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Literature Analysis of J.D. Salinger Work

# Introduction

“I prayed for the city to be cleared of people, for the gift of being alone”. This literature analysis paper consists of two main pieces of works which are “The Catcher in the Rye” and a compilation of “Nine Stories” both by the same author J.D. Salinger. Salinger was a famous writer in the early 1990s who was American (Salinger, 1953). He is praised for writing dozens of short stories involving the children in one way or another. He showed the dark side of the society in most of the novels sending many moral lessons to the readers about the issues society is facing. The Catcher in the Rye is one of the prominent novels he has written in his early career as a writer which talks about the materialism and the puberty struggles normally faced by the individuals that are intense in nature (Salinger, 1951). The Catcher in the Rye was written in 1951 whereas Nine stories were written two years later in 1953 (Salinger, 1953). Nine stories are the collection of nine short stories that have one common point in one way or another. There is a separate message given in each story related to are the intangible forces. The similarity in all the stories of Salinger is the active participation of the young characters who tell the readers about the different symbols that are existing in the present society. There are many characters in those literary works who forces the audience to reflect on their lives and find the wrongs around them. The aim of this paper is to critically review the texts chosen for the analysis and to present the deeper meaning the stories have to offer. The idea is to make the readers aware of the hidden messages the stories present in a refined way, and the flaws all the characters are having in the work and what it is trying to tell us. *Both the stories point out that it’s the people we should be afraid of not the circumstances.* Circumstances might change but people are hard to deal with and this is the only skill we will never be able to master.

**Discussion**

This world is delusional that makes us believe in many superficial things. People suffer in silence and never reveal their pain to others. This effect keeps on multiplying until the whole world becomes oblivious. The Catcher in the Rye tells the story of a teenage boy named Holden who does not want to grow up and accept the new changes his life is about to offer. At the start of the novel when he starts narrating, he makes it clear to his readers that he clearly does not have someone to share his terrible experiences with. This is the heartbreaking reality of this world that even after so much progress, people still do not find a reliable person to discuss their matters with. Guessing from his age, his unusual behavior is justified on the matters that are concerning him. He is feeling the pressure of this materialistic world and is unable to digest the bitter reality of life. The novel’s main view of point is the loss of innocence which is described perfectly in the book as the story progresses. Holden is expelled from four schools in a row and he does not know what to do next. He is in desperate need of guidance but there is nobody he could his issues with. In the story, he frequently calls random people when he stays in the hotel before going home. But, all the times the call is either ended by him or the other party is failed to resolve his problems. He is seen to be messed up in the present future not knowing where to go next. The experiences he faces are the negative sides of the society where he is misunderstood by the people around him and they do not give enough space for him to speak up. On and off in the story, he is hit back by the feelings he has for Jane but is helpless about them and do not pursue them. He is showed to be someone who is very careful and does not want to hurt other people's feelings intentionally. Like when he is on a train to New York where he accidentally meets the mother of one of his former classmates, he makes things up. Holden does not tell her about the real side of her son because she will be hurt. This depicts that Holden is not a bad person by heart. In another situation where he is hiring cabs for the travel, he keeps on asking the same question from all the drivers. That question irritates them showing how little the tolerance this society has for random questions. People in this world are not always depressed for the problems they have but they are sometimes depressed from the attitude they receive from others. We all are most of the times busy in our lives and forgets to realize that the people in our surroundings also matters. There are people like Maurice who takes advantage of someone’s misery and hurt them for materialistic means. Characters like Sally, Maurice and Sunny are presented as destructive in the novel because they are not capable of playing a positive role in someone’s life. They are here to have fun in this world and to feel joy by the materialism they have surrounded themselves with. The story is deeply depressing because there were many young characters in the novel but none of them performed their moral responsibility towards guiding Holden and listening to him. Most of the characters are showed to be selfish who do not possess a kind heart and are only concerned about themselves. Coming to the climax of the story, Holden finally reveals to his younger sister that all he ever wanted was to save children from the loss of their innocence. He always wanted to be The Catcher in the Rye whose job is to save children falling from a cliff (Salinger, 1951). That conversation truly conveys his inner fears which have related to adulthood. He does not want to enter adulthood because that will require many efforts from his side for which he is still not ready. This is why the novel was named the catcher in rye which symbolizes the uniqueness of Holden and individuality he has unlike other people around him(Salinger, 1951). He wants to stand out and makes a difference in the society but unfortunately, nobody is understanding his intentions in life. Holden wants to be heard, he wants people to understand and the children who are pushed into adulthood without being understandable.

Coming to the second part of the paper, the second text under consideration is the Nine Stories book of Salinger (Salinger, 1953). This book deals with more than one themes that involve the materialism, love, death, war, the madness, and society. The book starts with death in the first short story and ends with one in the last story. In the first story, the protagonist named Muriel is seen to be arguing with her mother on a call about her unstable husband. She is a superficial person who keeps on defending her husband in front of her mother but at the same time do not put any effort to help me. When he comes back to his hotel room, he ultimately. kills himself in front of his sleeping wife This event in the story revealed the dark realities we have to face in society. He was a soldier who after returning back from WWII started suffering from a post-traumatic stress disorder. There was no one in the entire world who could understand his situation and save him from self-destruction. This aspect of Seymour's character matches perfectly with the characterization of Holden from the above novel. Both the characters were lonely and needed someone to understand what they are feeling. This world is a cruel place and people get killed in the hopes that one day someone will eventually save them. Another relevance found in all the nine short stories is the role War has played in people's lives. For example, in the second story, Eloise was in love with a man named Walt who died in the war and she still dissolves whenever she thinks about him. She is the mother of a daughter but she has isolated herself from the world and making her life miserable and the people around her. The is a very weak character who does not have any concerns for her loved ones and destroying her life for a faded memory. The Laughing Man is the third story in the collection in which the chief is involved with a girl and she leaves him. He then kills the imaginary protagonist of his tales for no reason making the children heartbroken and in shock. The had the option of letting go and moving on in his life without giving no harm to anybody, but he did the otherwise. Similarly, in the “Pretty Mouth and Green My Eyes”, the readers are introduced to the world of deception through the characters. This story clearly sends a message that this world can betray you no matter who is standing in front of you.

# Conclusion

This world is full of uncertainty and ambiguity and this is why we are always afraid. No one comes to this world with the awareness that of how things will work and end. We stick our fears and the beliefs of how things will go and most of the time things are going fine but it is always us who creates a mess. We should not be afraid of the circumstances we have to face but the people we have to deal with and that's the most challenging part of living in this materialistic world. These stories tell us the heartbreaking reality we are facing these days and this is why most of us go on isolation and do not prefer to open up on matters that bother us. Holden was different than others, he wanted to do something in his life that changes everything but he didn't know how. Mauriel was the wife of a person who was facing extreme stress in his life but she was not able to save him from dying. There are many other characters as well in all the stories mentioned above who had the power to change someone’s life in a positive way but refused to do so. This is what we should be afraid of. This is why Salinger quoted in one of his short stories that “I prayed for the city to be cleared of people, for the gift of being alone". People are the most dangerous creature in the world if you do not know how to read them properly. They can do everything based on the intentions they have.

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(Salinger, 1953)