden is referring to the boy singing, representing the element and event that took place specifically in the world of the novel and Phoebe to the original and real poem. Thus, it is necessary to focus on both of these sources of the catcher fantasy because they are explicitly mentioned for the reader. As a result, we are able to make the connection to the prominent themes and reveal other layers of the metaphor.

2.2.1 Death

The basis for Holden’s catcher fantasy is planted in his head when he sees a little child blithely walking next to the curb by the roaring traffic, singing “if a body catch a body” with his parents not paying any attention to him (115). Rather than being unduly

alarmed with the careless behavior of the parents, Holden shares his enthusiasm for the child whose singing made him feel “not so depressed anymore” (115). Much like in the other various instances throughout the novel, there is again contrasted genuineness of childhood with the artificiality of adulthood. Holden praises the boy by saying how he was “swell” and “singing for the hell of it” (115). He exhibits genuine childish immediacy as “the child has not yet learned to experience the world in terms of categories” (Trowbridge 24). What depresses him is then mirrored in the next paragraph with the depiction of people going to movies, in Holden’s eyes the epitome of artificiality and fabrication, which as if represents the mindless act based on the social conventions.

Nevertheless, it is no coincidence that this episode shares very similar attributes to his fantasy of endangered innocence falling into the clutches of death with, in this case, a curb representing the cliff, the boundary between safety and falling into the danger. Death and suicide, then indeed become reoccurring and significant themes. When Holden tries to come up what he likes, apart from the nuns from Grand Central Station, James Castle, Allie and Phoebe are the only ones mentioned. They as if constitute Holden’s trinity of innocence of the good and genuine in the world that should be protected, while death is presented both in Allie and James Castle.

Allie, Holden’s younger brother who died of leukemia, plays a significant role in his emotional development. Death itself is in general an adult concept and is usually not likely to be understood by children. Coping with death is obviously difficult for everyone regardless of age, children, however, unlike adults, do not have the life experiences and knowledge that helps with such issues so they cannot really comprehend it. They have to develop ways how to deal with loss and learn to understand what it means, which is in fact the part and process of growing up. On this account, as we know, Holden struggles with growing up. He is no longer a child, but he still does not fully become an adult. Holden simply cannot bear to accept Allie’s death, the death of pure innocence that had no good reason to suffer or die. In Holden's eyes, Allie represents his ideal of the truth. Therefore, Allie should be also seen as a main inspiration of his catcher fantasy. He describes him as “terrifically intelligent” and the “nicest” person that “never got mad at anybody” (Salinger 38) He is clinging to the image of his brother, youth that died and is preserved in his memory, and he wants to savor these attributes in himself. Holden assumes a responsibility to protect this innocence, which is metaphorically represented by his savior image. In reaction to this

lost innocence that Holden was not able to catch, Allie's death is often considered to be a trigger of Holden's neurosis. Accordingly, Miller proposes to perceive the novel as "the chronicle of a four-year period in the life of an adolescent whose rebelliousness is the only means of dealing with his inability to come to terms with the death of his brother" (Miller 61). Allie's baseball mitt, memory item that is now in Holden's possession, offers another interesting parallel to Holden's coping with Allie's death. When he died, Holden responded by breaking all of the windows in the garage with his right hand that has never fully recovered. The mitt would then fit his left hand because Allie was in fact left-handed. On that account, Sarah Graham broadens the meaning behind this incident by pointing out that his injury also caused Holden to not attend the funeral since he was being hospitalized and therefore he could not make a proper closure of the mourning process (Graham 61). The urgent physical harm has prolonged to be harm emotional.

Interestingly, Holden shares a memory of his brother earlier in the book, where he describes Allie watching him playing golf from behind a fence. Yasuhiro Takeuchi compares this episode with the imagery of the catcher fantasy and identifies its similar attributes. In both of these settings is provided "a sense of boundary" (cliff and the fence) that is situated on the field (field of rye and one for playing) with the figure watching over (Holden and Allie) (327). Takeuchi also draws attention to the fact that "Holden takes on so many of Allie's characteristics (326). For example, Holden compares to Allie's red hair with the iconic red hunting hat that holds a high symbolic importance and will be discussed in detail later. Nevertheless, based on this identification of such similar attributes Takeuchi then highlights "that [Holden] emerges as possessing a desire to become Allie (the fallen) which infuses and redefines his desire to be a catcher in the rye", meaning he himself wants to be caught, helped (326).

As it has been established from the very beginning, throughout the book we are presented with clearly divided binary opposites. What however happens with these opposites is that their boundaries become more ambiguous similarly as Holden, the catcher, shares attributes with the fallen. The resolution of the story is "in its blurring of the binary oppositions through which we come to understand Holden" (Takeuchi 321). This is evident from these examples; it in fact indicates that Holden, the catcher, wants to be the one caught. Moreover, it is Allie, the original initiator of Holden's desire for catching, who is called upon by his brother repeatedly every time he crosses the road (probably a symbolic image of the divide) and asked not let him disappear. Holden even

confesses more explicitly when fleeing from home after the conversation with Phoebe: “For one thing, I didn't give much of a damn any more if they caught me...I almost wished they did, in a way” (Salinger 180).

In addition, another sad story of the good oppressed by evil is mentioned in the same chapter closely to Holden's confession of his ideal. Holden remembers James Castle, his classmate and also a prematurely deceased boy, who committed suicide by jumping from the window because he would not take back his word in an argument. To Holden he represents the fallen innocence that died for the truth. Holden is also identified with him several times, for example, when he mentions that James died in the turtleneck sweater he borrowed from him and most prominently when he even contemplates to jump as well. Death, in the end, would be in a way sufficient means for preserving his own innocence. It would remove him far from any other changes, leaving him conserved as Allie. Holden's death-wish can be interpreted in different ways. For example, it seems that Holden experiences survival guilt that he is not good enough to live on while his more successful brother cannot. Rather than living up to this ideal, he is purposely failing and sabotaging himself, which according to Takeuchi suggests that he “desires to reenact Allie's fall...” (327). However, although Holden toys with the prospect of suicide or inflicted death several times, he has personally experienced a major loss and he cannot put Phoebe through the similar grief. It is thus more likely that in this case “fall” does not represent physical death, but the death that indicates new beginnings, a transition into the next stage of life depicted in the carousel scene by the end of the novel. This shows, how is, in fact, Holden's ideal and fantasy of the savior image flexible through the course of the novel.

To Holden, Phoebe still can be sheltered and prevented from falling. Holden says: “I'm not too sure old Phoebe knew what the hell I was talking about. I mean she's only a little child and all” (Salinger 172). In fact, even though she is a child, she is aware of more than her brother. Phoebe is the one who pushes him and does not sympathize with his escapist tendencies. However, Holden still finds refuge in her company: “. . . she was listening, at least. If somebody at least listens, it's not too bad” (Salinger 172). She always helps him in the most critical parts of his journey. In their relationship it again comes to the blurring of the lines between the catcher (Holden) and the potential caught one (Phoebe) (Takeuchi 329). This is visible through the important symbolic device of the red hunting hat and its exchanges between the two. She in the end helps Holden reinterpret his ideal for “the act of catching resolves to be its opposite:

not catching” (Takeuchi 329). As he watches her on the carousel, endangered by the possibility of falling off, he comes to the conclusion: “If they fall off they fall off” (Salinger 211). This Phoebe’s major role in the carousel scene is foreshadowed when she is the one who reveals the origin and the correct words of the Robert Burns’s poem ‘*Coming Through the Rye*’.

2.2.2 To “meet” vs. to “catch” and the dilemma of sexuality

When we look more at the allusion of ‘*Coming Through the Rye*’, G.W. Napier states in 1878 Notes and Queries, that the original words of the poem are almost impossible to pin down due to its many different versions and alterations, even the version featured in the *Works of Burns* was known around long before him (151). This and the fact that the old versions of the poem come in the different modern English translations, therefore make it a bit tricky for proper analysis and interpretation. However, important for us, in the context of the catcher, is that not only the correct words are to “meet a body” but in another verse even to “kiss a body”. This provides the major irony and conflict of the metaphor because it infests Holden’s ideal of preserving of the innocence with a prominent aspect of the adult world, as the poem’s generally acknowledged meaning is considered to be of a sexual encounter.

The poem does not talk about a “catcher” in the rye, it talks about a girl who meets someone in the field for a kiss. The poem may refer to a forbidden secret sexual encounter of two individuals who are hiding out in the field to share an intimate moment, far away from the public eye and expectations of society. The possible interpretation poses a question that when two people meet and have a sexual relationship alone, should they have to tell it to the world, which refers to a line from the poem: “Gin a body kiss a body, need the world ken?” (Burns 265). Possibly, it also addresses justness of women’s sexuality as the poem asks whether: “need a body cry” (265) when she kisses someone upon meeting him in the field as such behavior was considered socially inappropriate for women.

Probably rather than trying to find the acute meaning of the poem and making the argument for the interpretations with a sexual connotation, it is even more conclusive that throughout the 18th century the poem/song appeared in several different renditions which lyrics grew more explicit featuring directly sexual terms. One of those versions can be found in the *Merry Muses of Caledonia*, with material both written and collected by Burns himself. This insight therefore establishes connection between the

reader and the writer. Either we are aware of this parallel beforehand due to our knowledge, or we can look into the original allusion, since it is pointed out to us (just like for Holden).

Nevertheless, with the original poem touching up on the issue of intimacy and privacy, this association provides the major theme of the novel which is sexuality and sexual awakening of the adolescent. But the very key for understanding Holden's struggle lies in the fact that his fantasy of the catcher, his almost life philosophy, has been built on the misunderstanding. Holden does not realize that he is misinterpreting the point of the poem and as Bryan James remarks that "the song is about romance, not romanticism" (1072). It is not about catching the children from falling into the adulthood. He is thinking in safety terms and is hoping that he can save other children from the phoniness of adult life, but also from the sexual aspects of it which give him so much trouble. In other words, he is avoiding his own coming of age and "[b]ecause he has to, Holden has substituted a messianic motive for the true, erotic one" (James 1072). Ironically enough, in both cases it is a child who presents the poem and uncovers the correct lyrics to Holden. In addition to what has been touched upon in the beginning, when Holden creates the ideal of the catcher, he chooses idealism that is "personal and escapist" (Trowbridge 22). "To catch" therefore symbolizes Holden sheltering himself and the innocence that is still left in him that could be violated. Holden's idealism could also be "impersonal and social" (22). However, rather than putting the negative connotation on the "meet" in terms of the original poem as an encounter that leads to casual sex, the "meet" would indicate Holden embracing not only himself and his coming of age but also the rest of the world because "that man . . . , in spite of all their imperfections, are to be loved" (23). Simply put, Holden by this substitution therefore "focuses on danger and potential death" and metaphorically wants to catch and be caught "instead of love and personal relationship" that he could meet (Edwards 555).

The substitution of the correct word "meet" with "catch" symbolizes the very irony of Holden's struggle and creates the clash between two opposites and ambiguity that is difficult for him to unravel, which becomes the source of Holden's neurotic nature. Ironically, however, in relation to the central metaphor Holden's neurosis and the dichotomy of his behavior help us understand his inner turmoil and uncover his true self.

First of all, this neurotic nature manifests itself in Holden's relationships and sexuality. Sexuality is one of the strongest themes in the novel as it constantly haunts

Holden's mind because these "sexual feelings are central to the maturing process he is undergoing" (J. Miller 601). We can witness his confusion and dichotomy in his behavior through his inner struggle with intimacy and the way Holden treats his sexuality. The dichotomy of his behavior is clearly visible. One time he describes himself as "the biggest sex manic you ever saw" and that he thinks about sex all the time and says: "Sometimes I can think of very crumb stuff I wouldn't mind doing if the opportunity came up" (Salinger 62). On the other hand though, these thoughts are however only theoretical as confesses he is a virgin. He wants to reach such personal connections, but then withdraws right back.

This dilemma and the clash of the two polarities gets explored several times, most significantly through his old friend and supposedly first love, even though platonic, Jane Gallagher. Holden tries to "give her a buzz" several times, but he eventually "doesn't feel like it" (51). Not only is Holden afraid of possible intimacy, he fears she will not remember him the way he remembers her. She exhibits all traits of innocence Holden wants to protect. There might be another reason for the avoiding her. The problem with Jane is that he remembers her to be innocence. They have both grown up and he cannot be sure she is the same way he has remembered her since their childhood. In fact, all indications show that she has changed and her innocence was violated by his "hotshot" roommate Stradlater; someone who does not honor women the way Holden wants to. In a contrast to Jane, the more lonely and deprived of connection Holden gets, the more he resorts to feeling attracted to girls whose behavior is phony or hypocritical or they simply do not match his ideal. Such example is portrayed by Sally Haynes, a girl he used to go out with. He says she sent him a "phony letter" (59) and even calls her "a queen of phonies" (116) but the minute he sees her, he comments that she "looked terrific" and that all of a sudden he "felt like [he] was in love with her and wanted to marry her" (124). It shows a common adolescent tendency to develop an infatuation based on the slightest seemingly genuine indication of interest from the possible partner.

The original poem is in a way similar to Holden's situation as it talks about casual sex and he finds himself pondering such idea. Holden has troubles with the subject: "I can never get really sexy...with a girl I don't like a lot. I mean I have to like her a lot!", though for the reader he treats it as if it is a bad thing saying: "Boy, it really screws up my sex life something awful" (148). He explains that "something always happens" and disables him to be intimate with a girl (92). He describes that usually in

the situation of coming close to “doing it with the girl”, she asks him not to continue and he obeys (92). He assesses this decision as the cause of his problem: “The trouble with me is, I stop. Most guys don’t. I can’t help it . . . They tell me to stop, so I stop. I always wish I *hadn’t*, . . . but I keep doing it anyway” (92). The issue he has with sexuality also implies a moral question. In a sense Holden’s antagonist is society, but even more so, it is his own perception of the social conventions he has to follow. On one hand, we have Holden, who feels he has to be sexually active in order to follow the mold of adolescent and on the other, we have Holden’s principle and reasonable negative attitude towards casual sex without emotional connections. His decision to stop is obviously by no means a flaw. It shows his good nature and kindness. Also, on the contrary to the typical scenario Holden describes, the ultimate confrontation comes when he decides to lose his virginity with a prostitute. He is the one who wants to stop. Holden, however, clearly states that having sex with a prostitute is “against [his] principles” (91). He obviously has a sense of what is right and wrong. Holden, being the self appointed catcher, perceives sexuality and sexual aspects as something violating and focuses on its pervasions from which he wants to shelter and savior the innocence. Through the prostitute Sunny, the ironic symbolic hint is visible. She shows several “childlike aspects [that] are emphasized” (Bryan 1069), such as her “little bitty voice” and as Holden notes: “she was young as hell . . . around my age” (94), which makes her as vulnerable as him and those he wants to save. This savior image serves as a strong contrast of the innocence and childhood, which symbolically manifests Holden’s constant inner struggle. As it is seen through Holden’s fantasy, the metaphorical fall over the cliff implying death of innocence, is associated with the transition to the adulthood accompanied with sexuality. Subsequently, manifestations of Holden’s dilemma get intensified by his association of sex with death, a major theme which has been discussed earlier. For example, after the debacle with the prostitute Sunny, Holden first gets beat up by her pimp Maurice, which “suggests physic punishment” (Bryan 1069). Later, however, Holden even imagines himself dying and pretends he has “a bullet in [his] gut” (Salinger 103-104). This connection is visible when one article in the magazine Holden finds is all about hormones and convinces Holden that his hormones are “lousy” and the other article talks about signs of cancer with which he also identifies himself and figures he would “be dead in a couple of months” (196). It is no surprise this happens after what seemed like a possible sexual pass from his former professor,

Mr. Antolini and instead of getting his mind of this confusing event, he receives no sympathy.

He becomes almost obsessed with preserving the innocence and consequently with the idea of changelessness and immutability. The written “fuck you” on the wall at school and museum drives Holden “damn near crazy” (201). He fears that other children and especially Phoebe could see it and eventually would find out what that means and how she would be different, as if being aware of sexuality would inevitably result in becoming part of the phony and foul society. When Holden meets a group of nuns, another manifestation of innocence, at the Grand Central Station, they share a conversation about literature. It is revealed that one of the nuns is fond of *Romeo and Juliet*, which makes Holden curious how they would react to sexually related topics because the play “gets pretty sexy in some parts” and that could seemingly conflict her vows and innocence (111). The thing is, though, Holden sees no corruption in her, quite the opposite. He enjoys their company. This is exactly what he himself needs to understand. Maturing does not mean that in the outcome of growing up his purity and innocence would have to be compromised.

Secondly, apart from sexuality, the neurosis is shown in Holden's search for the truth that has been already mentioned. Yet, it is he who often embodies the same character traits he criticizes others for. The catcher/savior image portrays his self-righteousness, but the fact that he puts basis on the wrong word also shows his imperfection. This contributes to that subtle motif that Holden cannot hold up to his requirements for the rest of the world. He is "a hero who constantly falls short of his own ideal, who in fact, participates in the very falsity he is trying to escape" (Trowbridge 22). Though being the self-appointed advocate of innocence, he also goes through phases throughout his journey, where his intentions seem insincere and often faked. Being on the threshold of adolescence, he, in fact, shows both childhood and adulthood in his character. When he talks about himself, he says that sometimes he acts older for his age. On the other hand, he confesses that even though he is seventeen, he acts like he is about thirteen. Ironically enough, even his appearance makes him seem older as he is tall and has grey hair. There are contradictions in his actions, he is battling with his surroundings to which at the same time he cannot resist. This is for example visible on his relationship with Sally Hayes, someone who does not correspond with

Holden's ideal but who also physically attracts him. He tries to blend in and ends up feeling excluded because his expectations do not match the reality.

On the other hand, as we explored earlier in the episode when Holden hires a prostitute, he knows what is right even though he feels tempted otherwise. His principle is also shown in action when it comes to hypocrisy regarding religion. Although feeling desperate, he refuses to pray: "I felt like praying . . . but I couldn't do it . . . I'm sort of an atheist. I like Jesus and all, but I don't care too much for most of the other stuff in the Bible" (Salinger 99). This decision contrasts most people who would resort to praying when in need, even though they do not believe in his existence such as the phony philanthropy of Sally Hayes's mother.

In conclusion, Holden is constantly looking for some connection, he is trying to reach out, but instead he either digresses from such ideas or he focuses on their negatives and confronts the "phoniness" in his environment. Accordingly, Holden is often regarded as a rebel. Edwin Haviland Miller even notes that most critics view the novel as "a commentary by an innocent young man rebelling against an insensitive world" (61). But it is not about rebellion or unwillingness to join the adult world, but about Holden constantly finding fault with his environment in order to justify this unwillingness. This conflict then "increases in intensity as his vision of inner and outer falsity becomes more and more overwhelming" which is captured by his emotional decline (Trowbridge 22). Subsequently, he is then forced to flee the insufficient environment when the tension in the former place heightens. This emotional pattern is then projected in the structure of the novel, as he flees from one insufficient environment to another when the tension in the former place heightens.

3. Form and distribution of symbolism

The novel unarguably contains a large number of symbols that are supporting novel's prominent motifs and themes. They are also showing Holden's motivations, which help us understand his actions or inactions. The generally most discussed symbols are usually the red hunting hat, Central Park Lagoon and its ducks, The Museum of Natural History and the carousel. However, as Alsen puts it, "most of the symbolic objects contribute to the characterization of Holden Caulfield [and] an analysis of these symbols clarifies the inner change that Holden experiences" (161). In

other words, the symbols are an inevitable means for the structure of the novel. We can perceive this build up through the rising tension in their meaning as they systematically map out Holden's emotional turmoil and decline.

Therefore, as Trowbridge points out: "...a symbol cannot be fully understood without discussing it in relation to the entire work" otherwise the complexity of the meaning is lost and interpretation of the symbols without full context of the story makes critics' "remarks either tantalizing, absurd, or simply obtuse" (21). Consequently, in this chapter, I would like to first provide an overview of the pattern through Holden's decline and relate this structure to the symbolism using the example of the shift in intensity of the ducks and the change in connotation and multiple meaning of the red hunting hat. Subsequently, before carrying out the full analysis of the symbolism in the novel, it is also necessary to focus on how the symbolic elements are used in order to convey meaning through the conflicts set out by the central metaphor.

3.1 Emotional decline and its stages

The possible way how to decode the story's structure, is to follow Holden's journey, more precisely, follow his emotional decline. As I have established in the analysis of the central metaphor, Holden takes refuge in the world of his fantasy, saving children from falling over the cliff. His idealism of adoring childhood and fearing adulthood has been also discussed. Simply put, the reality of the world around agitates him. He is focusing on its phoniness and immorality and so his expectations do not match reality. He is constantly resorting to comparisons between the childhood that has passed for him, and the adulthood he is not able to make a transition to. Due to this dichotomy, he seems lost, frustrated and uncomfortable in his environment, which is natural for adolescence. It is therefore no surprise that alienation is one the main themes of the novel. Although we see him talking to people, the communication is insincere or there is no actual connection. No place he has stayed in is sufficient enough for his needs. Trowbridge clearly articulates that this dissatisfaction creates the structural pattern of the novel:

. . . as a result of a frighteningly clear vision of the disparity between what is and what ought to be both in the world and in himself and because of an increasing feeling of incapacity to reform either, he attempts to escape into a series of ideal worlds . . . (685)

These ideal worlds refer to the both, actual places such as New York and the Central Park lagoon or imaginary places such the field of rye and the secluded cabin way out West he wants to hide in. We can agree that Holden's journey takes a downward spiral as he ends having a breakdown and gets hospitalized. Therefore, the structure maps out his emotional state and so the underlying mechanism of the symbolism and structure lies in Holden's emotional decline. Structurally, this decline is represented by the rising conflict of his inner state as he flees from one flawed reality to another ideal that turns out to be flawed and insufficient again, until he finally comes to the understanding and reaches the acceptance of the world around and him being its part.

So the stages of his decline are mapped out by his dissatisfaction with the environment and his subsequent escaping. Because we are speaking about states of emotional deterioration that increases in intensity, it is apt to distinguish the sections of the novel according to this main symbolic build up. I have decided to divide the novel into four distinct parts, based on the stages of his decline and classified them as stages of separation, alienation, isolation and reconciliation.

Separation

This first section of the story functions as a setup of the story's main conflicts. From the beginning, we can see Holden separating himself from the rest when he is standing on the hill, looking at the football game. Game is another symbol and metaphor appearing at the beginning, while Holden is discussing his expelling from the school – life as a game that one plays according to the rules. This Pency Prep section shows Holden as someone, who is rebelling against this idea, deliberately separating himself from such environment.

Alienation

The new vast setting of New York and its numerous places Holden flees to show the intensified conflict. Holden assumes a new strategy of playing along with the adult world. This again makes it impossible for him to fit in. We can see him in situations where he shapes his identity, on multiple occasions he pretends to be someone else, lies or acts out of character just to play the part he has openly criticized because he is desperately searching for some connection. This dichotomy of his personality is supported and presented to us with numerous juxtapositions of adult and innocent symbols. Ultimately, this strategy leaves him misunderstood and alienated from the rest.

Isolation

This section's starting point is right before Holden's return back home as he is by that point severely depressed. He assumes next stage of ideal in fleeing to some secluded place west and he alters his identity from the lonely catcher in the field to a completely isolated deaf-mute. In this heightened stage of Holden's depression from the inevitable change he has to go through, he fixates himself on the static and isolated images of the displays and catacombs in the Museum of Natural History that represent comfort to him due to their immutability. This is however contrasted with the symbols and images related to prominent motif of falling of multiple symbolic meaning. Here the falling either represents the rapid change of falling into the adulthood or it also becomes closely related to the static nature provided by death, as seen in James Castle and mummies in the museum.

Reconciliation

This last section examines the conclusion of Holden's journey depicted in the final scene of chapter 25 with Holden and Phoebe at the carousel. The carousel is a major symbol of the novel that combines childhood innocence and immutability, still spinning in the same fashion, with the possibility of falling and the importance of taking risks. It is when he redefines his savior catcher fantasy and gradually comes to the understanding of the difference between "to catch" and "to meet".

3.2 Recurrent symbols

When we look at how the distribution of the symbols is carried out, we can notice that it is done in two main forms; symbols that are recurring and symbols that are appearing only once and are significant for each specific section of Holden's journey. Most notably, the red hunting hat and ducks represents a symbol that is reoccurring, appearing through the whole span of the novel. Due to this recurrence, these symbols become the most iconic and are usually most referenced. They can have multiple interpretations because they communicate to us several ideas according to the needs of the story. For example, as Alsen states: "Holden's hat is a complex symbol because it suggests several interpretations of its meaning" (161). At one point the hunting hat is a symbol of rebellion, childish playfulness, alienation or a means through which Holden tries to establish his own identity. However, furthermore, with symbol's recurrence, as it has been said earlier, it shifts its meaning and increases in intensity the same way Holden's emotional turmoil heightens.

To clearly demonstrate that the determined structural pattern is present throughout the novel not only in the most obvious and generally acknowledged symbolic objects, as an example, we can identify the shift in the connotation and observe the change in a simple symbol of a window. Standing on its own, not much attention or meaning would be assigned to such general image. However, since we know that the structure of the novel is all about rising tension and intensity, we can examine its similar increasing quality. At Pencey Prep, Holden is seen several times, looking out of the window. Being at the beginning of his journey, what he describes is at one instance almost the image of nothingness. Other time he is unable to see anything because the window is too steamy. Through this symbol is also present the usage of the two juxtaposed conflicting opposites of the described snow and cold outside and the stifling heat inside. In the next section; in another symbolic setting of New York, window shifts and strengthens its negative connotation as it shows Holden the gloomy view out the Edmont Hotel with the “perversions” of the adult world. Finally, later, the window adopts even stronger negative connotation to death/ suicide as it connects, for example with the story of James Castle.

3.2.1 Central Park ducks

One of the most resonant images of the story are Holden’s famous and persistent questions on what happens to the ducks in the Central Park lagoon when the pond freezes over. Alsen among other possibilities comments that according to the most common interpretations his concern shows “compassion for all living things” (162). However, they are probably the most apt example that illustrates shift in intensity most accurately. Salinger creates this symbolic parallel between Holden’s and the Central Park ducks’ journey as Holden identifies himself as a lonely duck on the pond throughout the course of the novel. The same way as the pond slowly freezes over towards the center, until there is no remaining space left and the ducks have to move on and adapt to their environment, Holden himself feels the pressures closing in on him, he “has no place to go and is being “frozen out” (Alsen 162). Holden has to undergo his journey in stages of alienation through constant fleeing and changing of his environment. Their symbolic meaning shifts with each more prominent reappearance as Holden’s uncertainty, depression and a constantly increasing subconscious awareness of his problems escalate. Holden’s preoccupation with the ducks is a projection of his

anxiety about his own survival in the world he feels alienated from, which is revealed through his thoughts, questions and finally his visit to Central Park.

Holden first turns his attention to ducks right at the beginning of his journey, after being expelled from yet another school, Pencey Prep. While talking to his history teacher, Mr. Spencer, his mind drifts off and in his usual style of narration as he digresses to the seemingly random thoughts:

I live in New York, and I was thinking about the lagoon in Central Park, down near Central Park South. I was wondering if it would be frozen over when I got home, and if it was, where did the ducks go. I was wondering where the ducks went when the lagoon got all icy and frozen over. I wondered if some guy came in a truck and took them away to a zoo or something. Or if they just flew away. (Salinger 13)

It shows Holden's subconscious anxiety about his own future and at the same time his denial of acknowledging the obvious issue of responsibility when he adds: "I'm lucky though, I mean I could shoot the old bull to old Spencer and think about the ducks at the same time. It's funny" (13).

In New York, he continues not only to think about, but also begins to voice his growing concern for the ducks as his anxiety and loneliness increases. The significance of increasingly more prominent Holden's questions regarding the ducks now represents his alienation as well as they also become the means of the misunderstanding. Rather than going home, Holden tries to make a connection and seek comfort in strangers, in this case two cab drivers about the ducks. Holden is desperately trying to find some answers that would help him make sense of his own future. Asking cab drivers seem quite strategic from Holden's point of view. He is confronting them with his questions, thinking they are supposed to know the answers. They parallel the men who Holden assumes come for the ducks and help them escape their hostile environment. Holden seeks refuge in their ferryman-like abilities to take him somewhere more amiable or compatible with his expectation of an ideal habitat. However, similarly like no one really helps the ducks, his questions about ducks' future when the lagoon freezes over, are ignored by the both cab drivers who Holden even tries to befriend and have a drink with. One of them regards Holden as a "madman" and accuses him of trying to "kid" him (60). They both consider his questions to be crazy, childish and inappropriate for some his age. Holden on the other hand, sees their disregard not only as indifference to the ducks but most importantly to himself.

After numerous failed attempts to integrate into his current habitat of adult world of New York City, the desperation with which he tries to take refuge in the ducks and his need to “see what the hell the duck were doing, see if they were around or not” (153), basically comes as a matter of course and reaches its utmost prominence as he is almost at the worst of his troubles, by himself with no guidance. Depressed and lonesome, Holden finally has nowhere further to escape to. In the last section that revolves around the ducks, is apart from the continuously growing loneliness, isolation and fear of change, felt a prominent presence of death. Going to see the ducks for himself, seems to be his last resort for understanding his own journey, yet when reaching the “partly frozen and partly not frozen” lagoon he does not see “one single duck” it leaves his desperately persistent questions unanswered (154). The fact the ducks are gone, though the pond is not yet frozen over, is important in Holden eyes. Their absence leads him to the stream of compulsive associations in an attempt to clarify what it means to his own situation. He incorrectly interprets it as a kind of ultimate fleeing, permanent disappearing, which he associates with the loss of Allie, his younger brother, whose death affected him on a deep level. Even though Holden interprets their absence as disappearance and the ultimate fleeing, instead of a natural cycle and progression, they are paradoxically nevertheless a starting point and push for Holden to begin to take a portion of responsibility and try to confront the reality, which leads to the climax of the novel.

Though the ducks are undeniably symbol that accompanies Holden’s journey of loneliness and alienation, they provide hope that he fails to fully see. On the contrary to Holden’s believe their disappearance is not permanent. They are not there because they know what is necessary in order to survive and they do not have to wait until the pond freezes over, like Holden does when he continues in his downward spiral.

3.2.2 The red hunting hat

The iconic significance of the red hunting hat has been mentioned several times. It also undergoes the shift in intensity and change in connotation of its multiple meanings. It recurs throughout the entire novel and it becomes a signature characteristic item for Holden. Critic Kermit Vanderbilt even suggests it “may well be the happiest symbolic device in recent American fiction” as it indicates many aspects of his search for own identity (297). Even though countless meanings have been assigned to this one simple article of clothing and regardless of the variety of its meaning, every

interpretation has its appropriate significance. For instance, the hat is often perceived as a symbol of “rebellion against the rest of society” (Vanderbilt 297). It clearly stands out and catches the attention as Holden notes, “... you could see that hat about ten miles away” (Salinger 205). The bright red color contrasts with the traditional grayness and the conventional ways of his peers and the general public.

Several different ideas are connected to the wearing style Holden adopts as he constantly puts off and back on. The hat becomes in sense his security blanket and he usually wears it in times of need. Originally Holden buys the hat after he forgot the fencing equipment in the subway. It represents not only rebellion to be different than others, but also his way of separating himself from the rest of his teammates because he feels the blame for his shortcoming. It creates a place of comfort, a private space while he finds himself in the hostile environment. For the most part, this is seen in the first section of the novel when Holden is still in his dorm at Pencey Prep. The hat helps him separate himself from others, namely his two roommates Ackley and Stradlater, both representing undesirable portraits of men Holden does not want to become. Holden constantly takes off and puts it back on when he is feeling nervous or happens to be in an uncertain position. He wants to read without being disturbed so he puts on his hunting hat, obviously dubious addition to his pajamas. When getting beat up by Stradlater, the hat again provides comfort and confidence.

Through the hat we can also notice the dichotomy in Holden’s attitude. Sometimes he says he wears it “for the hell of it” (Salinger 61) and he assures the reader that “[he] didn’t give a damn how [he] looked ...” (53). Even though Holden often wears his hat publicly, in front of his roommates or on the New York’s streets, he sometimes adds that he can keep it on because nobody is around or he would not meet anybody he knows. Other times he even confesses: “I took it off ... I didn’t want to look like a screwball” (61). He acts self-consciously; on one hand, he establishes how far removed he is from the opinions of others, yet again, he shows his deep uncertainty with his of identity. Similarly, Holden sometimes comments, he tends to act like a child but at the same time, he often mentions that he acts matured for his age. This is a clear representation of a common confusion of growing up and the struggle between childhood and adulthood.

As we have learnt from the central metaphor, Holden does not want to grow up and is reluctant to move further. On this account, Vanderbilt explains how the hat represents not only a means of standing apart and separating himself from others but

generally his “recessive tendencies” (297), honoring childhood over adulthood. The same way Holden switches the position of the hat he also switches his mindset between the childlike qualities of immaturity and grown – up qualities of responsibility and therefore the hat, in a sense, becomes the symbol of adolescence.

Frequent occurrence regarding Holden’s behavior is the way Holden wears the hat on his head. He often flips its peak backwards or forwards to his forehead. Several different ideas are connected to this wearing style. On some occasions, usually in distress or when he feels nervous, he wears the hat forwards and tends to behave more like an adult. The hat is flipped backwards usually on the instances that Holden calls “horsing around”, meaning that he behaves like a child, acting carelessly or with boldness. He mentions several times that he likes it the best this way. The backwards flipped peak for example indicates to Alsen that Holden shows “his values are the reverse of what everybody else’s are” (162), and according to several critics it shows his desire to regress into childhood. Moreover, the backwards flipped peak of the hat may also resemble the baseball catcher’s hat who wears it the cap in similar fashion. The baseball imagery is provided mainly through Holden’s deceased brother Allie who played the game himself and is the prototype of the idolized childhood. The red color of the hat can be also associated both Allie and Phoebe who have red hair. Therefore, on another level this catcher association refers to the central metaphor, Holden’s fantasy of becoming the catcher in the rye, protector of the innocence.

As it was pointed out, due to its baseball related imagery, both of these symbols are connected to the theme of catching. The hat, moreover, becomes sort of a token that Holden gives to Phoebe as a farewell when he decides to flee to the West, similarly as he treasures the baseball mitt that belonged to Allie. The symbolic meaning of hat majorly shifts, when Phoebe receives it from Holden. Phoebe wants to accompany Holden on his escape. Holden, alarmed by this request, refuses to let her going with him and for the first time has to assume a responsibility and rethink his own idea of constant fleeing. Relating this back to the central metaphor and his fantasy of catching children, he thematically calls his hat “a people shooting hat” (Salinger 22). On the first glance, possible meaning behind this naming evokes Holden’s visible hostility towards phony people and society in general. As Takeuchi explains in his study, it is probably more so, that this naming points to the hunt, act of catching (323) and consequently, the shift in the symbols happens when he exchanges the hat, symbol of hunt/catching, with Phoebe (328). Phoebe, a child Holden wants to protect, becomes a catcher, in other words, it is

the reason why he reexamines his existing strategy of fleeing instead of facing the reality.

3.3 Setting

As it has been established, Holden constantly flees from one environment to another. The settings can be therefore too considered part of the symbolism as they convey specific aspects of his journey. It also shifts in intensity, moving from the phonies filled Pencey Prep through the conceited and perversion filled New York hotels and bars to the lonely halls of the museum and the desolated cabin in the woods. On the first glance, generally speaking, the story takes place in two main environments. The one, located on the grounds of Pencey Prep boarding schools and its dorms and the other in the vast space of the wintertime New York City. What is common for the settings is that no matter how crowded those places are or how much buzz there is, they still somehow make Holden feel lonely and isolated. He happens to situate himself in places that are stripped of personal characteristics or that are public without any private space. Such place is for instance Holden's dorm room, where he is being constantly bothered by his roommate's annoying presence or even beaten up. The beating occurs again in the New York hotel and also the unsuccessful date with the prostitute. Hotel therefore again exhibits the negative features. On the other hand, Holden also purposefully drifts to the environment that is secluded and lonesome. He happens to be walking through the night time street and goes deep into the Central Park in order to visit the lagoon with the ducks, he wanders in the catacombs of the museum, only surrounded by dead mummies or is forced to spend night lonely, as a homeless person at the Grand Central Station. In other words, the setting contributes to his everlasting feeling of loneliness and isolation.

Symbolic is also the setting of the imaginary cabin in the woods and Holden's desire of fleeing to West. As Alsen points out, "the cabin appears in two versions" (198). First, Holden wants to escape to the cabin in the woods because he attempts to persuade Sally Haynes to run away with him. This alone seems like an immature and idealistic way of coping with the environment as he is acting out of impulse. He maps out for her what the future would be like and again paints an unrealistic picture. On the second occasion, his plan is more thought out, yet still far removed from the workable reality. He imagines himself pretending to be deaf-mute so he would be able to avoid people, he would get married and if he had any children, he would home-school them.

Although both settings portray an isolation and seclusion, both scenarios involve eventually getting married. In Alsen's words, "this aspect of the cabin symbolism reveals that despite his dream of escape, Holden is on the verge of accepting adulthood" (164).

3.4 Binary opposites

So far, we have mostly discussed the pattern of the shift in intensity based on Holden's fleeing and emotional decline that creates the symbolic structure of the novel. Before the actual analysis of each previously established stages of Holden's journey, it is appropriate to focus on the way Salinger works with the text to create the symbolic meaning through the conflicts established by the central metaphor.

The central metaphor operates on the basis of binary opposites. Most notably, this is exposed to the reader through the clash between adulthood and childhood. This clash or dichotomy is to some extent present in various ways in almost every symbol. There is symbolism that represents the embodiment of adulthood and its characteristics. The symbols are usually assigned with some negative connotations and on a number of occasions this negativity is exaggerated by Holden to make it even more undesirable. Typically, he puts some extra emphasis on impurity, injustice or phoniness of those symbolic elements. For example, Holden focuses on the illness and old age of his professor, Mr. Spencer, saying it makes him depressed, or the phony behavior of the headmaster.

Opposed to that, the symbolism that represents the embodiment of childhood and its characteristics is assigned with positive connotations. Often, these childhood related symbols are static or have a circular quality. Thanks to that, they represent something unchangeable, stable or constantly repeating in the same fashion. They portray Holden's idea of ideal childhood, period that should never end. The most typical representation of the static symbol is the Museum of Natural History with its dioramas displaying figures Indians and Eskimos, which Holden likes the best because they never change. They clearly represent the preserving state Holden aims for in his fantasy of catching children, and himself from entering the next stage of growing up. The same way the museum never changes according to Holden some other things, precisely the ones he likes, should too stay the same: "You ought to be able to stick them in one of those big glass cases and just leave them alone" (Salinger 122). He is clinging to those static images because he is in need of stability and fears the changes that come with

growing up, becoming an adult and a productive member of society. Similarly, in terms of usage of language, Strauch identifies its duality and notes that: speaking of “Holden’s private world of innocence” he uses “a literate and expressive English” (7). The other “world of phony materialism” is treated with the “slob language” (Strauch 7). He also points out that this duality is used as “a realistic narrative device” yet there are also “symbolic purposes of slob language” and that is to show the “polarized relationship with the other” (7).

These two opposites are then therefore often juxtaposed in some way. Holden for example encounters the nuns, moral compasses and epitomes of purity at the Grand Central Station, a place of constant hustle, filled with people Holden immediately lumps into the category of phonies, coming and going from one place to another. The nuns are having, according to Holden’s standards, a cheap meal, something that is in his eyes not acceptable and good enough for somebody so virtuous. He then also contrasts their genuine generosity with the insincere philanthropy of Sally Hayes's mother. Juxtaposition is however also portrayed in the opposite manner, as the affection is shown in something that Holden considers phony, such as his attraction to Sally Haynes. This then ultimately shows Holden’s instability and dichotomy of his own ideal.

Another common means of contrasting the opposites can be referred to as an act or idea of violating something pure. This usage of symbolism can be seen from the beginning of the novel. One occasion, Holden makes a snowball and almost throws it against a car and then hydrant, but eventually, he does not carry it through because it all look “so nice and white” (Salinger 36). This pattern of something pure and innocent being endangered is again prominent motive already visible in Holden’s catcher fantasy. The snowball incident shows his savior qualities and at the same time can be interpreted as a sign of his sexual restraint. He does not want to violate anything pure and he acclaims the childlike relationship, he has with Jane Gallagher, rather than the lust he has for Sally Haynes.

Previously mentioned static symbols that represent need for stability and reinforce Holden’s liking in staying condensed in the “ideal world” rather than facing the inevitable change are being corrupted by the outside “real world”. While at school waiting for Phoebe, Holden sees “fuck you” sign written with a crayon on the wall. The environment that should be almost a safe haven for little children is contaminated with

obscurity. The stability of Museum of Natural History becomes shaken when Holden discovers the same obscene sign. His reaction is to quickly erase it. The symbol of the graffiti reappears again, in increased intensity, as it is scratched on with the knife. It is therefore impossible for him to get rid of it. This employed shift in the symbol shows that Holden's overwhelming need for protecting children from the negative things of the "outside world" cannot be successful, which is what Holden ultimately needs to accept. This acceptance appears in the final section of the novel, when Holden and Phoebe visit the carousel in the Central Park. The carousel would belong to the category of childhood related symbols with circular quality. Obviously, Holden associates it with childlike joy and carelessness. It spins constantly in the same manner so it remains still the same as it is also mentioned that the carousel kept on played the same songs. It is here when Holden lets go of his exaggerated savior desires as he sees Phoebe reaching for the golden ring, in danger of falling.

It is important to say that the prominent motives of falling and catching are naturally also present in the large number of symbols. Catching is obviously conveyed through the Allie's baseball mitt or Holden's red hunting hat, as it resembles the catcher's cap when he often flips it peak backward. However, Takeuchi notices, that although Holden concerns himself with the act of catching or preventing children from falling, we can rather encounter throughout the novel "many acts of picking up the fallen as opposed to catching the falling" (323). In addition, he also provides a perfect example, which is the "Little Shirley Beans" record that Holden buys for Phoebe and wants to give it to her as a surprise (324). Unfortunately, he drops it and so it breaks apart. Holden nevertheless picks up the broken pieces and gives them to Phoebe anyway. She takes them while saying, "'I'm saving them" (212). After his jumping out of the window, James Castle's body, another fallen symbol, gets also picked up and carried away by Mr. Antolini.

Phoebe accepted flawed, broken record and Mr. Antolini was the first who took away the dead body and was not concerned that his coat would get soaked with blood. This act of "picking up the fallen" (Takeuchi 323) in a way symbolizes an ultimate hope that no matter if one falls, there is always someone who is willing to help. In addition, we know that James Castle fell in Holden's sweater. This leads to another dimension of the symbolism which lies in the "blurring of the binary oppositions "of catching/falling, life/death or as Takeuchi puts it "hunter/ prey and savior/saved" (323). Holden, "catcher" gets identified with the "fallen" which indicates his own need to be saved.

Similar “blurring of the binary oppositions” or more precisely the reversal of the roles of the hunter/ prey are most importantly demonstrated by Holden’s exchange of his hunting hat with Phoebe at the carousel (323), which will be thoroughly discussed in the last section.

4. Analysis through the stages of Holden’s emotional decline

As it has been outlined in the previous chapter, the structure of the novel is mapped out by Holden’s emotional decline and his pattern of fleeing. Therefore, I would like to carry out a full analysis of these stages distinguished as Separation, Alienation, Isolation and Reconciliation to provide more in depth interpretation of the symbols and symbolic elements in relation to the overall story.

4.1 Separation

I have identified the first section of the novel, usually referred to as the Pencey Prep section, as the stage of *Separation*. We are presented with the environment of boarding school that Holden is fleeing from. He constantly addresses its phoniness, points out the acts of insincerity and in general lack of authenticity in others. We can clearly notice this characteristic pattern of Holden’s behavior from the beginning of his narration. He mentions a school’s misleading advertisement of “molding boys into splendid, clear-thinking young men” (Salinger 2), and claims that the school is “full of crooks” even though most of them come from wealthy families (4). The headmaster is “a phony slob” (3), and Ossenburger, a man who donated money to the school and one wing was named after him, calls consistently after God’s attention. His memories of Elkton Hill, the previous school he attended, are very similar for he says he left it because he was “surrounded by phonies” (12). Pencey Prep is the fourth school he gets expelled from and we learn that he failed four out of five subjects. However, we soon realize that this poor academic scoring is not due to incapability, but a kind of resignation, an act of quitting on purpose to avoid the next stage of coming of age. He does not want to be part such community and we see Holden deliberately separating himself from the rest of his peers. This separation is clearly visible right away at the beginning of Holden’s recollection.

He is standing by himself up on the Thompson Hill, looking down at the football game that is attended by the whole school except him. He does not join the rest. In fact, he is leaving. He explains that when leaving some place he wants to feel a sense of

goodbye. At first he is not successful conjuring some adequate memories and then he finally remembers playing with the football outside with some of his school mates for so long it was too dark to see. This first scene provides some major symbolism of the novel for it establishes an interesting and recurrent motif of a game. The game is here seen in two different qualities. The game down at school was aggressive with “the two teams bashing each other all over the place” (2) while the game in his memory was joyful played with “nice guys” (4). The problem is, this enjoyable sense of the game is now only a memory and everything else is dark and tainted. In a relation to the central metaphor of Holden being between two worlds, we are again presented with two impossible alternatives, one of idyllic state he cannot return to and the other he fears and avoids entering. Ironically enough, this carefree play is interrupted and stopped by the biology teacher, which, as Bryan also notices, parallels the inevitable course of biological changes revolving around personal identity, sexuality, senescence and eventual death, that interrupts childhood and one must go through when growing up (1065). Therefore the motif of a game can be interrupted as a metaphor for life and essentially, for growing up. Most significantly, this parallel gets further developed few pages later when Holden meets headmaster Mr. Turner, who explains to him that life is a game “that one plays according to the rules” during the talk about his expulsion (Salinger 8). This motto also gets supported by Mr. Spencer, Holden’s history teacher, in the episode where Holden goes to say goodbye to him.

In this first stage of his decline, he also separates himself from responsibility and is unable to acknowledge his problems. Upon Spencer’s question whether he is not concerned for his future at all Holden answers: “I feel some concern for my future . . . [b]ut not too much I guess” and comments that he “didn’t like hearing him say that . . . it was very depressing” (14). Although Holden recognizes Spencer’s help he is trying to offer him, he starts panicking and lies his quick ways out. Here we see him rebelling against this idea of life being a game because he is justifying his action by saying: “we were too much on opposite sides of the pole . . . I couldn’t hang around there any longer” (15). He explains that the “life is a game” motto only makes sense if you are on the winning team. He clearly puts himself and Spencer each on the different side. The game essentially offers Holden two impossible alternatives. Although he is not winning at all; he got expelled, he is lonely without any real meaningful relationship, sad and feeling guilty for disappointing his mother, he cannot accept any sort of help from Spencer either. Even though he respects him, he is a part of the authority he despises so

much. To Holden, acknowledging his problems to Spencer, and also to himself, would mean facing the harsh reality and succumbing to the system and eventually becoming one of them.

Although it is clear he separates himself from acknowledging his problems, his denial is met the apparent thoughts on his uncertain future. These worries are shrouded in thoughts regarding the ducks, a major symbol that has been already explored earlier, as he says: “I’m lucky though, I mean I could shot the old bull to old Spencer and think about the ducks at the same time. It’s funny” (13). Similarly, when Holden loses the foils and fencing equipment on the subway while he is supposed to be the team’s manager, his reaction shows his inability to deal with the situation. He complains that “the whole team ostracized [him] the whole way back on the train” yet he adds that “it was pretty funny, in a way” (3).

Holden is rebelling by pointing out the phoniness around him and focusing on the negatives. The negatives of aging are visible in the Spencer episode, which is filled with unpleasant images of old age and uncomfortable attempts to lecture Holden on his shortcomings. He describes the old and ill man in his pajamas that showed his “bumpy old chest”, the smell of Vicks Nose Drops, the fact he was picking his nose or the several instance where he tries to throw a magazine on the bed but presumably due to the old age fails which Holden assess as depressing (7). This attitude is a way how to make himself believe that life does not really hold anything special because the genuine and true of innocence has been already lost and is now only a memory same way that it died with his brother. These juxtapositions are also visible through his siblings. His older brother D.B. who “prostitute” (80) his talent of writing in Hollywood is contrasted with the purity of Allie.

Other part of this section, precisely five chapters, focuses on Holden’s roommates Ackley and Stradlater who both provide another type of interesting opposites and yet both undesirable. Similarly to the Spencer episode, Holden again focuses on the unsightly features. In this case, he stresses the deficiencies of their appearance as well as their habits and attitude. At first glance, they are complete opposites. Ackley is portrayed as pathetic, unsocial and repulsive looking. Stradlater on the other hand is said to be aggressive, outgoing and handsome. Their appearance is radically different. Ackley has “lousy teeth” that look “mossy and awful”, “pimples all over” and also “monotones voice” (19). Stradlater, however, is said to always look

good and characterized to have “heavy beard”, “damn good built” and be charming (26). Their sexual experiences also differ. Ackley is supposedly a virgin but brags about his time with a girl which was obviously fabricated. Stradler portrays a typical masculine male and “sexy bastard”, yet when asked about his date he refuses to answer (32). These two are however very similar in their repulsive personal habits and nature. Stradlater just hides them behind his good looks and volubility, which according to Holden, makes him a “secret slob” that shaves with a dirty razor (27). They are both indifferent to other people. Ackley is selfish and Stradlater uses insincere flattery because he wants a favor. Salinger works constantly with the duality in very clever way. These two characters again offer two impossible alternatives. As Bryan explains: “Stradlater and Ackley are antithetically placed to represent what Holden fears he may become if he is either sexually appropriative or repressed” (Bryan 1066). Holden shares several similar traits with both of them and the general duality is seen early on in his behavior and style of narration. This section also introduces major symbol of the red hunting hat that has been already looked upon in the previous chapter. The Holden hat here serves the purpose of the security blanket on a number of occasions and most notably it becomes a symbolic switch between the two polar behaviors. Holden’s more serious sides alternate with him “horsing around” (Salinger 21), such as pretending to be blind or tap dancing around. There is apparent duality and has been regarded by several critics as the same phony behavior Holden criticizes on others. For example when speaking to Spencer, he says one thing but he shares sarcastic comments with the opposite effect with the reader. He hates movies but we know that he has been to many of them and even planned to go that evening. He also criticizes athletes for using Ed Banky’s car on dates, which is not allowed, but we know for sure that he also used it with Stradlater in the past.

Holden even symbolically to an extent becomes them; he adopts Ackley’s annoying habit of disturbing others for example when he keeps questioning Stradlater and he as if becomes Stradlater when he ghostwrites a composition for him. Also, he lends Stradlater his jacket, hair tonic, and moreover, he goes on the date with Jane, Holden’s childhood love. However, after all, he is different, because on the contrary to them both, he cares. He cares about Jane so much, he says he “was so nervous [he] nearly went crazy” because he knows how Stradlater treats women and how sexually aggressive he is. In this regard, Holden’s concern and preoccupation with whether “she still keeps all her kings in the back row” (42), is referring to the idea wheatear she

follows the same habits. The composition he writes for Stradlater is about Allie's baseball mitt. Stradlater however scolds him for not doing what he was asked for, because the composition was supposed to be descriptive. Similarly as Jane's innocence has been presumably violated by Stradlater, Holden rather tears the composition apart rather than leave yet another innocence depicted in the memory of Allie's baseball mitt to Stradlater. Allie and Jane thus also share similarities. Holden shows a genuine affection towards them both. They both represent innocence and they are both a memory alike the memory of the game with football. Allie is dead and Jane has likely changed since the time Holden only held hands with her.

At the end of this section, we can notice that after Holden is beaten up by Stradlater, he feels so lonely that he tries to seek comfort in a person like Ackley even though he has expressed scorn towards him. As Holden might have expected, he receives no consolation. This introduces another pattern frequently used in the next section. That is, setting himself up for the failure when turning to people who either obviously hold no merit but are attractive or do not understand Holden's plight. The alternatives portrayed by Ackley and Stradlater make Holden depressed and he is not swayed either possible direction. As the pressure of facing the reality is forced upon him by Spencer and he gets beat up by Ackley, he is uncertain of what his options are. Feeling like he has nowhere to go, he flees from one place to another. Holden finally separates himself from the hostile environment of the Pency Prep with the words "Sleep tight, ya morons!" (52), that "represent a complete rejection of the adolescent world" (Trowbridge 23).

4.2 Alienation

When on the train to New York, Holden meets Mrs. Morrow, a mother of one of his former schoolmates. He lies to her about the reason of his journey, claiming that he has a brain tumor and goes to New York for an operation. Trowbridge assesses this encounter as "his most successful one" (23). This episode sets up the attitude Holden acquires throughout this section. That is, he tries to be an adult. He as if deliberately separated himself from the adolescence, in order to play the part of someone above this realm. Trowbridge calls this role he adopts and tries to play "the man-of-the-world" (23). This playing along attitude may in a sense go hand in hand with the "life as a game that is about to be played according to the rules" motto. However, this role is again unsuccessful because it is only pretended. I have identified this section as

Alienation because the constant failures of Holden's decision to shape his identity and abruptly become an adult make him lonely, depressed and ultimately alienated from his true self. Even before arriving to the Edmond Hotel, Holden takes off his hunting hat because, according to his words, he does not "want to look like a screwball" (61). This act also signifies the switching on the mode of "the man-of-the-world" (Trowbridge 23), suppression of his childlike side and the possible hope that he can sufficiently function on his own without a security blanket.

Although finally in New York, "[t]he first of the ideal worlds into which Holden tries to escape [to]" (Trowbridge 23), he still faces obstacles of his surroundings. While Holden is no longer deliberately separating himself, this section is filled with the numerous unsuccessful attempts to communicate, which constitutes a large portion of his alienation. The reader becomes aware of the obvious communication problem he has with others. Holden soon realizes that fleeing from, in his mind, hostile and "phony" environment of the boarding school has not made his situation any better. His self-destructive alienation and reluctance of facing the reality is illustrated immediately upon his arrival at Penn Station. The first impulse that comes to his mind is that he wants to "give somebody a buzz" (Salinger 59). He provides us with the list of people he could eventually call. He names D.B., Phoebe, Jane Gallagher, Sally Haynes, and Carl Luce. However, he rejects this need to contact his friends and family right away and justifies his decision with excuses such as that "it was pretty late" (59). Ironically, out of these mentioned he is only capable to contact those he does not even like that much, which is Sally and Carl Luce. Subconsciously, Holden knows that the natural thing is to go home as he gives the cab driver his regular address and later he keeps wishing he could go home. He is also aware that going home would mean facing the reality and assuming full responsibility, which would mean an unconditional surrender to the real maturity. Instead, he rather tries to make connection and seek comfort in strangers, such as Miss Morrow on the train, nuns at the Grand Central Station, cab drivers, women at the bar and so on. As it has been established, the novel operates on the gradual progression as Holden's dilemma and depression increases. In a similar fashion, Holden's attempts to embody the adult position are increasingly failing, until he realizes his strategy is erring.

I have already mentioned the significance of nuns earlier in a connection to Holden's sexuality. However, one of his interesting memories is triggered by their cheap suitcases they carry along the Grand Central Station. This playing along is to some extent visible in the symbolism of the suitcases, precisely through Holden's

dealing with the problem when someone's suitcases differ in price. He recalls his former roommate, Dick Slagle, who owned very inexpensive suitcases and who even after Holden's gesture of hiding his suitcases under bed, he still wanted people to think Holden's suitcases were his. He continues by explaining that it is difficult to room with people whose suitcase quality is different from his. Holden then closes off by stating: "It's one of the reasons why I roomed with a stupid bastard like Stradlater. At least his suitcases were as good as mine" (109). This statement contains a lot of symbolic irony. It very well might be easier to have the same suitcases as Stradlater because it seemingly does not make Holden stand out so much. They seem alike, but in fact, they are not. It is just a pretend and their relationship ends with Holden getting beat up. Similarly, Holden wants to fit in with his environment and play the role of "the-man-of-the-world" (Trowbridge 22), because it seems like an easier strategy. This, however, results in the similar misunderstanding like with Stradlater. He stands out because he is not the same, even though he tries to blend in. Consequently, others do not understand his attitude and they cannot be sure of his behavior. Therefore, they cast him and push him away.

As I have mentioned earlier, while discussing Holden's sexuality, society clearly plays his antagonist. The setting of the New York is perfect for portraying the phoniness and pervasions in the adult environment of the city. Salinger again uses Holden's critical eyes to pin point the atrocities and shallowness around him that depresses him.

Edmond Hotel was "full of perverts and morons" and the very old bellboy was "even more depressing than the room was" (65). The lobby smelled like "fifty million dead cigars" (90) and it was empty "except for a few pimpy-looking guys, and a few whory-looking blondes" (69). The setting of the three different bars Holden visits, Lavender Room, Ernie's and Wicker Bar, is not that much different at all. It is again strictly adult environment and Holden is once again "surrounded by jerks" (85) for it is full of "Ivy League bastards" (69) and "stupid girls" (70). Holden faces several failures with girls, in fact. An attempt to make a date with the stripper Faith Cavendish fails, phony Lillian Simmons, "strictly a phony" treats Holden as a child by calling him "you little so-and-so" and stresses out he is D.B.'s younger brother. The three women he meets at a bar, Bernice, Marty, and Laverne, who he calls "three witches", "real morons" and grools" (70), and are depicted as shallow and only interested in movies stars rather than having an "intelligent conversation". This environment he tries to

infiltrate sees through his farce. Symbolically, as a nod to insufficiency of his behavior and apparent appearance, the question “How old are you?” gets asked in its variants at least five times throughout this section. Consequently, he fails when he wants to order a drink, which does not discourage him from attempting it several times later.

Notably, Holden does not understand many of the common social conventions. It is all insincere for him, which in most cases really is. He hates the power gesture of hand shaking and hates saying ““Glad to've met you" to somebody [he is] not at all glad [he] met” (87). Although Holden tries to play along with the adult world, his resentment for this role is obvious. Society plays his antagonist, but more damaging is his own perception of these social conventions he thinks it is necessary to follow in order to blend in. As he puts it: “If you want to stay alive, you have to say that stuff, though” (87). This pressure makes him feel depressed and even as he says: “I almost wished I was dead” (90).

Even though playing this role, Holden still does not really want to grow up. He wants to evade the gradual progressions and “get it over with” (95) as he says he is about to lose his virginity with the prostitute Sunny, which he at first sees as his “big chance” (92). On this note, a lot has been already said about Holden’s encounter with the prostitute Sunny. We know that after all, he does not agree with such actions, but insists on carrying out these supposedly expected necessities in order to become the “man-of-the-world” figure (Trowbridge 22). We learn that he is not capable of doing the deed, not necessarily out of fear or nervousness, but because it goes against his belief: “I can never get really sexy... with a girl I don't like a lot. I mean I have to like her a lot” (Salinger 48). He sees this inability as a fault that makes him incompetent in his environment and causes him all the troubles. This episode holds a great significance for his adult like role of this section. He is put in the position where he faces fabricated adult like reality he has created for himself. It is therefore necessary for him to confirm his position by having sex with the prostitute. Accordingly, this inability to act does not validate his position and demotes him back to the young adolescent status. Trowbridge draws the parallel between Holden’s parting words at the Pencey Prep, ““Sleep tight, ya morons!” and Sunny’s parting words, “So long, crum-bum,” (98). Holden there rejects the adolescent world and “Sunny dismisses his pretensions of being an adult” (Trowbridge 24). After this setback with Sunny and also the unsuccessful date with Sally, his role is destroyed and shattered, leaving him again desperate and confused.

From this context, the duality in Holden's behavior is evident. He wants to play along with the environment he detests. This common human temptation gets displayed when Holden looks out of the hotel window. He describes seeing a man, obviously a transvestite, putting on women's clothes, high-heeled shoes and so on. In the other window, there is man and woman "squirting water out of their mouths at each other" (62). He is shocked and disgusted, but he keeps watching anyway, complaining: "The trouble was, that kind of junk is sort of fascinating to watch, even if you don't want it to be" (62), which directly portrays the double nature of the world. Moreover, he adds the woman was "pretty good-looking" (62). There is an undeniable attraction to something that goes against his liking. This has been mentioned in connection to Sally Haynes, who is the perfect example of such temptation for he finds her physically attractive.

There is a large number of women with whom Holden tries to make some connection in this section. For the purpose of juxtaposing the binary oppositions, their flawed attitude and nature is contrasted with the two prominent female figures in Holden's life, his sister Phoebe and Jane Gallagher. They both portray the innocence and genuineness. I have already drawn upon the parallels between Jane and Sally. He likes Jane for her personality rather than looks. Through Jane, we get to see what would Holden's idealized relationship look like; being intimate, holding hands and overall, being sincere. Moreover, the memory of this idyllic time with her serves as a consolation after the unsatisfying encounters with other women, as he confesses: "I still couldn't get her off my brain" (76). The symbolic consolation is visible several times when Holden pretends what it would be like to be severely wounded, such as having "a bullet in (his) guts (104). In such scenarios, Holden thinks of Jane as someone who would rescue him or take care of him afterwards because as he remembers: "You never even worried, with Jane . . . [a]ll you knew was, you were happy. You really were" (79). At the same time, though, he is unable to contact her, which he attempts and contemplates doing six times. He often says he is "not in the mood" to justify his inability. Presumably, it is the thought of her with Stradlater driving him crazy, which makes him reluctant to contact her. Her innocence could have been violated and would remain only his memory. Phoebe's admirable character traits get also highlighted. Although she is still a child, she knows better than most of the people around him. He also wants to contact her because she is the one who would understand him.

The symbolism of the ducks in this section nicely sums up Holden's condition. Ducks' future once again haunts Holden's mind so he tries to find the answers with the two cab drivers. One of them, Horowitz, does not understand the questions at all and points out that the winter is "tougher for fish" (82), since they have to stay in the ice, which is in their nature and finally, if he was a fish "Mother Nature [would] take care of [him]" (83). Horowitz scolds him for not recognizing that. This in fact mirrors Holden's actual behavior. He cannot fit in because he attempts to blend into his environment by acting as an adult which constantly results in discouragement and failure because he "rejects the values and pretensions of "adult" society without having formed any coherent or articulate set of superior values or a more successful plan for a satisfying life" (Evans 42). Holden once again tries to reach out in order to receive some advice that would show him the way. He contacts Carl Luce, versed and knowledgeable womanizer, who again dismisses Holden's curiosity by saying that "[his] mind is immature" (147), and advises him that he needs to "recognize the patterns of [his] mind"(148). He does not know what kind of approach he should have because his ways and attitudes become mixed up and that is why he feels like his environment cannot support him any longer. As later in the novel Mr. Antolini describes when he is voicing his concern for Holden, he has been "looking for something [his] own environment couldn't supply [him] with" (Salinger 187). He has to realize that making a natural transition and maturing rather than playing along is necessary in order to be understood by others.

4.3 Isolation

The hints of isolation are already becoming slowly apparent by the end of the previous section. The failed attempts to blend in with the New York City, such as the debacle with the prostitute Sunny, getting beat up, having his offers for drinks declined by strangers or rejected even by the ones he knows. The date he has with Sally again depicts another failure and collapse of his strategy.

At this point Holden is completely irritated by his environment and starts to slowly realize that his adult like role has been a fabrication. He provides a list of reasons and examples why he hates living in New York, such a taxi cabs, bus drivers, phony guys, elevators and so on. He criticizes consumer society, with its cars, boarding schools where everyone "sticks together in these dirty little goddam cliques and" and "all you do is talk about girls and liquor and sex all day" (Salinger 131). For the most

part, he basically sums up the horrors he has so far encountered on his journey. His alienation is so extensive that he proposes Sally to go away with him from that all. He would rather live modestly, without funds or resources than to become a cog in a stereotypical corporate system. Sally declines his offer, saying they are “both practically *children*” (132). This result is something he should have expected beforehand.

He cannot play along anymore because the falsity of his environment and himself is too apparent and unbearable. He is so overwhelmed by his surroundings that he is forced to change his strategy. “I didn't want anybody to notice me or anything or ask how old I was” (150). We have explored earlier that ultimately, Holden is an idealist. Therefore, he has to create an ideal place for himself to resort to because “society rejected him, he now rejects society” and aims to isolate himself. (Strauch 21).

Apart from the escape to New York, the Sally episode features a first truly absurd escape plan that later increases in intensity. The final push in Holden's fleeing pattern in search for some better place is his escape to the west. There he plans to pretend to be deaf-mute in order to avoid any direct contact. This fantasy is “the most pathetic, as well as the most fantastic image of himself that Holden has yet created” (Trowbridge). In contrast to initial enthusiasm of the first escape plan, this last planed destination professes the necessary remaining option of isolation.

The physical isolation is apparent when drunk, depressed, and lonesome Holden aimlessly wanders through the Central Park, looking for the ducks. This event shows him becoming slowly isolated by his own choice of direction the same way as his downward spiral is conditioned by his pattern of fleeing. The setting gets more secluded. Holden describes that “[i]t was dark” but he “kept walking and walking, and it kept getting darker and darker and spookier and spookier” (Salinger 154). Ironically, he is more lost than he thinks when he mentions he knows his way around the park because he used to play there as a child. Now, however, he has a hard time finding the lagoon with the ducks. This clearly symbolizes the fact that he is not a child anymore and what used to be familiar in childhood has undergone a certain change, the change Holden is so afraid of and therefore he is unable to find his place.

Being almost at the worst of his turmoil, in regard to what we know about the symbol of the ducks, he needs to find them for the sake of finding out his own path. However, he does not find one single duck and is left without answers. Interpreting their absence as a kind of ultimate fleeing and permanent disappearing, he associates this loss with the loss of Allie. As it has been discussed, we may argue to what extend Holden

might have a death wish as the thoughts of death are not singular. He imagines himself dying on a several occasions, one of which is for example, jumping out of the hotel window and being shot the stomach. Death would fatally provide Holden the static and unchangeable state he is longing for. However, when seized by the thoughts of getting pneumonia and dying his thoughts go to what bothers him most is “how old Phoebe would feel” (156). In that instance of deep depression comes a critical point his process of thinking. Although he has been avoiding going home, he decides that in case he dies he must go see Phoebe. Carl F. Strauch explicates this decision by stating that “Holden is finished with childhood and is prepared for the burdens of maturity” (19). However, we have to keep in mind that this event led Holden only one step closer to realizing his self-destructive behavior. We know that going home means facing the problems and also facing the reality of the natural progression. He again finds a loophole to avoid this acknowledgement. He is not turning himself in, he is sneaking home. He has nowhere else to go. After all, the only place that is left and where he should be understood is home. The only person who can provide Holden with some consolation is just his sister Phoebe.

Even though being finally at home, he is by no means facing the reality yet because Holden shares with Phoebe his catcher fantasy. The majority of this important episode has been thoroughly analyzed as the central metaphor, but it is necessary to mention its significance in regard to this section again and show several links to his isolation. He is still following the same pattern of fleeing because Holden is describing himself in the field of rye, saving children from falling over the cliff. He is the only one big around, he is alone, isolated in the idyllic space. When being a catcher, “Holden’s intention is absurd in its opposition to reality, [but] the goal of his intention is to help innocent children to avoid reality (Galloway 31).

Interesting parallel is made when Holden talks with his former teacher Mr. Antolini about Oral Expression, a school subject he hated the most and flunked. The rules were speaking on the same topic and every time someone did not keep to the point, he got yelled at: “Digression!” (Salinger 184). Holden explains that digressing is sometimes more interesting than the original idea, again avoiding the rules. Accordingly, Holden himself is digressing by not following the original plan of maturing. The catcher fantasy also represents a form of digression and, to link it back to what we have learnt at the beginning, it is also a kind of game that is played again by

Holden's rules. He isolates himself from the reality by creating idealistic and unrealistic escapes.

When sharing this fantasy, he keeps Phoebe in mind as the one that should be protected and himself as the one who is already falling and needs to be caught. We witness Holden slowly falling over his imaginary cliff from the beginning of his journey; falling both symbolizing progression into adulthood and his emotional decline. For example, before going to see Spencer, the road is icy and he almost falls down and similarly while leaving Pency, he mentions that he almost fell down because someone throw peanut shells over the staircase. When he is looking for the ducks by the lagoon, he "damn near fell in once" (154). Mr. Antolini sees this Holden's pattern of digression and he observes that Holden is "riding for some kind of a terrible, terrible fall" (187). He also comments:

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...so they gave up looking...before they ever really even got started. (187)

This is exactly what Holden has been experiencing. Throughout his journey, he is unable to acknowledge his problems and plays along with the environment that sees through the pretended. Moreover, it also depicts Holden's giving up through his final decision of isolating himself. By this time, Holden's turmoil escalates so much that the appearance of falling becomes also more intensified. Holden confesses that every time he is about to cross the road and step off the curb he has a feeling he would never reach the other side, "I thought I'd just go down, down, down, and nobody'd ever see me again" (178). Essentially, Antolini's episode is crucial, because it provides Holden with the answers he has been looking the entire time. He understands his problems and depression. Moreover, Seng highlights that "[w]hat Antolini predicts for the future already, in part, exists in the present" (207), when he warns Holden that he may become someone who would "sit in some bar hating everybody who comes in looking as if he might have played football in college" (Salinger 168). Essentially, Antolini provides Holden with very answers and guidance he has been looking for, while wondering about the ducks and trying to make a connection with various people.

This important episode is also “the high point of irony” (Seng 208). The trouble is that although Antolini warns Holden of this impending fall, for Holden, he himself becomes the false idol that falls. The highly idolized teacher, who was the only one to pick up the fallen body of the deceased James Castle, presumably tried to make pass at him, by patting sleeping Holden on his head. Antolini is immediately discredited by this event and Holden is incapable of accepting his guidance because he “measures it against impossibly absolute standards” (Seng 208).

Museum of the Natural History is an important symbol that I have already introduced. Holden explains what he likes about the museum, which goes hand in hand with what has been established earlier, while discussing its symbolism; it is one of the static images Holden clings to. He focuses on its immutability, a perfect state he would like to seek for himself and essentially, never grow up. Museum first appears by the end of the previous section, however Holden only talks about it, presenting these ideal features, but he decides not to go inside. This can be attributed to the fact, that at that time he is still trying to play along. Presumably, he hopes his strategy still has a chance. In such case, museum would just be a possible option that offers this permanence. On the other hand, he is aware that what stays the same are just the displays and not the person visiting it. The attributes of the museum are in this section portrayed to their extreme. Holden has to go inside to soothe his depression that even increased after the Antolini episode. The place provides him the same isolation, as the displays are isolating the artifacts from the outside world and forces. Disappointed with the outside world, he goes even further to the catacombs. The display of the mummies is the extreme case of immutability, a flawless example of preservation. Ironically, Holden’s fondness for such permanence is hinted at the Spencer episode, when they discuss Holden’s inadequate exam paper, which he chose to write on the topic of Egypt and the only thing he mentioned was mummification.

This brings us again to the theme of death, a possible state of immutability, which we have kept meeting through his dead brother Allie, suicide of James Castle and so on. In the tomb, he is again alone and isolated, which is what he likes: “I sort of liked it, in a way. It was so nice and peaceful” (Salinger 204). What he sees while waiting for Phoebe in her school and in the museum again destroys his idea of idyllic place with stability. These safe places that are supposed to protect and nurture children as well as preserve things from changing inside the “glass cases” (122) gets violated by the “Fuck

you” sings written first in crayons, later even scratched all over the walls and displays. Holden’s effort to get rid of them is the same effort he wants to avoid change and also protect the innocence of children, especially Phoebe. However, the “Fuck you” sign got even under the glass. He realizes that it cannot be done: “That’s the whole trouble. You can’t ever find a place that’s nice and peaceful, because there isn’t any” (204). He then laments that when he dies, someone will write such words even on his tombstone. Simply put, Holden sees that not even death can provide absolute escape, and that “the quest for permanence is a hopeless one” (Trowbridge 27). This harsh realization shatters his idea of finding an idyllic place and brings a climax to his downward spiral, his fall, when he breaks down and passes out. The enigmatic questions of ducks he has are really for himself and Mr. Antolini provides him with answer of harsh, yet inevitable reality: “You’re going to have to find out where you want to go. And then you’ve got to start going there” (Salinger 188), not fleeing, but meaning that Holden has to realize himself what he ought to do. He should move on and accept the natural course of development and move on.

4.4 Reconciliation

Phoebe is the anchor and stability in Holden’s life. No matter how alienated or isolated he gets, she is the one who provides a sense of comfort. In other words, “[f]or Holden Phoebe provides [the] center” (Strauch 25). Moreover, “[i]t is through the innocent Phoebe, at the end, that Holden initially moves toward this redemption” (Vanderbilt 300).

He is going home for one purpose only, to see her. While at home, Holden picks up her notebook and says: “I can read that kind of stuff, some kid’s notebook, Phoebe’s or anybody’s, all day and all night long” (Salinger 161). He admires her secret, childlike world, where she uses a name “Phoebe Weatherfield Caulfield” (160). He finds liking such things, because he also has his secret world, his catcher fantasy.

We have already discussed the fact, that these two siblings often exchange their roles.

Holden shows a childlike side to him, “horsing around”, pretending to be blind and so on. Phoebe, on the other hand, shows very mature and sophisticated character traits. She is a good at all subjects, Holden compliments her dancing abilities, she is neat, “always has some dress on that can kill you” (160) and unlike others, she listens.

All Holden wants to do it to protect Phoebe. He wants to shelter her from the harsh reality of the “Fuck you” signs on the wall and the burdens of the mature life. Interestingly, when Holden hides from being “caught” by his parents, Phoebe shelters him and does not give him away. Because Holden was smoking in the room, Phoebe lies to their mother, saying she “only took one puff” (177). Firstly, she is the one who protects him, taking his role of a savior. At the same time, though, she suddenly begins to show Holden’s typical teenage behavior, such as lying and, even though only pretended, smoking. Finally, when her mother asks about her dinner, she replies with only one word: “Lousy,” and the mother scolds her for using it (177). In fact, the word “lousy” is Holden’s almost iconic and probably most often used adjective; he uses it forty nine times. This scene might symbolize the irony of Holden’s savior image, for it is he who puts Phoebe’s innocence at risk on the number of occasions, most significantly by his planned escape to West.

On that account, Takeuchi’s “*The Burning Carousel and the Carnavalesque*,” provides major insight on their apparent exchange of the catcher and the caught roles, or the “identity of hunter (savior)/prey (saved)” and consequently, blurring of the lines between these two alternatives (323).

Looking a bit back, while being at home, Holden gives Phoebe his precious hunting hat. During that time, he still wants to leave, so the hat becomes a token for Phoebe she would savior when he is gone, similarly, as Holden saviors Allie’s baseball mitt. The exchange of the hat “marks their exchange of roles” (Takeuchi 328). Not only Phoebe takes on some of Holden’s characteristics, she becomes the catcher. While he is waiting for Phoebe to say goodbyes before leaving, she then appears with Holden’s old suitcase, wearing his hunting hat. By this time, she almost resembles him. She informs him that she wants to go away with him and, as a Holden’s typical move, refuses to return to school. Holden, shocked by this announcement, rejects such option. He starts panicking when he realizes that he is putting her in danger with his behavior. Her well being makes him essentially rethink his strategy and he puts her innocence before his ideal of fleeing, saying: “I’m not going anywhere. I changed my mind” (207). He even states: “I’m going home” (208). Holden probably perceives his decision as an act of catching Phoebe when he sees attributes of his behavior in her. However, it is Phoebe, who catches Holden, making him his destructive nature.

However, moments later, Phoebe hurls his hunting hat at him, and hurries away and “their reversed relationship is again reversed” (Takeuchi 328). This time, as Takeuchi notices, “Holden tries to catch Phoebe literally”, however she keeps following him (328). He tries to grab her hand, she does not let him. Takeuchi concludes that “[n]ot only do the roles of hunter and prey resolve to be interchangeable, but the very act of catching resolves to be its opposite: not catching” (329).

The last scene at the carousel finally brings Holden a dose of understanding and recollection. As it has been stressed, symbolically, the carousel makes Holden think of his childhood memories. It is on the same “a permanent and secure spot” (Vanderbilt 300), playing “that same song about fifty years ago when I was a little kid” (Salinger 210). It indeed shows a childhood attributes and the changelessness of its direction, since it spins in the same way, but it is also “symbol for the circular activity of life” (Strauch 27). Thus, at the same time, it helps him change his attitude that one must risk the possible fall, for one needs experience, even negative, in order to learn and grow. After all, the carousel “still has a fixed center” (Vanderbilt 301). He comes to and conclusion that it is not necessary to be a savior and protector of innocence, after all, because no one can deliberately hold back one’s natural progression into the next stage of life:

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 goddam horse, but I didn’t say anything or do anything. The thing with kids is, if they want to grab for 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 211)

The falling is a necessary part of growing up. The children are grabbing for the golden ring in order to reach their goal. They can fall and try again. Similarly, Holden himself “has fallen and survived” (J. Miller 602). His willingness to let children go through such experience symbolizes his willingness to leave behind his unrealistic ideal and acceptance of his own coming of age.

As Holden watches Phoebe on the carousel, it suddenly starts to rain heavily, and he, all of a sudden, begins to feel happiness. Takeuchi focuses on the significance of the rain in this scene and explains that “Holden eventually succeeds in joining his brother” as he points out the parallel of this scene with the memory of visiting Allie’s gravel that Holden shared earlier (327). The rain also started to pour heavily. Everyone

could hide in their cars, “everybody except Allie” for he was dead, buried in the ground. Similarly to this scene, the other parents are hidden under the roof of the carousel, whereas Holden stays on the bench and gets drenched with the pouring rain. Through the rain, he is finally able to reconcile with Allie's death. Holden identifies himself with his dead brother, “they are both dead men in the rain” (Takeuchi 327). Holden's death is however only spiritual, representing the death of a stage of his life and presumably rebirth into the more mature self. Holden says that his “hunting hat really gave [him] quite a lot of protection” (Salinger 212). Vanderbilt points out the fact, that Holden is not turning the peak of his head backwards (301). He is giving up on his catcher role and comes to a realization that his hat, “his pseudo-identity and gesture of escape from life, provides. . . only a partial protection” (Vanderbilt 301), as Holden “got soaked anyway” (Salinger 213). Holden thus reconciles himself with the inevitability of maturing and moreover, “he must reconcile himself, recognizing not only the "shortcomings" of man but also the "shortcomings" of himself” (J. Miller 602).

4.5 26th chapter and the ambiguous farewell

Before concluding this analysis of Holden's emotional decline, we have to take a look at the final 26th chapter of *The Catcher In the Rye*. Holden finishes his narration with simple: “That's all I'm going to tell about” (Salinger 213). The carousel scene that has left us filled with hope turns to be a bit bitter when we see Holden hospitalized. Although he has just gone through an emotional breakdown and has come to reconciliation with the inevitability of growing up, Holden still shows some of his typical attitude. He describes D.B.'s company as “pretty affected, but very good-looking” (213), and does not like the idea of applying himself to school. He says: “I mean how do you know what you're going to do till you do it?” (213). This might remind us of the similar reasoning for his fondness of digressing: “. . .[L]ots of time you don't know what interests you most till you start talking about something that doesn't interest you most” (184). So far, these instances do not persuade the reader of the hopeful outcome.

Holden ends his story by being regretful:

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, . . . I think I

even miss that goddam Maurice. It's funny. Don't ever tell anybody anything. If you do, you start missing everybody. (214)

Critics have various interpretations of this ambiguous ending. Some are positive about Holden's hopeful reconciliation with the world, and some are skeptical about his retrieval. Galloway, for example, believes that Holden misses those people "because his experience has taught him something about the necessity of loving" (31). On the other hand, Vanderbilt explains that "[h]is discovery of who he is remains imperfect, just as his reunion with society yet remains to be achieved (301). The optimistic and skeptical readings are the final instances of the omnipresent binary oppositions. Similarly as in the novel, these opposites meet in between and make the conclusion provided by Galloway and Vanderbilt to be of the combination of both.

This ambiguity has its valuable side in its relation to the reader. It makes Holden's struggle and successive reconciliation more realistic. We, as the readers, are able to relate to such an open conclusion. The ambiguity becomes to be more hopeful when we think back to the Antolini episode. This last chapter parallels the advising words of Antolini:

Among other things, you'll find that you're not the first person who was ever confused and frightened and even sickened by human behavior. You're by no means alone [m]any, many men have been just as troubled morally and spiritually as you are right now. Happily, some of them kept records of their troubles. You'll learn from them--if you want to. Just as someday, if you have something to offer, someone will learn something from you. It's a beautiful reciprocal arrangement. (189)

All Holden wants throughout the entire novel is to make some connection, someone to talk to, but most importantly, he wants someone who would listen. Even the first line of the novel begins with, "[i]f you really want to hear about it . . ." (Salinger 1), and it later appears in several variations. These concerns symbolically manifest Holden's uncertainty and need for reassurance. Ultimately, the hopefulness lies in the fact that Holden is able to follow Antolini's advice and shares his experience with D.B. and the "psychoanalyst guy" (213). He also shares his story and troubles with us. The beauty of Salinger's work is that it goes beyond the pages. Consequently, there are also binary oppositions of fiction (Holden) and reality (reader). Holden is speaking to us, the readers, and we connect with Holden through his loneliness, for at some point or

another, there was a dose of Holden in all of us while growing up. Therefore, it comes to the blurring of the lines between the opposites. We are the ones listening and consequently identifying with Holden. We are able to learn from his journey and realize we are really not alone for we have become a part of that “reciprocal arrangement” (189).

5. Conclusion

The first reading of *The Catcher in the Rye* can be satisfying enough, however, to fully understand and appreciate its immense symbolic value, it necessary to the novel should be read and studied more closely.

It has been established, that the central metaphor, Holden catcher fantasy of saving children from the fall into the abyss of maturity and adult pitfalls, holds a major significance for novel's symbolism. In the central metaphor, there are condensed to some extend all of the novel's themes and motifs such as the childhood and fear of growing up, idealism, alienation, sexuality, death, phoniness, and depression. Some directly stem from the catcher imagery, and others are its accompanying signs. Overall, it creates a web of intricate symbolism based on the image, attributes and meaning behind the catcher ideal, most of them closely related to the motif of catching and falling.

The aspects of the central metaphor influence the pattern of the symbolic structure of the entire novel. Namely, the savior image of the catcher represents Holden's need and search for own identity and also shows the reader his sincerely caring character. The concept of good and evil represented by the conflict of childhood and adulthood creates the reoccurring motif of binary oppositions, a major symbolic resource. These binary opposites are also visible through Holden's substitution of the correct word "meet" from the original Robert Burns's poem *Coming' Through the Rye* with the word "catch" reflects his inner turmoil and dichotomy of his actions. This clash between his ideal and reality forces him to change his environment or leave behind the image of self he has created, until he reaches the understanding, which constitutes the structure of the novel. These findings were applied further to provide an overview of the pattern through Holden's emotional decline and relate this structure to the symbolism using the example of the shift in intensity. By the close analysis of the two most prominent symbols, the red hunting and the Central Park ducks, we can clearly see this shift with every of their subsequent appearance as Holden's depression heightens. In regard to the form of symbols, the binary oppositions of childhood and adulthood are juxtaposed in order to show the conflicts in Holden's attitude and struggle. Consequently, his effort of avoiding growing up is reflected in his tendency to cling to a former memory or to something that has a static quality.

Finally, in relation to past findings, a full analysis of the novel has been carried out, focusing on the stages of his emotional decline that have been distinguished as Separation, Alienation, Isolation and Reconciliation. Through these distinct sections we can observe that Holden's idealism forces him to constantly flee from one insufficient environment to another and the falsity of each of these environments increases. He first separates himself from the phony environment of Pencey Prep, rejecting the adolescent that is undesirable for him in both Stradlater and Ackley. His escape to New York is accompanied by a strategy of playing along with the adult environment in order to blend in. This decision makes him alienated because the dichotomy of his behavior and the obviously pretended image of himself make him misunderstood by others and simultaneously alienated from himself. He detests the environment he is the part of. He is confused, feels lost, alone and at times like he cannot survive. Thus the only possible option is to isolate himself in his ideal world, because his surroundings would never match his standards. Holden gets prompted that life is a game that he must learn to play according the rules, but most importantly, life is a constant transition that everyone is going through. Only at the end, when his self destructive attitude endangers Phoebe he is able to finally accept the inevitability of growing up, because even though one matures and takes on responsibility it does not mean that in the outcome of growing up purity and innocence would have to be compromised.

Holden is not the person he was at the beginning, when the story was happening to him, and he is not the person he is going to be in the future, after he confides in us. In the end, Holden is not the person you would want to be or someone who you would idealize. He is the one you secretly know yourself to be or used to be. One does not have to necessarily sympathize with Holden Caulfield or entirely relate to his pain and conflicted nature. However, upon the deeper this analysis, we have to appreciate the work of J.D. Salinger and his brilliantly crafted web of symbolism for the novel ultimately becomes richer and more vibrant when we read it more closely. Everything that has been once taken at the face value contains some meaning. Symbolism and metaphor are the vessels into the deepest questions in ourselves. The hunting hat, ducks, Museum of the Natural History, the carousel and so on are Holden's way into us, that is what makes us read along and care and it also makes us realize he is the same as we are.

Works Cited

- Alsen, Eberhard. *A Reader's Guide to J. D. Salinger*. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2002. 53–77. Rpt. in *Bloom's Modern Critical Views: J.D. Salinger, New Edition*. Ed. Harold Bloom, New York: Infobase Publishing, 2008. 145-173. Print.
- Bryan, James. "The Psychological Structure of *The Catcher in the Rye*." PMLA 89.5 (Oct. 1974): 1065-74. JSTOR. Web. 12 Oct. 2013.
- Burns, Robert. *The Complete Works of Robert Burns*. Ed. Allan Cunningham. Boston: Phillips, Sampson, and company, 1858. 265. Print.
- Edwards, Duane. "Holden Caulfield: 'Don't Ever Tell Anybody Anything.'" *EHL* 44.3 (1977): 554-565. JSTOR. Web. 12 Oct. 2013.
- Graham, Sarah. *Salinger's The Catcher in the rye*. London; New York: Continuum, 2007. Print.
- Miller, Edwin Haviland. "In Memoriam: Allie Caulfield in the *Catcher in the Rye*." *Mosaic* 15.1 (1982): 129–140. Rpt. in *Bloom's Modern Critical Views: J.D. Salinger, New Edition*. Ed. Harold Bloom, New York: Infobase Publishing, 2008. 61-73. Print.
- Miller, Jr. James E. "'Catcher' in and out of History." *Critical Inquiry* 3.3 (1977): 599-603. JSTOR. Web. 12 Oct 2013.
- Napier, G. W. "Coming Through The Rye." *Notes and Queries* London: 5.5 (1876): 151.
- Salinger, J. D. *The Catcher in the Rye*. 1951. Boston: Little, Brown, 1991. Print.

- Seng, Peter J. "The Fallen Idol: The Immature World of Holden Caulfield." *College English* 23.3 (1961): 203-209. *JSTOR Arts & Sciences III*. Web. 4 May 2013.
- Strauch, Carl F. "Kings in the Back Row: Meaning Through Structure. A Reading of Salinger's "The Catcher in the Rye."" *Wisconsin Studies in Contemporary Literature* 2.1 (1961): 5-30. *JSTOR*. Web. 30 Sept. 2013.
- Takeuchi, Yasuhiro. "The Burning Carousel and the Carnavalesque: Subversion and Transcendence at the close of The Catcher in the Rye." *Studies in the Novel*, 34:3 (2002), 320-336. *JSTOR*. Web. 3 Oct. 2013.
- Trowbridge, Clinton W. "The Symbolic Structure of *The Catcher in the Rye*." *Sewanee Review* 74.3 (1966): 681-693. Rpt. in *J. D. Salinger's The Catcher in the Rye*. Ed. Bloom, Harold. Philadelphia: Chelsea House Publishers, 2000. 21-30. Print.
- Vanderbilt, Kermit. "Symbolic Resolution in The Catcher in the Rye: The Cap, the Carrousel, and the American West". *Western Humanities Review* 17 (1963): 271-277. Rpt. in *Critical Insights: The Catcher in the Rye*. Ed. Joseph Dewey, Pasadena: Salem Press, 2011. 297-305. Print.