

The catcher in the ryeconclusion



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'The Catcher In the Rye', written by J. D. Salinger is a bildungsroman in which Holden Caulfield, a misanthropic sixteen-year-old, narrates a story concerning three, eventful days of his life.

Among the several themes successfully portrayed throughout the novel, the theme of isolation is most prominent, as Holden constantly feels detached from the society in which he lives. The reasons for this are various but are mainly due to the fact that Holden is unhappy with the world he lives in and what it values. His dislikes for the world around him cause him to withdraw into a state of isolation and this serves as a form of self-protection from the 'phonies' that he finds so unbearable. It is at the start of the novel that Holden is initially perceived as being an outsider to the society around him. At 'Pencey Prep.', he reveals his strong emotions on a number of instances and the reader soon learns that he does not appear to have any true friends.

An example of this is shown after his fight with Stradlater when he admits to himself that he was "feeling so lonesome and rotten, I even felt like waking Ackley up". This quotation clearly illustrates the extent of Holden's loneliness at Pencey and is a strong indication of how he is an outsider. This is because, through Holden's narration, the reader has learnt that Ackley is one of Pencey's social rejects and is someone who people rarely talk to, let alone confide in. Therefore, the very fact Holden is even considering talking to Ackley indicates his desperation to find a friend. This desperation has stemmed from the fact that he has isolated himself from those around him, making him feel lonely. In the above quotation, Holden admits that he is lonely and what he says clearly suggests that he has nobody to talk to.

Additionally, the very fact Ackley is asleep indicates that even the social rejects of Pencey are not there for Holden and that he really is in a state of isolation. As the novel develops, the reader begins to get the impression that Holden uses his isolation as a way of protecting himself. An example of this is shown when he is in Ernie's nightclub: " So I left. It made me mad, though, when I was getting my coat. People are always ruining things for you.

" This illustrates how Holden reacts when Lillian Simons asks him to join her for a drink. Holden immediately makes an excuse that he has to meet somebody and leaves the club. He does this because he does not want to talk to her since she is ' strictly a phony'. From previous experiences, Holden knows that phony situations and people irritate him and so there is a clear sense of self-protection in Holden's actions, as he does not want to be irritated any more than he already has been. The first sentence of the above quotation has an interesting structure as it is a very short and this helps to emphasise how quickly Holden leaves the club as well as how sudden his decision to leave is.

Additionally, when he says that ' people are always ruining things for you', he is actually saying that phoniness ruins things for him. For Holden, phoniness is something which greatly upsets him and he sees it as a symbol of what is fundamentally wrong in the adult world. It is for this reason that he isolates himself from the majority of adults around him. This explains his actions in the situation at ' Ernie's' when Lillian Simmons asks him to join her. He realizes she is ' phony' and so this gives him an excuse to withdraw into his isolation, making him leave.

When Holden meets Carl Luce further on in the novel, he demonstrates how he is frightened of isolation. The reader notices this because of the way he pleads Carl to stay and have another drink with him: “‘ Have just one more drink,’ I told him. ‘ Please. I’m lonesome as hell.

No kidding. ” Since Holden is pleading Luce, it is clear that he has a strong fear of isolation and being alone. Here again, he admits that he is lonely and it seems that Holden has wanted to meet Luce for companionship but his meeting has resulted in him feeling an increased sense of isolation. This is due to the fact that Luce has changed and is not interested in what Holden has to talk about.

Carl Luce has grown up and is moving into adulthood and this is something that Holden is reluctant to do, as it is adulthood and growing up that he associates with phoniness. This explains why Holden is unable to relate to Luce and why Luce finds Holden’s behaviour unusual. This incident therefore reinforces the isolation Holden must feel and highlights the fact that his isolation ruins the few friendships that he still has. In chapter twenty-two of ‘ The Catcher in the Rye’, Holden speaks to Phoebe telling her what he wants to do in life: “ 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. ” This illustrates how Holden wants to be a catcher in the rye.

He pictures children playing innocently in a field of rye, high upon a cliff but eventually the children become adults and fall off the cliff. Holden uses a metaphor here to compare adulthood with falling off a cliff because when children become adults they also become phony and corrupted and Holden

views this as a terrible thing. He wants to protect children from the phoniness of the adult world and he wants to protect them from what has happened to him. Holden feels that he, in some ways, has fallen off a cliff. He wants to isolate children from the adult world to prevent the corruption from happening.

This idea of protection features yet again in the novel. Just as he has isolated himself from the phonies of the adult world, he wants to isolate these children from that phoniness as well. "The Catcher In The Rye" is a novel which investigates many different issues and can be read on a variety of different levels. Holden appears to be someone who isolates himself from the society he lives in as a form of self-protection. As Salinger reveals more about Holden's isolation, the reader in turn, learns more about his character as well.

He fails to make any true friends throughout the novel and is unable to feel at ease when confiding to anyone. Holden's isolation is a source of both his pain and his strength; however, it is also something which he fears. He wants to protect children from what has happened to him, but, by the end of the novel, emerges as an individual who is greatly troubled by those around him. Salinger's portrayal of Holden's isolation is consistently effective throughout the whole of the novel and it is Salinger's effective use of literary techniques which shape "The Catcher In The Rye" into the thought-provoking work that it is today.