

Catcher in they rey –
holdens contradictory
views of the world



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

With close reference to pages 183-186 analyse Salinger's use of language and structure, exploring Holden's contradictory view of the world. On Page 183 Holden says ' you could tell the two hot- shots I was with weren't enjoying it too much. They stayed close as hell to me, and the one that didn't talk at all practically was holding onto my sleeve'. Holden calls them ' hot shots' because they acted phony by bunking school and then lying about there being no school. (P182). Throughout the novel, Holden seems to have a problem with the whole idea of ' phoniness', yet at times, he himself acts phony.

Holden considers movies to be extremely phony and criticises his brother because he moved to Hollywood. Holden emphasises his hatred for Hollywood and movies throughout the novel. Holden states his problem with phonies on page 184 when he says ' I'd have this rule that nobody could do anything phony when they visited me. If anybody tried to do anything phony, they couldn't stay'. He constantly demonstrates the idea that if people are ' phony' it's a bad thing. We see this on pages 72/73 when he is talking about Ernie.

He says that Ernie ' is a terrific snob and he won't hardly even talk to you unless you're a big shot or a celebrity or something'. In this sentence, Holden implies that just because Ernie is good at playing the piano he thinks he can treat people badly, as if he is better than them. This seems to be Holden's main dislike about ' phoniness', the fact that people act ' phony' because they think they are better than you. This is also shown on page 23 when Holden says that stradlater fixed himself up all the time because he was ' madly in love with himself.

He thought he was the handsomest guy in the whole of West Hemisphere'. He criticises Stradlater's love for himself because he sees this as an act of 'phoniness'. While criticising people due to their 'phoniness' throughout the novel, Holden himself acts 'phony' on multiple occasions. On pages 48-52, when talking to Ernest Morrow's mother, he pretends to be a completely different person to himself. He makes up a whole false persona in order to look better in front of Ernest's mother. His false persona has a different name, and likes Ernest, even though Holden himself doesn't have a high opinion of him.

If somebody else were to do the same thing in front of Holden, he would undoubtedly call them 'phony'. In chapter 17, when Holden goes on a date with Sally Hayes, he speaks just as posh as Sally does. This is shown when he says 'swell to see you too'. Again, Holden is putting on a false persona in order for Sally to like him more. Throughout this whole chapter, Holden constantly criticises Sally on the way she speaks and acts, yet speaks and acts just like she does. By doing this, Holden is contradicting himself.

He doesn't seem to realise that he is acting just as 'phony' as Sally is. Holden seems to act this way in front of most girls. I think he does this because he sees other guys acting the same way with girls and he naturally copies them because he doesn't know how else to act. As a result, he contradicts himself often, but he just doesn't realise this. On page 183, Holden states that the tomb was 'so nice and peaceful', yet he goes on to say that 'you can't find a place that's nice and peaceful because there isn't any'.

Again, Holden is contradicting himself, but in a different way. He always seems to radically change his views based on little things. On page 184, he talks about his ideal future living in a cabin away from the world. When talking about how his family could visit him he says that he would let D. B. come and visit him for a while if he wanted 'a nice, quiet place for his writing. ' Again he is contradicting himself because he is now saying that there is a place which is nice and peaceful, even though he previously stated that there isn't any.

This is a clear example of Holden's unstable state of mind, because he doesn't remember what he previously says and he doesn't seem to have any set views as he is always contradicting himself. Loneliness is a key theme in the novel, and it is represented through Holden's contradictions. On page 184, when talking about his ideal future living alone in a cabin, he says, 'I'd ask them all to visit me sometime if they wanted to, but I wouldn't insist or anything. ' This basically shows Holden's desperation for any type of relationship.

Although he wants his family to visit him and keep him company, he doesn't want to admit it and therefore acts like he would invite them round as a favour to them, when really, it would make him feel better. On page 186, Phoebe is angry at Holden and Holden gets upset and feels guilty. This shows that he actually cares for Phoebe, even though he would never admit it. He shows this often throughout the novel when he talks highly about her. This idea is also shown on pages 122-123. Holden is so desperate for company that he just contacts anyone he could think of in order to have company.

Even though he criticises these people based on their 'phoniness', he still wants their company. This reoccurs on page 134. Holden spends all that time criticising Luce, yet ends up practically begging him to stay with him because he is lonely. He even admits his loneliness to Luce . 'I'm lonesome as hell, no kidding'. This happens a lot during the novel. In chapter 10, Holden meets three girls, who he refers to as 'pretty ugly' and 'the three witches'. He spends the majority of the chapter pretending to like them in order to have company, even though he constantly criticises them to us.

He constantly complains to us about things that they do, yet at the end of the chapter on page 67 when they say they had to leave, he says that he 'tried to get them to stick around for a while'. This scene links together the last two points that I mentioned. Holden doesn't actually like the girls, yet he pretends he does so that he can have company. He also creates this false persona that is interested in the three girls. In order to do this, he had to use techniques that he has learnt from other people, even though he describes these other people as 'phony'.

Because he so socially unable, he takes techniques from others. What he doesn't realise is that by using these techniques, he himself is being a 'phony'. You could say that deep down he knows that he does this a lot, yet he doesn't want to admit it to himself. In conclusion I think that Holden is highly contradictory about everything due to his troubled and confused state of mind. I think this is caused by the changes they are taking place in his life, such as getting kicked out of schools a lot and not understanding sexual relationships/feelings.