

Holden caulfield literary psychoanalysis

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Holden uses dissociation as a defensive mechanism, to avoid his self-inflicted emotional distress, by separating his own feelings to suit that of a situation. For example, when Holden learns that Stradlater will be going on a date with Jane Gallagher, he represses his obvious feelings for her and, simply tells Stradlater to “give her my regards”, saying that he is “not in the mood right now” (Salinger 42-43). Though he is encouraged to go down and greet Jane, he blatantly ignores it and instead continues to only talk about Jane and his what he can remember about her.

This is an example of how Holden repressed his own emotions and did contrary to what he wanted to do. While Holden is out all night, drinking, dancing, and clubbing, he meets Lillian Simmons and dances with her, they are both uninterested and pay no attention to one another, and he realizes that “she wasn’t listening though. So [he] ignored her” (93). Holden seems to have cast his antisocial and misanthropic nature aside as he pretends to be interested in things that he clearly dislikes.

Holden seems to see himself as a suave popular playboy, but he hints at the loneliness that he is truly feeling, and his desperate want for company when he tries to nonchalantly pass off that he “tried to get them to stick around for a while but they wouldn’t” (98). He seems unwilling to admit his great yearning to be with other people. As he indifferently describes all the times that his offers were rejected. Holden’s control over his own true emotions conflicts with the actions and words that he expresses.