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A Psychoanalytic Reading of Identity Crisis in J.D. Salinger's The Catcher In The Rye

Assist. lecturer Rifqa Sami Al-Sayad
College of Education For Pure Sciences – Tikrit University-Tikrit- Iraq
Rifqa.s.saleh@tu.edu.iq

قراءة نفسية تحليلية لأزمة الهوية في رواية ج. د. سالينجر "الحارس في حقل الشوفان"

م. م رفقه سامي صالح الصياد
كلية التربية للعلوم الصرفة جامعة تكريت

Abstract
This paper presents a psychoanalytic reading of J.D. Salinger *The Catcher in The Rye*, a seminal modern novel that reflects the psychological aftermath of WWI and WWII. The study highlights how Salinger's hero, Holden Caulfield, embodies alienation, loneliness, and deep depression as he struggles with the crisis of identity during the flimsy transition from childhood to adolescence. His resistance to entering adulthood and insistence on preserving childhood innocence reveal unconscious conflicts shaped by the hypocrisy and phoniness of modern society.These inner struggles ultimately drive Holden but to disintegration, leaving him lost both in his personal life and in his sense of self. While some critics interpret the novel as Salinger's commentary on the horrors of war or the universal difficulties of maturation, this paper argues that Holden's journey is understood through psychoanalytic theory, which uncovers the repressed desires, anxieties, and internal contradictions at the core of his troubled psyche.**Key Words:** The Catcher in The Rye**,** J.D Salinger, Psychoanalysis; Holden Caulfield, identity crisis, childhood, adulthood.

الخلاصة

يقدم هذا البحث قراءة تحليلية نفسية لرواية "الحارس في حقل الشوفان" للكاتب ج. د. سالينجر وهي رواية حديثة بارزة تعكس الاثار النفسية للحربين العالميتين الاولى والثانية. تسلط هذه الدراسة الضوء على بطل الرواية، هولدن كولفيلد، وكيفية تجسيده للعزلة، والوحدة والاكتئاب العميق وهو يكافح ازمة الهوية خلال فترة الانتقال الهشة من الطفولة الى المراهقة. ان مقاومته لدخول مرحلة البلوغ واصراره على الحفاظ على براءة الطفولة يكشفان عن صراعات لا واعية شكلها نفاق المجتمع الحديث وزيفه. تدفع هذه الصراعات الداخلية هولدن في النهاية الى التفكك، تاركة اياه تائها في حياته الشخصية وفي شعوره بذاته. يفسر بعض النقاد الرواية على انها تعليق سالينجر على اهوال الحرب او الصعوبات العالمية للنضج، وتوضح هذه الورقة الجدل حول رحلة هولدن/ تجادل هذه الورقة بان رحلة هولدن تفهم من خلال نظرية التحليل النفسي، التي تكشف عن الرغبات المكبوتة والقلق والتناقضات الداخلية في صميم نفسيته المضطربة **الكلمات المفتاحية:** الحارس في حقل الشوفان ، ج. د. سالنجر ، التحليل النفسي ، هولدن كولفيلد ، ازمة الهوية ، الطفولة ، البلوغ.

I. Introduction

Modernism and Postmodernism represent eras of radical change in which Europe, and indeed much of the world, endured the brutality and devastation of two World Wars. The twentieth century, therefore, came to be recognized as a period of disintegration, moral crisis, and the erosion of religious and spiritual values. This turbulence inevitably found expression in literature, where many writers sought to capture the alienation and fragmentation of modern life. Among these voices, J.D. Salinger stands out for his ability to dramatize spiritual disintegration and psychological conflict, most notably in his 1951 masterpiece, *The Catcher in the Rye*. The novel's protagonist and narrator, Holden Caulfield, recounts his turbulent experiences during a few days in New

York after his expulsion from school. Through Holden's wandering, Salinger portrays the struggles of adolescence: loneliness, alienation, and the painful transition from childhood to adulthood. In this sense, Holden becomes not merely an individual ,but a representative figure of postwar American youth, reflecting the inner conflicts and anxieties of an entire generation.The present study, therefore, examines Holden Caulfield's psychological struggles through the lens of psychoanalytic theory. By adopting this approach, the paper aims to explore how Holden's alienation, depression, and obsession with innocence reveal deeper unconscious conflicts, repression, and anxieties that shape his identity crisis.

II. Theoretical Framework: **Psychoanalysis**

Psychological approach is one of the most influential schools of literary criticism, concerned with exploring the relationship between literature and the human mind. Its roots can be traced back to classical antiquity, when Aristotle defined tragedy as a means of evoking pity and fear, leading to catharsis. Later, during the Renaissance, Sir Philip Sidney emphasized the moral and emotional impact of literature, while Romantic poets such as Samuel Coleridge, Percy Shelley, and William Wordsworth highlighted the psychological dimensions of imagination and creativity (Guerin and et al , 1992, p.153).In the twentieth century, however, the psychological approach became more systematic with the emergence of psychoanalysis, pioneered by Sigmund Freud. Freud's theory placed the unconscious at the center of human behavior, introducing concepts such as repression, defense mechanisms, and the structural model of the psyche (id, ego, superego). Psychoanalysis thus provided literary scholars with a new method for analyzing characters, themes, and texts, revealing hidden desires, fears, and conflicts beneath the surface of narrative and language to be the centerpiece of a new discipline called psychoanalysis theory which studies humans' mind whether conscious or unconscious along with his conducts and actions. Its aim is to liberate the inner feelings and emotions that are repressed inside human being and resolve our psychological problems, disorders and dysfunctions (Sharma and et al , no date, p.5 Freud's participations in such a new modern discovery are the assertion on the unconscious portions of human psyche. He believes that human beings [conducts / behaviors] are driven and motivated by driver's fears, needs and conflicts of which they are unaware, so, this is known as unconsciousness that is one of Freud's radical insights and still occupies psychoanalysis approach. As he illustrates that the mind of individual is constructed just like the theory of Iceberg that the heaviness and thickness repose in the surface. As it is notable that unconscious refers to any mental process, thus, many of human mental procedures are unconscious is so one of Freud's essential assumptions, the second is Freud's appointment of libido or sexual energy as the major psychic driver which is denied by many of psychologists and even by Freud's followers including Alfred Adler and Carl Gustav, the last one is the main assumption due to its vigorous social taboos that are related to specific sexual motifs in which most of our lusts and recollections are repressed and definitely have dismissed from conscious awareness.(Guerin and et al , 1992, pp. 154-155)On the other hand, Eric Erikson's, one of Freudian followers, theory "Psychological Development" constitutes the basis of Salinger's *The Catcher in The Rye* for this theory concentrates on the study of humans personality in many certain stages which involves the person's development from the beginning of his life represented by childhood till its end which is death passing by adolescence, maturity and of course caducity. Psychological Development Approach has centered on what is called "ego identity" as a major element believing that it's the sense of consciousness of a human that is evolved by social interplay.For Erikson, "a sense of competence" is one more aspect that plays a key role in individuals' developmental psychology. It induces persons to deal with every stage and remain them successfully. He has totally convinced that each person whether child or young has experimented some struggles through these stages and among them. Erikson has coined the term of "ego strength" which denotes an achievement sense, to indicate to each stage termination whether it has fulfilled with success or not. Nevertheless, if its end closes with discontent and the teenager is being frustrated and like enough the outcomes of the former phase will impact the following stage negatively. Furthermore, the human should be engaged in every phase in conflicts with opposite drivers. So as to have a hygienic developmental psychology, there should be a balance among all the reversal forces. The novel demonstrates that Holden himself lacks such equilibrium.(Erikson, 1964, pp.222-223) Megheirbi (2018, p.582) argues in her article that Erikson concentrates on the ego as it is mentioned before and regards it not solely as the pander between the id and superego of Freud but possess its own personality introducing the real identity of the individual. Also Erikson is unlike Freud doesn't considers evolvement just as "psychosexual process" but he approves in the impacts of the "social interplays" in the identity's evolvement. The major stages that this theory is renowned for and human beings' identity are built on, they are:

1."Basic Trust vs. Basic Mistrust" this is the first stage which deals with the infants and its motivating driver is "hope", Erikson states that the child should gain trust in order to evolve the ego and his mum's role is a fundamental for the growing sense of child's trust. (Erikson, 1964, p.223)

2."Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt" as a second stage, the baby starts conflicting so as to be independent and to do so he depends on the "will" to achieve what he wants without the aid of the older such as walking , drinking ,eating etc.. If he fails in accomplishing them, the result will be shameful and doubtful.(Erikson, 1964, pp.226-227)

3."Initiative vs. Guilt" its leading force is "purpose" this shows Childs' guilts in their reproduction of parent's conducts and actions and are aware of it while if they succeed to do so they have the ability and control. (Erikson, 1964, p.230)

4."Industry vs. Inferiority" (5-12 years) one more stage that manifests a space of freedom for kids in which skills for the coming phases are needed, its driver is "competence".(Erikson, 1964, p.234)

5. "Identity vs. Role Confusion" (13-19 years) is the most prominent stage in which the time of puberty occurs and based on controlled force "fidelity". Hence, Holden Caulfield connects directly to this phase. Erikson explains that "With the establishment of a good initial relationship to the world of skills and tools, and with the advent of puberty, childhood proper comes to an end". (Ibid) This stage is formed by the so-called "identity crisis" which Erikson defines it as "turning point of increased vulnerability and heightened potential". (Erikson, 1968, p.96). It is mainly aimed to fulfill "fidelity" and "ego identity" at the termination of adolescence time by averting "role confusion". Erikson urges that this phase's risk is to be cornered in this role in many cases; it is the capacity to set on a vocational identity which troubles the young persons. According to the role confusion, he states that the most popular inquiry that is asked by those whose identity disordered "who am I", wants to find and know their existential self, is it existed? so, Erikson responds this question by adopting the term "psychological Moratorium" believing that "the mind of teens is really mind of moratorium, a psychological stage between childhood and adulthood, and between the morality learned by the child, and the ethics to be developed by the adult". (Erikson, 1964, p.236) As a result of such fiasco in this phase which is restricted in "role confusion", reaches the term of "rejection/ refusal" and for Erikson himself it is known as "Repudiation". The teen at the primary step starts rejecting his position in the world of maturity and refuses himself to be a member in such world as well as they deny even their own requirement for distinguished personality, thus they resort to do any action merely to avert the disturbing requests of the popular community. This is totally applied on Holden Caulfield's own identity who rejects this phony world as he says and denies the new personality that he will obtain it from adulthood, instead he insists on being in childhood cosmos especially when his nearest sister Phoebe asks him about the job or dream he wants to practice, he answers to be the catcher in the rye , rescues children from falling in the edge i.e the world of adolescence to prevent them from a painful suffering during this transforming period.(Nayebpour and Aygül, 2014, p.6)

6."Intimacy vs. Isolation" it's relied on "love" its target is to accomplish intimacy through social relevance and evade isolation. In this stage individual should have a certain identity because it's the period of maturity not of adolescence, in addition it's liberate from the troubles of identity from which many teens suffer.(Erikson, 1964, p.237)

7."Generativity vs. Stagnation" it is another stage which based on "care" and restricted to the age of middle adulthood from 25-64, or 40-64 years.

8."Integrity vs. Despair" the last stage that human passes with. It deals with those who are at the late of adulthood, at the age of 65 to death . its controlled force is "wisdom".(Nayabpour and Aygül, 2014, p.6)

Having lost the sense of self-awareness, Holden forfeits Erikson's ego identity due to his failure in achieving the aspect of "fidelity: Identity vs. Role Confusion". This is demonstrated obviously in the novel when Mr. Antolini [Holden's English teacher] alerts Holden to make him get the ultimate opportunity by saying "I have a feeling that you're riding for a special kind of fall, a horrible kind. [. . .] 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" (Salinger, 1951, p. 183). Mr. Antolini's alerting plays a role in hasting of Holden's collapse instead of cooperating him. It shows how Holden has lost ego strength and competence sense. Holden's ego identity is entirely unstable and disordered. He portrays his teacher as the catcher in the rye who attempts to save Holden from falling and he is the only figure who expects that Holden's termination is not a good one even it isn't obvious. His loss of fidelity sense leads Holden to face problem in any dilemma. Salinger's characters were intruders due to the dissemblance of the real world; some of them were distinct from

other people due to the distinct norms of this society. They have felt of isolation due to the lack of features that are wanted to be passable by the community also felt of alienation as a result of the absence of love. While Salinger's children are disgusting the word of "phoniness" as well they rejected the idea of adulthood. Jerome has tackled various themes in his novels but most of them are related to what was called solitude, such as isolation, loneliness, death, loss of innocence, and desolation. His literary writings fulfilled a great success due to its rich content about important issues more specifically "*The Catcher in The rye*" which becomes the best seller in all around the world and has translated into various languages.

III. A Psychoanalytic Reading of Identity Crisis in Salinger's The Catcher In The Rye

J. D. Salinger's *The Catcher in The Rye* 1951offers one of the most profound literary depictions of adolescent identity crisis, explored through the psychological instability of its protagonist, Holden Caulfield. From a psychoanalytic perspective, Holden's experiences reflect Erikson's stage of "identity vs. role confusion", in which adolescents struggle to achieve fidelity, or a coherent sense of self. Holden's inability to establish this ego strength results in disorientation, alienation, and a withdrawal from social life. As Nayabpour and Angular (2014, p. 6) explain, the loss of fidelity destabilizes the individual's sense of competence and leads to disordered ego identity. This condition is manifested when Holden's former teacher, Mr. Antolini, warns him of a "special kind of fall, a horrible kind" (Salinger, 1951, p. 183). Instead of guiding Holden toward stability, Antolini's warning accelerates his collapse, emphasizing/ underscoring his vulnerability and lack of self-integration.The roots of Holden's identity crisis are evident from the opening chapter of the novel. As Renae T. and et al. (2013) observe, Holden narrates his story from a mental hospital, already signaling alienation as the product of psychological fragmentation. Instead of joining his classmates in watching a football game, he isolates himself in Thomsen Hill, watching from a distance "I remember around three o'clock that afternoon I was standing way the hell up on top of Thomsen Hill" (Salinger, 1951, p.2). This moment illustrates his estrangement from human contact and foreshadows his retreat into solitude. The negligence of his parents deepens this crisis, preoccupied with their careers and temperamentally harsh, they fail to provide the care and support he needs in this transitional period. Holden himself notes their sensitivity and distance: "they're quite touchy about anything like that, especially my father. They're nice and all -- I'm not saying that --but they're also touchy as hell" (Salinger, 1951, p.1). His older brother D.B., absorbed in his work as a Hollywood writer, also abandons him emotionally, a betrayal Holden describes as "prostitution", " he's is my brother and all, he's in Hollywood. Now he's out in Hollywood, D.B., being a prostitute. If there's one thing I hate, it's the movies. Don't even mention them to me" (Ibid). Such familial detachment deprives Holden of crucial support, aggravating his inner conflicts. Other traumatic events intensify Holden's disintegration. The death of his younger brother Allie leaves him in unresolved grief, while the suicide of his schoolmate James Castle at Elkton Hills serves as a hunting reminder of the brutality of a phony and unforgiving world. Castle, refusing to retract his words, chooses death over compromise, a decision that profoundly disturbs Holden: Finally, what he did, instead of taking back what he said, he jumped out the window. I was in the shower and all, and even I could hear him land outside.[….] , so I put my bathrobe and I ran downstairs too, and there was old James Castle laying right on the stone steps and all. He was dead, and his teeth, and blood, were all over the place" (Salinger, 1951, pp. 164,165).These experiences reinforce Holden's rejection of adulthood, which he associates with phoniness, hypocrisy, and despair. As Megheirbi (2018, p. 583) notes, Holden's confusion is articulated in his self-description: "I still act sometimes like I was only about twelve. Sometimes I act a lot older than I am" (Salinger, 2010;1951, pp. 9-10). This oscillation between immaturity and premature adulthood exemplifies his fractured identity and inability to situate himself within a stable developmental stage.Holden's encounters with adult figures further demonstrate his crisis. His relationship with Mr. Antolini reaches a disturbing climax when he awakens to find his teacher stroking his head in the dark (Salinger, 1951, pp. 188-190). Whether interpreted as predatory or misguidedly paternal, the incident intensifies Holden's mistrust of adults and deepens his sense of violation. His disgust with adult life also manifests in his aversion to office work, newspapers, and films, which he associates with monotony and corruption (Salinger, 2010 (1951), pp. 119-120). In contrast, the only person he seeks genuine contact with is his younger sister, Phoebe. As Erikson (1968, p. 178) argues, adolescents often form deep attachments to siblings as compensatory figures in moments of identity crisis. Holden's connection with Phoebe provides him with a fragile lifeline, yet it cannot resolve his deeper alienation.Scholars such as Kinnick (1970, p. 441) emphasize that Holden's disillusionment arises from his futile search for an ideal and decent world. His revulsion at "phoniness" and duplicity in the adult realm pushes him to cling to childhood innocence. Erikson identifies such repudiation as a form of "negative identity," in which the individual rejects all socially offered roles and retreats

into cynicism and solitude. This is evident in Holden's disdain for adolescent behavior, nightlife, and sexual relations, which he views as contaminated by falseness (Megheirbi, 2018, pp. 584-585). His attachment to the museum of natural history, where "everything always stayed right where it was" (Salinger, 2010/ 1951, p. 131), reflects his yearning for permanence and resistance to the flux of growing up. This desire crystallizes in his fantasy of becoming the "catcher in the rye", saving children from falling into the corrupt adult world, a dream that symbolically externalizes his own longing for protection.Yet, Holden's inability to reconcile with reality culminates in psychological breakdown. His recurring hallucinations of falling and his imagined conversations with Allie reveal the severity of his mental illness. As Megheirbi (2018, p. 585) argues, these experiences demonstrate the devastating impact of alienation and unresolved grief. Ultimately, Holden ends up in psychotherapy, where he continues to display resistance to adult expectations. When questioned about his future plans, he dismisses the inquiry as meaningless: "How do you know what you're going to do till you do it?" (Salinger, 2010, pp. 208-209). His response encapsulates his identity crisis, his refusal of integration, and his lingering entrapment in disillusionment.Thus, through Holden Caulfield, Salinger dramatizes the psychoanalytic dimensions of identity crisis, capturing the anxieties of adolescence in the face of alienation, trauma, and societal phoniness. Holden's struggle reveals the fragility of ego development when fidelity is not achieved, offering a lasting exploration of the tensions between individuality, authenticity, and the pressures of adulthood J. D. Salinger's only renowned psychological novel *The Catcher in The Rye* 1951 is one of the most opulent novels for adults in which its protagonist Holden Caulfield suffers a lot of hardships through the transforming period from childhood into adulthood whose categorical rejection begets him such miseries. As well this novel raises many arguments concerning Holden's inner conflicts and mental psyches, some believe that the reason behind his sufferings is the death of his close brother Allie Caulfield who affected him negatively and led to his expulsion from various prep schools due to his weak activities [performance] and failure in all examinations While others assert that the main cause is the radical change of maturity that any human will get during such transformation and it's normal to be familiar with by accepting it ,but Holden is known with his egoism as critics state so as to his denying, he has driven to his own disorders including identity crisis [alienation, loneliness, depression and eventually psychotherapy]. He loses his identity because he himself refuses to admit with the world of adolescence and remains dreaming with childhood and has nostalgia to the past when he was a child playing with other children. his dream during the events of the story reinforces the aspect of egoism when he desires to live alone in an empty field just he and the children play around him to rescue them from falling down to the cliff which refers to the world of maturity. Renae, and et al (2013) explain that his disgust from such a fake world is the world of adults and his insistence on childhood believing that children represent the signs of purity, innocence, and reality while adults are the symbols of hypocrisy, phoniness, and revulsion, thus, his thoughts and views about adolescence has driven him to confront such harmful troubles. Thacker (2015, pp.35-36) argues that identity crisis exists in Holden's persona as a result of the death of his young brother Allie Caulfield who has died with leukemia and leaves him to face his collapse alone as an isolated young boy of 16years believing that it's his guilt and blames himself frequently for being survivor, this is shown when his dorm and classmate Ward Stradlater asks him to do his English homework by writing an essay so, he starts writing about his dead brother's baseball leaper (mitt) while he is composing he mentions, "He's dead now," which makes the reader/ viewer knows that Allie has died before two years ago.(Salinger, 1951, p.43) His grief on missing Allie gains him the impulse of thuggery and aggression also makes him lost his conscious, unable to control himself this is the outcome of a horrible and shocking experiment as (Erikson, 1968, p.17) debates in his book 'Identity: Youth in Crisis' that after such trauma or as an effect it makes the person "impaired in that central control over themselves" as it's clarified in Holden's reaction for his died brother he loses not only his control but definitely his mind that night."I was only thirteen and they were going to have me psychoanalyzed and all, because I broke all the windows in the garage. I don't blame them. I really don't. I slept in the garage the night he died, and I broke all the goddam windows with my fist, just for the hell of it. I even tried to break the windows on the station wagon we had that summer, but my hand was already broken and everything by that time, and I couldn't do it. It was a very stupid thing to do, I'll admit, but I hardly didn't even know I was doing it, but you didn't know Allie" (Salinger, 1951, p.44)(Renae .T and et al , 2013) assert that the starting point for his alienation as a production of identity crisis takes place at the opening chapter of the novel as he narrates this story from the hospital in which he gets his psychotherapy; when Holden has witnessed the annual football game against Saxon Hall that is established in his private school, Pencey preparatory in Agerstown, Pennsylvania. He stands alone on the topmost of Thomsen's Hill, isolated himself from any other body due to his avoiding of human contact,

instead of viewing it with his mates, he watches it lonely as he says "I remember around three o'clock that afternoon I was standing way the hell up on top of Thomsen Hill". (Salinger, 1951, p.2) Holden's identity crisis also belongs to the consequence of parents' negligence and oblivious of their boy in his most sensitive period in which he will be changed from a child into a teenager so, he needs his parents into his side, their care, their supports , attention, sympathy and tenderness ,but regrettably Holden doesn't find such aspects in his father and mother due to their engagement in work which never ends as well too angry and as an outcome they have no time to take care after him in the same time they don't know how to deal with him thus, he has sent to an endless boarding schools paying no attention how he will be there, what will acquire bad or good conducts, how and how, but it seems that it is unimportant matter for them nevertheless their role is dominant and substantial in creating his personality , Holden says "they're quite touchy about anything like that, especially my father. They're nice and all -- I'm not saying that --but they're also touchy as hell" (Salinger, 1951, p.1)Furthermore, his elder brother D.B. who plays a key role in his dereliction due to his work as a writer more specifically scenario writer in Hollywood that leads him to disregard his brother or rather to forget him completely , Holden describes his work in Hollywood as prostitution " he's is my brother and all, he's in Hollywood. Now he's out in Hollywood, D.B., being a prostitute. If there's one thing I hate, it's the movies. Don't even mention them to me" (Ibid)The foremost cause for Holden's destruction of identity along with Allie's death is the horrible suicide that is committed by his schoolmate from Elkton Hills "James Castle" when he jumps from the window as a result of something he says about a snobbish student named Phil Stabile. The terrible thing that when he says any word, he doesn't take back of what he has said, so, this conceited guy as Castle called him come with his other bastards and lock his room's door in order to make him take back but he denies which makes him prefer suicide rather than retraction. May be he does so to get himself rid from such an unbearable phony world and life. Thus, such catastrophic incident effected Holden's own life considerably as he says:" There was this one boy at Elkton Hills, named James Castle that wouldn't take back something he said about this very conceited boy, Phil Stabile. James Castle called him a very conceited guy, and one of Stable's lousy friends went and squealed on him to Stabile. He was a skinny little weak-looking guy, with wrists about as big as pencils. Finally, what he did, instead of taking back what he said, he jumped out the window. I was in the shower and all, and even I could hear him land outside.[….] , so I put my bathrobe and I ran downstairs too, and there was old James Castle laying right on the stone steps and all. He was dead, and his teeth, and blood, were all over the place" (Salinger, 1951, pp. 164,165) Megheirbi (2018, p.583) points out in her article that Holden's losing of identity at the beginning of the novel is displayed when he says "I still act sometimes like I was only about twelve. Sometimes I act a lot older than I am". (Salinger, 2010;1951, pp. 9-10) This shows his confusion of identity, he himself doesn't know where, how and when he behaves as a kid and as an adult, he really lives in a fettle known as the betweenness in both his conducts and feelings he is really cannot realize his current state is he a child or an adult·It is of high importance to mention that the motivating force for his losing whether identity or the entire self is the phony, corrupted, and hypocrite surrounding environment of such an American society either its places or its people who cares just for appearance and hedonism also it is represented in his headmaster of Pencey prep school Dr. Thurmer as Holden calls him phony slob who is really representative of this fake world when he shacks every hand especially the students' parents, and Mr. Haas the headmaster of Elkton Hills school whom Holden names him the phoniest bastard ,also somehow he regards his parents as a phonies too particularly when Mr. spencer tells him that Pencey's headmaster calls his father and mother as grand people and they're really grand people , the word 'Grand' is the most hateful word Holden has heard ever "Yes, they are. They're very nice. "Grand. There's a word I really hate. It's a phony baloney. I could puke every time I hear it" (Salinger, 1951, p.10). He hates also the hotel [Seton Hotel / Wicker Bar] which he visits when he has expelled from Pencey prep school and stay for three days or more before returns back to his home and the night club he again goes to it he disgusts such places because he believes completely that they are full with phony persons / individuals. As a tragic outcome he gains it from the term of "phony" is his inability to communicate with others, he attempts several times so as to make himself as an adult but he fails when he tries with his history teacher Mr. Spencer as he has thought a trustworthy buddy to contact with through his suffering of identity crisis but the effective thing that Holden has witnessed throughout his visit Mr. Spencer's physical illness and the terrible signs of old age which makes Holden fears for himself and nauseates in the same time for being an old man like Mr. Smith. "He was sitting in a big leather chair, all wrapped up in that blanket I just told you about. The minute I went in, I was sort of sorry I'd come. He was reading the Atlantic Monthly, and there were pills and medicine all over the place, and everything smelled like Vicks Nose Drops. It was pretty depressing. I am not too crazy about sick people,

anyway. Old Spencer had on this very sad, ratty old bathrobe that he was probably born in or something. I don't much like to see old guys in their pajamas and bathrobes anyway". (Salinger, 1951, pp. 7-8) He attempts for the second time with Mr. Antolini, Holden's smart and friendly English teacher at Elkton Hills who has quit teaching in other place. Holden phones him to tell him about his expulsion from Pencey prep when he is at his home to see phoebe his lovely sister and the one who understands him, as he narrates some events that have happened to him throughout his long adventure at Pencey and after especially about New York city, then to avoid his mother and father's seeing, he informs phoebe to go to Mr. Antolini's house till Tuesday. His English teacher and his wife welcome him to spend the day with them as he believes that Mr. Antolini is a real trustworthy man to be his mate but it's revealed the opposite due to his affection towards Holden when he is sleeping and passes his fingers on Holden's forehead and hair, this action bothers him and makes him counted along with those phonies because he considers such deed as mark of sexual attempt/ homosexuality, thus, he mistrusts Mr. Antolini and departs his home at once. (Megheirbi, 2018, p.584)"I woke up all of a sudden . I don't know what time it was or anything, but I woke up. I felt something on my head, some guy's hand. Boy, it really scared hell out of me. What it was, it was Mr. Antolini's hand. What he was doing was, he was sitting on the floor right next to the couch, in the dark and all, and he was sort of petting me or patting me on the goddam head. Boy, I'll bet I jumped about a thousand feet. "what the hellya doing?" I said. "Nothing ! I'm simply sitting here, admiring" (Salinger, 1951, pp. 188-190)Holden's incisive refusal of adult world comes out again from his disgust of the tedious life and humdrum routine of adults who has already contemplated himself when he becomes an adult solely as a boring and clumsy man engaged in many things as he says, "working in some office, making a lot of dough… reading newspapers, and playing bridge all the time, and going to the movie". (Salinger, 2010; 1951,pp. 119-120)Thus, a good decision for Holden to take after these failure contacts is to prevent human contact totally except a single person who cannot reject her i-contact his only sister Phoebe due to the belief of Erikson (1968, p.178) as an outcome of "an early identity hunger," the teens "attach themselves to one brother or sister", they do so to indemnity their unattained personalities like Holden's contact with Phoebe. He behaves as a mute and deaf man to avoid communication as well the things that gets him nervous as he tells his sister that he works in a very far place where no one can realize him. Kinnick (1970,, p.441) shows that "adolescent's disillusionment and sense of failure arrive when his search for an ideal and decent world for his ideal and decent self to respond to prove useless"It's notable that Holden's revulsion of all the fake and duplicity he confronts it in the mature world is exposed in his clutch into childhood. As Erikson himself has depicted such type of repudiation and scare of being an adult or merely enters the adult cosmos is a negative identity as one of the leading forces of identity crisis in which the mature rejects every suggested role of her/him from the community and lives in a solitude condition with a cynical attitude to adolescents themselves and their universe and this is reflected in Holden's own isolation when he feels nasty from every little thing surrounds him especially the breath who calls it "bad breath of adolescents" due to the smell of cigarettes and wines generally amusement places and particularly night clubs and anything relates to adulthood such as sex phenomena, physical appearance etc.. The cause behind Holden's prevention of communication lies in his disrelish of phoniness that his own world surrounds by it, so this drives him and leaves him as alienated and lonely young boy. (Megheirbi, 2018, pp.584-585) His insistence on children to remain in the world of childhood and never attend the adulthood one to be stable like the museum when he visits it frequently and fond with its things due to its stability "everything always stayed right where it was. Nobody'd move.[…] Nobody'd be different" (Salinger,2010; 1951, p.131) this speech is connected with his own dream as he informs his sister to be a catcher in a grand empty field stopping at the edge and rescuing children from plopping in the disgusting world of adulthood due to his desire of preventing them from trying a hard experience as his mine. This represents his own fall as Amina explains in her article that his dream exposes his appeal of a person to protect him from his downfall and this is demonstrated when he was in his way in Fifth Avenue and passes with a strange experiment which reflected in his frequent passing of hunks, in each time he moves from one to the other, he says "down, down, down, and nobody'd ever see me again". (Salinger,2010;1951, p.204) such feeling of falling down makes the reader convinced that he is suffering from illness more specifically when he envisages himself conversing Allie asking him for help and protection from the world of delusions [phoniness]. (Megheirbi, 2018, p.585)Hence, all these actions, behaviors, frequent attempts and experiments in adult world have led but to psychological clinic/ psychotherapy where Holden has remedied in as an outcome of his identity confusion/ crisis , lack of ego's integration and his disgust from such a phony world of adolescence. This is manifested in the hospital when the psychotherapist questions Holden concerning his future schemas after his healing from identity crisis and attending a new school in the coming

year, he considers such inquiry as a moronic one, “A lot of people, especially this one psychoanalyst guy they have here, keeps asking me if I’m going apply myself when I go back to school next September. It’s such a stupid question, in my opinion. I mean how do you know what you’re going to do till you do it?” (Salinger ,2010;1951 , pp.208-209)

Conclusion

J.D. Salinger's *The Catcher in The Rye* is widely regarded as his masterpiece, written in the aftermath of the Second World War to capture the cultural and psychological transition of America and more broadly, Western society from the modern into the postmodern era. The novel achieved international acclaim for its candid portrayal of alienation, adolescence, and the search for meaning, resonating with readers across generations. At the center of the narrative stands Holden Caulfield, a troubled adolescent whose struggle with identity crisis defines the novel's trajectory. As a sixteen year old boy, Holden embodies instability and psychological turmoil, manifesting in alienation, loneliness, and depression. His character not only reflects the disorientation of postwar youth but also mirrors Salinger's own confrontation with trauma and isolation.Holden's crisis originates from multiple sources, the most devastating being the death of his younger brother Allie, which leaves him overwhelmed by guilt and self-blame. His parents' emotional neglect exacerbates this condition, isolating him during his most formative years and leaving him vulnerable to the corrupt and "phony" world he perceives around him. Consequently, Holden's rejection of adulthood and his desperate clinging to childhood stability drive him toward psychological breakdown. His failures in human connection further intensify his conviction that loneliness is preferable to engaging with what he sees as a hypocritical society. This alienation becomes symbolized resistance to conformity and his self-identification as an outsider.Despite his repeated attempts to find guidance from teachers, peers, and adult figures, Holden continually interprets these encounters as betrayals or distortions, which reinforces his withdrawal into isolation. His only genuine bond remains with his sister phoebe, reflecting Erikson's (1968) notion that unresolved "identity hunger" often leads adolescents to anchor themselves in sibling relationships. Ultimately, Holden's disillusionment culminates in hospitalization and psychotherapy, where his refusal to commit to future goals reflects Erikson's argument that identity confusion stems from a lack of ego integration, ego strength, and competence.Thus, Holden's crisis is not merely a personal tragedy but a representation of the fractured self in postwar American society. Through psychoanalytic interpretation, his alienation and rejection of adulthood expose the fragility of adolescent identity when confronted with death, neglect, and social hypocrisy. Salinger's novel, therefore, continues to resonate as a profound exploration of the psychological struggles of youth and the enduring complexities of identity formation. Jerome Salinger’s protagonist Holden Caulfield is the main axis that the whole novel revolves around him as a figure and his dilemma as a disordered/ unstable young boy of 16-17 years who suffers a lot throughout the development of the novel’s events which leads him languished from identity crisis along with alienation, loneliness, and depression. His character has mirrored Salinger’s own strong impact of Wars which left him isolated and wrote without publish due to his alienationHolden’s identity crisis has existed and promoted by many sources including the dominant one is his brother’s death Allie who drives him to blame himself for being alive while Allie is dead. His carelessness parents leaves him alone in a private school in the most sensitive period of child’s life that leads him to struggle internally with the hypocrite, corrupted, and phony world that surrounds him which ultimately ends him up with a mental illness. As well as his categorical rejection of being adult or just entering the adulthood world makes him insisted on remaining in childhood one, his failure in human contact despite his attempts makes him convinced that this fake world and its people are not worth to communicate with and reaches him to persuade that loneliness is the best solution for such terrible problem this is reflected and symbolized in his red hunting hat who wears it to refer that he is an alienated boy and doesn’t contact with human beings. However Erikson states and asserts that the reason behind Holden’s identity confusion is the lack of ego identity combining with ego strength and the sense of competence.

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