

CHAPTER THREE

CONCLUSION

After analysing the portrayal of the protagonist of J.D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye*, I conclude that Holden Caulfield is portrayed as a teenager who is idealistic, caring, unsophisticated, and impotent. He cannot understand what is going on around him. He is scared of the complexity of the adult world. Holden feels depressed to find people in his surroundings are not honest. This fact makes Holden, who is an idealistic person, angry.

Besides being idealistic, Holden is a caring person. He cares about people around him especially children. He feels worried that innocent children will fall into the adult world which, in his opinion, is cruel and full of phonies. He cannot accept the fact that children will grow up, become adults and fall into the adult world.

In his novel Holden is also portrayed as unsophisticated. Lacking in experience when facing things of the adult world, as a teenager, he becomes confused and feels depressed. This is reflected from his reaction to the situation he faces.

Moreover, he is portrayed as impotent. He cannot change the undesirable situation and he also does not have guts to change it. The only thing he can do is imagining things. Because of living under pressure of the adult world and thus, having a mental breakdown, Holden ends up in a sanatorium.

From the portrayal of Holden Caulfield, the reader can see clearly that Holden Caulfield faces some difficulties in adapting himself to the new situation he is in. He even cannot bear the pressure that finally causes him to feel depressed so that he should get psychological treatment. Holden's characteristics are closely related to the purpose of the author in creating such a character. The purpose of the author is to show that it is not always easy for the teenagers in 1950s to adapt themselves to the new situation.

J.D. Salinger, the author of *The Catcher in the Rye* is successful in portraying Holden Caulfield, the protagonist of the novel. In the novel, Holden is portrayed in a realistic way and thus, appears lifelike, so there will be a bond between the reader and the book ("J. D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye*: Connections to Literature"). This kind of portrayal gives the reader the sense of reality that someone like Holden really exists in this new era; someone who cannot adapt to the changes and who is depressed by them. Thus, I am of the opinion that J.D. Salinger has portrayed Holden Caulfield to reflect teenagers who faces difficulties in adapting themselves to the new situation, as a part of the teenagers in the 1950s America.

After reading J.D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* and analysing the portrayal of the protagonist of the novel, I can learn several things. The portrayal of Holden Caulfield has led me to the understanding that although the majority of

the American teenagers in 1950s feel comfortable with the changes, there are still teenagers who feel the opposite. Holden Caulfield is an extreme example; instead of feeling the euphoria of the new era, he is depressed and mentally disturbed by the changes. These different feelings are undoubtedly plausible to happen in any changes in the society. However, I am also surprised to know that such a new condition can give negative impact on the people who are involved in it.

From what Holden describes as his experience, it seems that his parents do not play any role in assisting Holden to cope with the difficulties he faces. In my opinion, parental guidance will be of some help for teenagers in entering and facing the new world, that is the adult world. Therefore, the teenagers will have someone to share with or to solve their problems.

In conclusion, J.D.Salinger's novel *The Catcher in the Rye*, however, has given me a clear picture of a teenager in coping with the new situation in 1950s America. Thus, it is worth reading and analysing.