

TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY

Formation of Identity through Negotiation in *The Catcher in the Rye* and *The Giver*

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By

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Declaration

I hereby declare to the best of my knowledge that this thesis is original; no part of it has been submitted earlier for the candidature of research degree to any university.

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Letter of Recommendation

Bishwa Ram Nepal has completed dissertation entitled “Formation of Identity through Negotiation in *The Catcher in the Rye* and *The Giver*” under my supervision. He carried out his research from June 2023 to June 2024 carefully. I hereby recommend his dissertation for the vivavoce.

Dr. Komal Phunyal
Supervisor

Letter of Approval

This thesis entitled “Formation of Identity through Negotiation in *The Catcher in the Rye* and *The Giver*” submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University by Bishwa Ram Nepal has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

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Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to investigate the process of young adult's coming of age in J.D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* and Louis Lowry's *The Giver*. Young adult characters, Holden and Jonas negotiate the social structure in their own way, yet they come to the same point—gaining maturity through assertive behavior—at the end of these novels. Examining in the framework of Petru Golban's bildungsroman approach these two characters' journey to maturity successfully negotiates existing social structures. Both of the young adult narratives revolve around characters' coming of age experiences. Holden's social structure makes him a rebel, whereas Jonas' social structure makes him a controlled subject. Nevertheless, they challenge the social structures in the process of growing into indurated individuals. The negotiation to the structure occurs through resistance and complicity: Holden resists and Jonas becomes a part of the existing structure. Finally, both of the characters challenge the existing structure which is an indication of their character formation. The research concludes that both Holden and Jonas take a different route to maturity but they grow into being assertive individuals. Protagonist in Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* and Lowry's *The Giver* undergo a transformation of consciousness and both of them grow up to be assertive individuals albeit in a reverse trajectories. And, the research concludes that the formation of identity completes when Holden decides to stay back with his sister and Jonas successfully rescues Gabriel and runs out of the community.

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Chapter I

Introducing Individual and Society in Young Adult Narrative

Young adult narratives cover a range of novels that include adolescents, teenagers, or young adults, thus a shorthand expression YA, a popular genre today. Traditionally, the genre was dismissed for it was called low literature and unsuitable for academic discussion. However, contemporary scholars have not only read the YA literature but also theorized it. Today, sometimes, YA, also called children's literature, stands as an independent genre with enormous resources and publications. According to Pam B. Cole, Young Adult literature today includes “a wide range of reading interests and abilities” (“Preface” xv) designed and intended to different readers. In this regard, the YA titles “include traditional young adult literature (both new and classic), adult books for mature readers, and traditional canonical texts. It also places an emphasis on young adult literature for the content area classroom and picture books appropriate for teens” (xvi). Similarly, Cole identifies adolescence as “a developmental phase that includes conflict” (32). And, by the age factor, adolescence refers to the teens, and they “naturally push away from authority figures in order to discover their identities” (23). Thus, the adolescents participate in a frictional relation with existing social structures to form their identity and freedom as an individual.

Peter Hunt has an interesting observation regarding the subject matter and theme of children's literature in *An Introduction to Children's Literature* (1994) that “[t]he picture of children's literature that emerges from 300 years of history is one of a literature divided between entertainment and edification, and criticism today is divided along the same lines” (163). Similarly David Cappella points out two reasons underpinning the increase in young adult novels. The first reason is obviously a commercial one: “trade publishers [are] offering new fiction title and touting new

authors” as well as academic and “educational publishers are making new textbooks” (2) while they constantly update and upgrade old textbooks and teaching genre. This practice has propelled YA into a serious literary genre:

New anthologies of stories and poems geared towards YA’s continue to appear from various publishers. A myriad of articles in newspapers and magazines have discussed such topics as death wishes in teen fiction, the parent problem in Young Adult Literature, and coming of age YAL. After all, adults are reading these books now, especially books about misfit teens and fantasy fictions. (2)

Cappella points to an interesting cultural phenomenon silently taking place in the field of YAL readership. The majority of the readers are the adult ones who read it to know more about the children—their own children included, in most cases—and for the joy and pleasure of the fantasy world.

Similarly, the second reason behind the burgeoning of YAL is “author crossover factor” (2). This means that the writers who are not primarily known as children’s literature writers have written YAL and enjoyed a considerable popularity. However, a noteworthy event is that “long before the entry of these writers, established YAL authors pushed and redefined the boundaries of our conceptions of Young Adult Literature, moving the genre forward in new, exciting ways” so that the non-YAL authors enjoyed a wide market without doing much hard work. Meida, writers, publishers and academicians have equally contributed in the mainstreaming of YAL.

According to Jill Coste, children’s literature too fall prey to canon—a selective process of listing in and bracketing out. However, there are attempts to revise famous texts, include ignored texts and voices in order to “mapping contemporary revisions,

fan fiction, and fan art onto a fin-de-siècle landscape” (125). In fact, the questioning why and how canonical texts become canonical once and all. Coste explains further:

Indeed, the so-called Golden Age of children’s literature, which features Anglophone texts produced during the mid-nineteenth century into the early twentieth century, introduced readers to enduring characters and situations that are firmly established in our cultural imagination. At the same time, canonical Golden Age children’s books also reveal a context that was rife with conflict and exclusion. Contemporary calls for diversity in children’s literature have drawn attention to the tendency to revisit the same well-trodden works when teaching and writing about the Golden Age, but these titles are only a small sample of the literature available featuring and written for children during this era. (125)

Known as the period of Golden Age of children’s literature highlights the dual nature of this period, which is celebrated for its creation of iconic characters and stories that have left an indelible mark on cultural memory. However, it simultaneously underscores the era’s underlying conflicts and exclusions, often overlooked in favor of nostalgic reverence. Contemporary demands for diversity in children’s literature reveal the narrow scope of the traditional canon, suggesting that the emphasis on a limited selection of celebrated works obscures a broader, richer array of texts from this period.

Similarly, Wesley Jacques examines children literature and an “obvious and undeniable [political] reality of both adult and child subject position” (267-68). In such literary writing Jacques argues “priority is often given to adult normativity, adult ideology, and adult desires, reifying the oppressive function of all literatures, especially for—but certainly not limited to—children and adolescents” (268). Thus,

the landscape of adolescent literature is marked and marred by adult ideologies; it suppress the genuine concerns and suppress the power of young people in narrative.

In book length study of young adult and their literature, Katherine Bucher and M. Lee Manning have outlined the three phases of the development of young adult: physical, psychological, and cognitive. In the first phase physical changes such as body structure and skeletal grows rapidly and in a visible way. It is the period when children gain “considerable diversity in physical development” and rapid growth “rates occur due to genetics, environmental factors, health issue” (3). Distinct gender differences start to emerge in a boy from around 14 and in a girl from around 12, where they argue health issues such as eating disorders and sexual experimentation begins. The second phase is psychological where children start to develop their friendship circle and social interactions which “has a potential for boosting self-esteem and reducing anxiety” (3) among them. In the cognitive phase, they argue the following traits start to emerge:

Higher level of cognitive functioning (e.g., reasoning and higher level though process) develop. Moral and ethical choices are now possible and often guide behavior. Developmental diversity leads to a varying abilities to think and reason. And, cognitive ability is often affected by socialization. Perspectives about past, present, and future develop that allows enhanced perspective about time. Finally, language and overall verbalization skills increase, allowing improved communication in both school and home. (3)

The adolescent is marked by higher cognitive functions, moral and ethical decision-making ability. In this phase a child learns reasoning abilities too. Socialization influences cognitive skills, and a deeper understanding of time emerges. Language and communication skills also improve, enhancing interactions at school and home.

Adolescent literature, fitting for this age group and their social psychological situation, covers the issues mentioned above as their subject matter.

Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* (1950) and Lorry's *The Giver* (1993) capture the theme of growing up in two different societies. Salinger's protagonist is a young boy who struggles against social norms where Lorry's protagonist wrestles with a society that prescribes rules to be followed to be acceptable in the given society. Written in space to more than a half century, these two novels can be a yardstick to map the changing socialization patterns, fears and social anxiety faced by western society in these respective times. Moreover, these two Young adult (YA) narrative make a case: individuality has to be gained by wrestling with existing structures and systemic mechanisms. In *The Cather in the Rye*, the protagonist evolves into knowing the social structure and limitation of an individual in it; the protagonist in *Giver* is forced to acknowledge restrictive mechanisms clamping down on them.

Young Adult literature is a new genre with a long history without being called by this name. Peter Hunt charts the history of this new genre in *An Introduction to Children Literature* and finds it to be an "ideological minefield" that is "simplistic and overlooks obvious difficulties of reading it" (186). However, today, YA literature designates a field of study that is "both young and profoundly complex" (14). Though it started to facilitate the teaching of Young Adult narrative, it includes a comprehensive body of theoretical understanding and applications to narratives. As a new genre, the systematic study in YA fiction began as late as 1974: the first ALAN Review was published in 1974. The initial research covered "curricular materials encouraging and facilitating the use of YAL in classroom" (Suico et al 116). However, today YAL covers the issues of identity, growing up, social anxiety and

dystopia, to name a few. In short, it has evolved into a systematic investigation in pedagogical outlook for teaching Young Adult literature and theorizing it.

Both *The Catcher in the Rye* and *The Giver* map out a growing process of protagonists, Holden Caulfield and Jonas, respectively. However, they don't face the world in similar terms; their social realities are so different. Yet, they come across some shared experiences. Both the protagonists navigate these common experiences, such as conformity versus individuality, to better adjust in a societal environment of a phony world and dystopian social control over the individual. The research investigates on what makes them question the structure and at the same time preserve their innocence. Finally, the research explains the overall loss of innocence that make them stronger and more vocal. In short, the formation of identity gets materialized.

Holden Caulfield in *The Catcher in the Rye* and Jonas in *The Giver* resist societal norms in their own ways. Caulfield resists the norms overtly, going against social structure, whereas Jonas conforms to the norms and lives through them enough to question the role of social expectations in curbing individuality and rebel it by rebelling against the very social system that controlled him. The present research aims to examine two novels from the perspective of growing up as a process of social negotiation. The result will significantly enrich the existing scholarship on Salinger and Lowry's representation of society. The research will serve as a valuable resource for anyone pursuing research and scholarly understanding of these two novels as stories of coming of age.

In order to work with the hypothesis, the researcher will use the coming-of-age narrative as a methodological framework. To examine the structure of growing up—Holden's rejection of social norms, and Jonas's complicity to dismantle the structure from within—the research uses Sarah Graham's ideas on *Bildungsroman*,

explained by Michael Bakhtin and finally theorized by Petru Golban in “Towards a Definition and a Vector of Methodology in the Approach to the Bildungsroman as a Literary System.” In this study, Golban highlights the characters’ psychological maturation as the yardstick to coming of age narrative. This psychological maturation which he calls ‘formation of individuality’ includes maturity, assertiveness and ability to take decision.

Chapter II

Literature Review

Young Adult Literature started towards the last quarter of twentieth century, though S.E. Hinton published her seminal work *The Outsider* in 1967, which carries the major Young Adult themes: class conflict, identity and loyalty. The 1980s and 90s produced an abundant number of works—both critical and creative—in the field. In 21st century YA brought a diversity of issue on board. Now, it talks about diverse representation, identity, growing up, multiculturalism, and migration to name a few. It has evolved with the broader cultural shift occurring in the Western world. The survey of representative literature reviews on selected two texts tries to capture this evolution in the study of Young Adult Literature.

Ian Kinane, in an article “Phonies and Phone Calls” views *The Catcher in the Rye* as a failure of communication and resultant social isolation: “Salinger’s *The Catcher in the Rye* constructs social isolation as a problem of communication—and as a problem of language—which fails Holden Caulfield in his attempt to connect with others” (118). Holden's use of the word “phonies” cannot be understood as a simple social transaction but “in terms of how he [Holden] views the world around him” (118) as to be sham and fake.

James Bryan’s observation of the novel goes into psychological modes as he explains:

The richness of spirit in this novel, especially of the vision, the compassion, and the humor of the narrator reveal a psyche far healthier than that of the boy who endured the events of the narrative. Through telling his story, Holden has given shape to, and thus achieved control of, his troubled past. (1074)

Narrated by a young boy, Holden, the novel interestingly employs language. Donald Costello observes this phenomenon as an "authentic teenage speech" which is typically "overlaid with strong personal idiosyncrasies" (173). Despite its strong resentment of the social decorum, Holden's use of language does not cross it. In the same vein, Stefanie Schafer tries to understand the protagonist, Holden through Paul Ricour's theory of cognition in "Recognition Is a Form of Agreement." Schfaer's proposes that "self narration as identity formation and consolidation allows" the readers and narrator participate in "an ethical relationship" (606). For her, Holden's narrative style and most importantly the opening of the novel reveals his personality: a reluctant narrator who would tell his story only "if you [reader] really want to know" (Salinger 1). Holden's personality comes as early as the opening of the narrative, she argues:

[The] opening introduces Holden's idiosyncratic narrative style, revealing his taste for run-on sentences, simple syntax, and a kind of discourse that resembles oral speech to such an extent that we [readers outside America] might forget that it is actually too long-winded to to be one all-encompassing monologue. In addition, it reveals his characteristic unwillingness to compromise when faced with such normative expectations as the conventional way of narrating 'autobiography.' (610)

Holden's language, syntax and extensive knowledge of contemporary society makes him more than a narrator in the hand of Salinger. It is especially notable when the opening of the novel presents a narrator who engages with the audience in an informal way to the length of asking if they would like to listen to him. In short, it paints a clear picture about the narrator and protagonist.

Donald P. Costello's essay published in 1959 devotes extensively to read the language used by Holden in the novel as an artistic choice by Salinger in order to create an individual character but "not with the linguistic task of reproducing the exact speech of teenagers in general" (173). And, Holden speaks in the most "recognizable teenage language, and at the same time had to be identifiable as an individual" (173). Thus, Salinger is more focused on creating an individual character through the use of language as he explains further:

Holden's informal, schoolboy vernacular is particularly typical in its 'vulgarity' and 'obscenity.' No one familiar with pre-school speech could earnestly contend that Salinger overplayed his hand in this respect. On the contrary, Holden's restraints help to characterize him as a sensitive youth who avoids the most strongly forbidden terms; and who never uses vulgarity in a self-conscious or phony way to help him be 'one of the boys.' Fuck, for example, is never used as a part of Holden's speech. The word appears in the novel four times, but only when Holden disapprovingly discusses its wide appearance on walls. (175)

Despite using a lot of swearing words and most of the time throwing angry words at interlocutors, Holden appears to be a very sensitive boy as maintains social decorum and doesn't exercise the unsocial language. It has been evident in a number of occasions in the novel such as once he pays a visit to Professor Spenser.

One of the consistently researched topics on Salinger is censorship. Pamela Hunt's book-length study on the novel concludes that "[o]ne of the most salient characteristics of postwar American censorship has been the repeated inclusion of particular books on the censor's list, and J.D. Salinger's novel stands out as a premier example" (2). From banning the books to book burning, *The Catcher in the Rye* is an

“indicative of a deepening cultural crisis in post-World War II America” (3).

Revisiting the theme of censorship Ami e. Sterns argues from sociological perspective that the “public [and] collective responses to a cultural work like *Catcher* help articulate how one group defines its values, whether those definitions concern art of obscenity” (67). In this regard, the novel is a powerful expression of 1950s “teen angst” through protagonist Holden who “offers his dialogue, his perspective, and his behaviours to present and future audiences, inviting interpretation and public sparring over the production and control of meanings” (67). In fact, Holden’s communicative competence is an indication of the time he lived, and through his language choice readers can relive the time: 1950s.

Sara Lewis Dunne observes that Holden's emotional depth is communicated with the motif of the two movies mentioned in the novel. He "can achieve emotional intimacy with those he loves through the act of movie going, but the movie must be “good” instead of “lousy” and rather like lovemaking, the partner must be someone he cares for deeply” (38). Holden tries to lean on emotionally. Similarly, John M. Howell’s rather interesting reading of the novel equates Salinger’s novel with T. S. Eliot’s *Waste Land* (1922) structurally. He argues that, Holden’s idealized reality is the one sterilized and frozen either by death or by winter. Thus, Howell argues, “it is only to the degree that Holden can see the spirit of the saintly Allie in humanity that he can forgive those who do not conform to his ideal; that he can become his own savior as well as a savior of others” (370). In the waste land, Holden’s maturity takes place, or rather he becomes a catcher with Allie’s baseball glove in his hand.

Lowry’s *The Giver* has enticed a sustained number of scholars and critics as a rich source for analysis and interpretation. The critical engagement ranges from structural to discursive, theological to textual and imagist. These critics have made a

point that Lowry's novel carries themes suitable to their critical investigation. Moreover, a cursory search of the online database and archives will produce numerous articles and perspectives that highlight the problems of young adult literature in terms of dystopia—the alternative reality that is yet to happen in relation to Lowry's work, or *The Giver* as one of the seminal pedagogical text or the one should be banned from classroom use for its depiction of reality.

Ted Hipple and Amy Maupin allude to *The Giver* as one of the best young adult novels written at the turn of the twentieth century in the article, "What's Good about the Best." For them, the novel, along with other two, has good plot, character and is rich in "artistry details, emotional impact and teachability" (40) which has been central yardstick of good YA literature. Jonas, the protagonist of the novel, is at constant loggerhead with the social structure represented by the Gurdians allows him "to examine and critique his world" (Stewart 32) that he believes, so do most of the readers, is corrupt and socializes children in wrong ways. In Lowry's world, the society is "based on an elaborate system of discipline and punishment" and because of it the "community that has sacrificed free will, diversity, and individualism in the name of security and sameness" (Latham 134). However, such an imposed order and homogeneity, Latham argues, is neither effective nor absolute:

However, while chillingly effective, these mechanisms of control are not absolute. As the novel progresses, Jonas experiences a growing awareness of the terrible sacrifices his community has made, and eventually, he decides to escape. His act of resistance, and the famously ambiguous ending of the novel, question the efficacy of these mechanisms of control while at the same time refusing to provide a comfortable resolution. (134)

Jonas' rebellion points to the fact that social processes can't hinder an individual's growth, for growth is evolutionary in nature and immune to subjugation of any kind. Lowry's novels employ color motifs for strong symbolic purpose. The most dominant color blue appears as a constant choice. One of the books in "The Giver Quartet" is named *Gathering Blue* (2000). The color does not function as motif and symbol; color in Lowry's novels, argue Han and Yanghawa, has "sociopolitical significance" (338), and it points to the idea of "people's colorblindness as a symbol of their lack of autonomy and individuality, which is attributed to the community's overprotection of its members" (338-9). They further argue:

Drawing on various literary and philosophical theories of color, human perception, memory, and selfhood, this essay seeks to shed light on how Jonas's growing ability to see colors aids his transformation from a passive follower of the rules of his community into an autonomous individual with an ethical capacity that enables him to risk his own life for another human being. Jonas's growth as an individual capable of thinking for himself and making his own decisions is crucial to understanding the values he adopts during his training with *The Giver*, his predecessor. (339)

Perhaps by selecting the dominant color blue to represent Jonas' growth, Lowry is trying to map out a less biased and ethically balanced view of socialization. In other words, it tries to take the novel from the polarity of colors.

Similarly, Susan Louise Stewart reviews the novel against several readers "disconcerting on numerous levels" as the one that is "nevertheless has a place in the classroom" because it captures the essential nature of growing. In fact, Stewart asserts:

The Giver only reinforces many of our cultural values. True, many of those cultural values are worthy of reinforcement, but I do not believe we should accept those values without question, especially considering the world in which we now participate. Ultimately, I urge a careful examination of the textual, contextual, and extratextual components associated with the novel. This analysis will reveal that what initially appears to be a radical approach to adolescent literature actually reinforces cultural norms. In short, the text represents a return to normal.

The novel, in fact, reinforces numerous cultural values. While many of these values are indeed worth upholding, we should not accept them unquestioningly, especially given the complexities of the world we live in today.

In a Foucauldian reading, *The Giver* appears as having the governmental structure of dystopian society, Don Latham's in depth analysis of *The Giver* concludes that the novel has some "thematic concern with the social discipline" (134). For Latham, the social discipline primarily functions through the system of punishment. He claims:

A much more serious kind of punishment is "release," a term used to refer variously to both euthanasia and execution. Release is not thought of as a punishment if it is employed as euthanasia. When an underweight baby is released, for example, the occasion is considered sad, as it implies a failure on the part of the nurturers. When an elderly person is released, the occasion is considered a time to celebrate the culmination of a life fully led. If employed as a means of execution, however, release is considered a 'terrible punishment' as was the case with the errant pilot and the father of one of Jonas's classmates. (142)

The kind of social exclusion and punishment is designed for the exercise of control. The guardians exercise this social control by developing a mechanism. For example, shame serves as a subtle but powerful form of disciplining act. And, in another instance, an eleven-year-old who, having failed to complete his volunteer hours on time for the Ceremony of Twelve, had to do an extra month of work and receive his assignment privately, illustrating the consequences of falling short of expectations. In Grame Wend-Walker's "On the Possibility of Elsewhere" The Giver as a component of trilogy, is "replete with themes and tropes drawn from the wellspring of religious tradition and experiences" that shape the whole structure and theme of the novel. However, Wend-Walker contests that the novel brings "a tension between religion and critical discourse" (138) without taking name of religion. Wend Walker establishes the common theme in these three texts:

The Giver (1993) suggests that the eradication of the religious from human thought would mark not a moment of intellectual or social liberation but a catastrophic narrowing of the imaginative spectrum, and thereby a diminishment of the capacity to open onto difference. *Gathering Blue* (2000) demonstrates that such narrowing can arise from the institutionalization of the religious impulse as readily as from its exclusion. *Messenger* (2004) moves from critiquing the spiritual imagination's organized suppression to asserting its value in sustaining both social diversity and cohesion. (139)

Wend-Walker's points to the common lens to read Lowry's trilogy is through a secular standpoint because, he argues Lowry both encourages and challenges secular readings, as *The Giver* brings spiritual element in the narrative, not the religious one.

Finally, Kyoung-Min Han and Yonghwa Lee examines the philosophical significance of color in *The Giver*. They argue that the importance of color in the

novel is an important one and thus “has not gone unnoticed,” but all for wrong reason: “many critics have focused on mainly on the sociopolitical significance of color” (338). Han and Lee contends that the color enables to understand to understand “Jonas’s increasing knowledge of color enables his maturation as an individual subject with his own interior space” (339). Focusing primarily on the color white, Han and Lee elaborates the connection between whiteness and protagonist’s maturation:

It is significant to understand the transformative and constitutive power of Jonas’s ability to see colors because it offers a new perspective on the ending of the novel. Focusing on how the novel’s ending does not provide a specific account of Jonas and Gabriel’s fate when they reach Elsewhere, many critics define the novel’s conclusion as an open ending purposely designed to enrich the interpretive possibilities of the novel. (340)

The final event in the novel is an example of gradual assertiveness coming into Jonas. He does not only leave for Elsewhere, he decides to carry Gabriel as well with him. This decision is very important in the sense that Gabriel was going to be released from the community. And, Jonas took a responsibility to save his life.

Chapter III

Methodology: Bildungsroman as Coming of Age Genre

Almost all the narrative do have an experience of growing up: characters grow in age and maturity, gain experiences, apply them to reading social contexts and make better judgment about their surroundings. The collective term for this development is bildungsroman, a German term popularized in critical theory by Tobias Boes when he translated and published original German essays written by Karl Morgenstern between 1817 to 1824. Todd Kontje contends that the German word “can be used to explore many themes” in English literature, such as “individual psychological development, changing gender roles, the value of labor in a capitalist society, the importance of religion in a secular age” (10). In this sense, the narrative encompasses almost every aspect of a novel making it a literary genre. He argues, "German [concept of] Bildungsroman is an intrinsically political genre that explores in various ways [through which] the relation between the cultural nation . . . and the political state" (10-11) comes to the reader. Bildungsroman, as a genre, thus is "devoted to the depiction of individual maturation" (11). Kontje highlights two historical meanings associated with the use of the term. First, as the name ‘roman’ suggests a “vernacular prose novel” that was very popular during eighteenth century. The second sense suggests a “personal development of the individual takes place against the backdrop of a world that is changing too” (11). Historically, the genre has evolved along with the European society and public sphere and it continues in modern narratives too in the form of character development.

Also known as coming of age or a narrative of formation, it examines a protagonist’s gradual development into an assertive and accountable individual. Fiona McCulloch defines it along the age itself: “rather like adolescence itself, it is a genre

of mutability that offers the potential of becoming through an interactive narrative that resists dominant mode of being" (199). As Sarah Graham explains, it is "a novel about a young person facing the challenges of growing up—because it is one of the most popular and enduring genres in literary history" ("Introduction" 1). A bildungsroman narrative typically charts an individual's journey into maturation. She explains:

Depicting the journey from youth to maturity, a classic Bildungsroman concentrates on a protagonist striving to reconcile individual aspirations with the demand for social conformity. The narrative offers privileged access to the psychological development of a central character whose sense of self is in flux, paralleling personal concerns with prevailing values. The Bildungsroman's ability to explore the relationship between self and society accounts for its lasting global appeal. (1)

A typical coming-of-age story includes several elements: a young individual and his attempt to free himself from social structures. Studying such attempts will lead readers into the psychology of the characters. Historically, each generation has experienced it in similar ways. Thus, the genre has an unabating appeal to readership.

Similarly, Petru Golban examines the genre, focusing on the psychological and moral growth of the protagonists from youth to adulthood. Golban charts the development of the genre over time: he highlights its origin, key themes, and major works that carried the themes in different times and geography. Moreover, Golban's major argument has the cultural sensibility of the genre; he argues that the genre not only reflects individual development but also actively engages with broader social, cultural, and historical contexts while accommodating the changes in those contexts.

Thus, according to him, the genre offers to look into complex social political realities.

Global further argues:

In short, we would define the Bildungsroman as the *novel of identity formation*. With certain caveats, of course; namely, that the formation of identity is textualized as a *process*, diachronic and large-scale, from birth or early childhood through adolescence and youth to entering upon adulthood; this process is rendered in a biographical or autobiographical manner as *development* – spiritual, psychological and moral, rather than physical – leading to the *formation* of personality. (18)

Golban's genre definition highlights some key moments in the maturation process.

For instance, personality formation refers to the point where the individual has matured enough to be a changed person, which signals "social and professional success" (18) the character achieves.

Most of the narratives are coming-of-age narratives in the broad sense of the term. The genre known as Bildungsroman in German in origin and is associated with an individual's socialization process. The German word roughly translates as 'curating the noble self' in English. In a detailed discussion of the term, Mac Redfield charts out the origin of the term and its philosophical development. He argues that the term "seems to have inherited the virtues of its nominal father, Gothe" (38). His contribution to conceptualizing the emergence of the term into a genre. As it has achieved the genre status, "*Bildungsroman* narrates the acculturation of a self—the integration of a particular 'I' into general subjectivity of a community, and thus finally into the universal subjectivity of humanity" (Redfield 38). In the broadest sense, the term functions as a trope for the aspirations of aesthetic humanism. In a literary sense,

the term refers to the novels that track the protagonist's moral and psychological development.

Originated from Germany, the genre of Bildungsroman has been adopted differently in other European countries. Richard Salnan, in “The Bildungsroman and Nineteen-Century British Fiction” explores the reason behind the late circulation of the term in Britain: “the term itself didn’t appear in literary discourse in Britain until over a century after its first usage in Germany . . . in 1803” (57). Although heavily influenced by Goethe’s *Wilhelm Meister’s Apprenticeship* (1795), it cannot qualify as a bildungsroman fiction. Instead they developed their form, known as ‘novels of development.’ Unlike British literary milieu, French reception of the genre has been cautious and measured. According to Alison Finch, “French has own term: roman de formation, novel of development or education” (33). However, French literary critics have used both the terms Bildungsroman and roman de formation. But, Finch argues, “the failure of either term to achieve a significant presence in the wider culture hints at a reluctance to embrace the concept itself (and perhaps also conflicting feeling about ‘Germanness’)” (33). Contrary to French reticent to accept the genre, American culture found the genre of “[a]n adolescent on the journey to maturity . . . [as a] perfect metaphor for the United States” (Graham, *The American* 117). She argues that the genre has given a critical capacity to express the diversity of experiences:

The evident capacity of the Bildungsroman to represent diverse experiences contributes to its popularity in American literature, as does its strategy of presenting the nation from the perspective of youth. While depicting disadvantaged and marginalized characters gives the Bildungsroman its critical power, many novels portray discontent amongst the most socially privileged youth. (141)

Graham aligns herself with the popular view that America is a new nation with diversity; thus, for her, the strategy of coming of narrative fittingly captures American sentiments and positions.

In the wake of cultural and political criticism, feminist, African-American and postcolonial scholars have tried to understand the genre of bildungsroman in different light than the usual European, masculine, heteronormative outlook. Maroula Joannau's article "The Female Bildungsroman in Twentieth Century" captures the feminist critique of the genre where "The Postcolonial Bildungsroman" by Ericka A. Hoagland examines the experiences of growing up in colonized society. Similarly, Meredith Miller in "Lesbian, Gay and Trans Bildungsroman" examines the traditional normative discourse of growing up narratives and interrogate the structures in order to reexamine "the relationship between sexuality and life narrative" (Graham, "Introduction" 8). In short, the coming of age can't be similar to people with different social, political and economic histories. Thus, looking into the experience with a single perspective will be wrong.

Joannou contends that the journey to maturity does not happen in similar ways to women and girls to boys because the concept itself is based on wrong assumption of male identity and experiences as universal one that automatically includes the female experiences as well. Unfortunately, she dissents to the view: "The coming-of-age journey in the classical Bildungsroman is based the assumption of the male self as the universal self" (202). Though the men and women are part of same growing community, they grow differently: "The quest—whether geographical or the inner quest for spirituality or truth—is a quintessential aspect of human experience, not only in the Bildungsroman but also in literary forms" (202) as well as in real life. However, "Is there a sense" she continues, "in which this assessment of

Bildungsroman form as unsuited to female experiences reinforces conventional perceptions of femininity as unsuited to engagement with the wider world?" (203).

The argument points to the necessity of finding new ways to explain the experiences of women characters in the narrative of formation.

In an article "The Female Bildungsroman" Carol Lazzaro-Wise understands coming-of-age literature as a genre criticism. She argues that the advent of feminism has provided a tool to study the growth of female characters in the novels by men and women. In fact, feminist criticism in the 1970s, the ideas became "useful in analyzing how nineteenth and early twentieth-century women novelists represented the suppression and defeat of autonomy, creativity, and maturity" (17). She argues that, in a society growing through a male model of socialization, females do not 'grow up' rather, they "grow down." Thus female writers' narrative rejects the thematic ideas of bildungsroman as encompassing one. Lazzaro charts the history of this genre about its handling of the intervention of feminism in determining the role of feminists in delineating the autonomous self for a woman. In order to develop an autonomous female identity, a woman needs to play multiple roles as a part of a strategy to subvert the self-imposed identity upon them from outside.

The politics of experience is inevitably conservative, for it cannot help but conserve ideological concerns that are not recognized as such but are taken as real. Given that, the broad acceptance of coming of age as a genre form has been a tool for studying the personal histories of an individual. She understands that the "problems inherent in using the bildungsroman as a form for women's writing and as a critical, theoretical tool go even deeper than the recent debate among critics over concepts of the self, of experience, and the possibility of representation.

In the depictions of alienated, failed types predominate, and the form rapidly became less concerned with depicting social problems than with the problems involved in self-knowledge. Even this process, however, more often than not, is left incomplete as the protagonists retreat from society into isolation or self-destruction through union with nature. Sammon's article is partly a response to Martin Swales, who, rather than questioning the generic rubric as Sammons does, argues that to solve the dilemma of the Bildungsroman, as critics like to do, is to destroy the form. For the term to be valid, the central problem of the Bildungsroman could only be irresolution and alienation. He correctly observes that what is integral to the Bildungsroman is its questioning of the narrator's and, ultimately, the reader's capacity for reflexivity and its concern to articulate the values and assumptions upon which human experience rests. The "male" Bildungsroman, at least in its German manifestations, seems somewhat similar in goals and results to its "female" equivalent, which, as Hirsch, Langland, and Abel observe, typically substitutes inner concentration for active accommodation, rebellion, or withdrawal. Alienated social outcasts with the potential to self-destruct due to overwhelmingly crippling relationships with nature and religion are characteristics shared by many female protagonists of the form. To be sure, the originators of the bildungsroman were interested in problems of representation, the relationship of the individual to the group, and questions of subjectivity, which they saw in social as well as aesthetic terms. Women writers, like their male counterparts, have traditionally turned to the Bildungsroman not to subvert its structures but rather to flaunt the contradictions in the form that critical theory has tried to explain away.

All writers of bildungsroman call for the right to describe experience in epistemological rather than teleological terms. Thus, it is no surprise that, in the 1970s, the form was used to defend the right of feminist and women authors to

describe their reality and to legitimize these experiences and their differences to those of men. The visceral grappling with identity that characterizes so many of this movement of the 1970s celebrates the slogan “the personal is political,” that is, the need to show that personal structures are created and indeed controlled by the patriarchy and its political values. Teresa de Lauretis points out that although this slogan was meant to launch a critique of the political, all too often it came to mean “the personal instead of the political” (9). The need for theory has become the most commonly voiced concern among American feminist critics. It is no longer possible to divide along the boundaries of the Atlantic those critics who accept theory as the only way to express resistance and revolt and those who argue for an essentialist, experiential view of feminism. They have attempted to displace experience from a personal to the general level.

Finally, it is important to note that since the bildungsroman tradition has always represented conflicts between individual agency and society, subjective and social structures.

Bildungsroman as a Literary Method

One of the common themes of young adult literature is the issue of coming of age. Terminologically, the expression 'coming of age' usually means 'to reach full legal adult status. As a stage in development, it usually occurs from twelve to nineteen years old. However, these are culturally charged terms. Thus, adolescents try to reach full legal adult status variously between cultures, especially in relation to such cultural markers as consumption of alcohol, sexual consent, driving license, and marriage. These cultural paradigms are often adopted as the subject matter of young adult novels, also called 'coming of the age' fiction. Fiona McCulloch argues that bildungsroman "as the novel of education or the novel of formation, is ideally

positioned as a pedagogical model of childhood development within children and young adult (YA) fiction" (174). McCulloch points to the social aspect of the structure and theme of YA fiction. He presents a model of YA education:

As an educational tool, the Bildungsroman presents the growth and development of a character that embodies the criteria of personal and social success and manages to successfully inhabit both a personal narrative and be forged by a social script. Success, in traditional Bildung terms, is managed by social class stratification so that 'the self-discovery and self-definition of the protagonist tend to be more emphatically social, conjured up in large part by new prospects of social mobility, a world of possibility at once exhilarating and fearful. That desire for, yet terror of, the unknown is an ideal format for children's literature and the protagonist's progress. (174-75)

The genre and its theme can be an effective tool to teach young adults about the way they grow by adopting and adapting to social and cultural contexts. At the same time, the experiences of growing up cannot always be smooth and pleasant; it can be the fear and terror of the unknown. Guiding through the literary genre can grease the path and prepare YA to mitigate the passage smoothly.

The research uses a frame of analysis developed by Petu Golban. For him, Bildungsroman is "synonymous with novel of formation" (18). Golban comes up with the most comprehensive method to understand and analyze that novel of character formation. He further clarifies:

[I]t names a genre of subgenre of the novel, a fictional category or species, a type of autobiographical fiction which renders the process of growth, maturation, education, apprenticeship, in general of upbringing—to which we necessarily add "formation"—of character in his/her both biological and

intellectual development within a time span typically set from childhood to early maturity. (18)

Formation as the end of the maturation process implies inner changes occurring in the characters. External changes are more perceptible than the internal changes. Thus, the bildungsroman portrays the round protagonists rather than the flat in order to show the gradual development of the character. Similarly, formation of character refers to a development of multi-sided personality who is self-cultivated and socially acceptable. Formation of identity entails another character too which is an ability to balance individual aspirations with social demands and expectations. Thus, formation promises completion and success, but it may also end in failure or a combination of both success and failure, as conditioned by the author's message and thematic perspective.

Formation, thus becomes a culmination process of developing an identity. It centers on the realization of an individual in relation to social structure. Finally, it can be understood as the developmental process to acquire an identity and once it is acquired it becomes an experience and the realization of the various aspects of self such as a sense of who one is, gender distinction, family and professional perspective, social and inter-human status and role, modes of thinking, and communication.

Chapter IV

Analysis and Discussion

Holden Caulfield as an Emotional Rebel

Salinger's classic young rebel Holden Caulfield is an adolescent but an epitome of a rebellion. His defiance to social structure, education and everything that he does not like is more deeply rooted in his emotional turmoil than in any overt political or social activism. At base, he is motivated for rebellion by a profound sense of alienation as well as a desperate search for authenticity in a world he perceives as "phony" which is equal to artificial or showy to general people. He has limited people whom he finds true and trustworthy; the rest of the world is just a "phony slob" (Salinger 3). Holden's formation of rebellious character is an outcome of his emotional alienation.

Holden's emotional rebellion manifests through his pervasive cynicism and disdain for the adult world. He hates his school because he finds advertising as "modeling boys into [being] splendid, [and] clear thinking" (2). But in reality, as he reveals:

They advertise in about a thousand magazine, always showing some hot-shot guy on a horse jumping over a fence. . . . [At Pencey Prep] they don't do any man more *modeling* [emphasis original] at Pencey then they do at any other school. And I didn't know anybody there that was splendid and clear-thinking at all. May be two guys. If that many. And they probably *came* to Pencey that way. (2)

He consistently criticizes the school for showing one thing and doing something else and he calls it "the crumbly place" (1). In fact, the school promises to be the best one but "it was a terrible school, no matter how you looked into it" (3). He even disliked

people around him, teachers as well as his peers are too “phonies” and “show-offy-looking guys with their dates” (Salinger 75). What he can’t stand and even his contempt is for their superficiality and hypocrisy:

People always think something’s *all true*. I don’t give a damn, except that I get bored sometimes when people tell to act my age. Sometiems I act a lot older than I am—I really do—but people never notice it. People never notice anything. (10)

Holden’s frustration with people around him is because of his age: he thinks that he is grown up enough to be taken seriously, but he is not. In other words, he is struggling with the problem of formation. As Petru Goblan argues, “formation as the culmination of developmental process is identity” (18), Holden is trying to assert or force his individual identity among others. In fact, Holden’s attempts are directed towards “the realization of the self” and the development of “a sense of who one is” (18). This is a typical passage of time in formation narrative.

However, it would be a mistake to take this aversion as just a teenager’s contempt to everything he does not like. It reflects a deep-seated disillusionment with the values and behaviors of society Holden himself is the product of. His refusal to conform to societal norms is a form of emotional protest against the loss of innocence and the inevitability acquiring an identity. As formation in Bildungsroman, “is at once the expected fulfillment of the process of character development” Holden resists this process but of no avail. He likes the things that are still and frozen. In fact he strongly believes that “Certain things they should stay the way they are” (Salinger 132). He feels that “The best thing” is life is the one that resists change as he likes things to be” everything always stayed right where it was” (131). Thus, he likes museum, he pains for the ducks during the winter when the Central Park Lake freezes.

Central to Holden's emotional rebellion is his profound sense of loss and grief, particularly regarding the death of his younger brother, Allie. Allie's death represents the shattering of Holden's idealized world, and his pain and anger over this loss fuel much of his rebellious behavior. Holden idealizes Allie, whose purity and innocence starkly contrast with the corruption Holden sees in the world around him. He brings Allie over and over again: "I felt miserable. I felt so depressed. . . What I did, I started talking to Allie. I do that sometimes when I get depressed" (107). His inability to cope with Allie's death leaves him in a perpetual state of mourning and anger, further alienating him from those who do not share or understand his grief.

Holden's interactions with other characters reveal the depth of his emotional rebellion. He often seeks out relationships, hoping to find genuine human connections, but simultaneously sabotages these interactions out of fear of being hurt or disappointed. His relationship with his sister, Phoebe, is one of the few exceptions, highlighting his longing for innocence and sincerity. However, even this relationship is strained by his inability to reconcile his idealism with the reality of the world.

Moreover, Holden's rebellion is marked by his unrealistic fantasies of preserving childhood innocence. His dream of being "the catcher in the rye" which he borrows, in fact wrongly, from Robert Burns' poem, symbolizes his desire to protect children from the harsh realities of adulthood. His idealism is too high:

I keep picturing all these kids playing some game in this big field of rye and all. Thousands of little kids, and nobody's around—nobody big, I mean—except me. 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—I mean if they're running and they don't look where they're going I have to come out from somewhere and *catch* them. That's all I do all day. I'd just be the catcher

in the rye and all. I know it's crazy, but that's the only thing I'd really like to be. I know it's crazy. (186)

This fantasy reveals his deep-seated fear of change and his inability to accept the complexities of growing up. His repeated failures to realize this dream underscore the futility of his rebellion and the depth of his internal conflict.

Holden's use of language further underscores his emotional rebellion. Though he is an underage child—"I was sixteen," (22)—he would behave like an adult across the novel. His colloquial and often vulgar speech serves as a rejection of the refined and polite language of the adult world. This linguistic rebellion is a means of asserting his identity and distancing himself from the phoniness he despises. His narrative style, filled with digressions and contradictions, mirrors his tumultuous emotional state and his struggle to make sense of his experiences.

However, Holden's rebellion is not entirely nihilistic. It stems from a place of deep caring and sensitivity, which he struggles to reconcile with the harshness of the world. Holden's awareness and sensibility towards nuns, geese and even to a young prostitute makes him a good person. He is not a social outcast; he can't be termed as socially unfit rebel. His rebellion stems from his deep dissatisfaction, personal loss and from his inability to cope up with the overwhelming sense of loneliness and loss. His protectiveness over children and his disdain for adult corruption reflect his desire for a more honest and compassionate world. This idealism, though often buried under layers of sarcasm and anger, is at the heart of his emotional struggle.

Holden's revolt is emotional; it is un-harming to anyone around him. Moreover, he is driven by a complex interplay of grief, idealism, and a longing for authenticity. His defiance of social norms, use of unsuitable language, faking that he is a grown up, and even his attempt to whore out is not merely a rejection of societal

norms but a heartfelt protest against the loss of innocence and the pervasive phoniness he perceives around him but can't do anything to stop it. So, out of helplessness, he vents out his anger. Through Holden, Salinger explores the painful and often contradictory nature of adolescence, capturing the turmoil of a young man in the course of maturity yet he is caught between the innocence of childhood and the disillusionment of adulthood.

Jonas Maps His Individuality by Challenging the Guardians

Jonas negotiates his identity through balancing social expectations and individual aspirations. Of course, the explicit one is that his identity formation comes from challenging the Guardians. His quest for selfhood and understanding is marked by his growing awareness of the community's underlying repression and his subsequent rebellion against it. Jonas's challenge to the Guardians is not just an act of defiance, but a critical step in mapping his individuality within a society that prioritizes conformity over personal freedom.

Initially, Jonas is a model citizen, adhering to the community's rules and accepting the Guardians' decisions without question. For instance:

The freedom to choose where to spend those hours had always seemed wonderful luxury to Jonas; other hours of the day were carefully regulated. . . . There was never any comfortable way to mention or discuss one's success without breaking the rule against bragging even if one didn't mean to. It was a minor rule, rather like rudeness, punishable only by gentle chastiment. (42-43).

The Guardians, who represent the community's authority, enforce strict rules to maintain what they deem a utopian society, devoid of pain but also bereft of true joy, love, and individuality. This system is upheld by suppressing emotions and memories,

effectively eliminating personal choice and freedom. Jonas's acceptance of this way of life begins to waver when he is selected as the new Receiver of Memory, a role that grants him access to the community's collective memories and the truths they conceal.

As Jonas receives these memories from *The Giver*, he experiences profound emotions and sensations that were previously unknown to him. The memories of love, pain, color, and music awaken his consciousness and foster a sense of individuality that starkly contrasts with the homogeneity enforced by the Guardians, but once he gets the memory he feels differently about everything:

The Giver shook his head,. “No flesh isn’t red. But it has red tones in it. There was a time, actually—you’ll see this in eh memories later—when flesh was many different colours. That was before we went to Sameness. Today flesh is all the same, and what you saw was red tones. Probably, when you saw the faces take on colour it wasn’t as deep or as vibrant as the apple, or your friend’s hair. (123)

This newfound awareness propels Jonas to question the legitimacy and morality of the community's practices, particularly their suppression of emotions and memories. His internal conflict intensifies as he grapples with the realization that the community's so-called utopia is built on a foundation of ignorance and control.

Jonas’s individuality becomes more pronounced as he begins to see the Guardians not as benevolent protectors, but as enforcers of a deeply flawed and unethical system. In fact, he vents his anger: “But they don’t want to change. Life here is so orderly, so predictable—so painless. It’s what they have created” (Lowry 134). This is special phase in the formation of his individuality. In a typical coming of age narrative, a hero’s journey begins with his “conscious effort and on the manifold aspect of human behaviour” (Campbell, quoted in Golban 19). Thus, Joans identifies

his inner goal through “interior motivation” (18). In fact his challenge to the Guardians is multifaceted, encompassing both his silent dissent and his eventual overt rebellion when he leaves the community carrying Gab with him. Initially, Jonas's defiance is subtle; he starts to withhold his emotions and thoughts from his family and peers, recognizing that they are incapable of understanding his new perceptions. This secrecy is a critical step in his journey towards selfhood, as it allows him to preserve his burgeoning sense of identity.

The climax of Jonas's challenge to the Guardians occurs when he learns the true nature of “release,” a euphemism for euthanasia to kill people who the society want to get rid of. As the new Receiver of Memory Jonas has an access to everything, including a footage of his father killing a child: This revelation is the catalyst for Jonas's decision to escape the community, a radical act of rebellion aimed at reclaiming his freedom and individuality. By fleeing, Jonas not only seeks to liberate himself but also hopes to unleash the suppressed memories and emotions upon the community, forcing them to confront the realities they have long denied. Jonas's escape is a pivotal moment in the narrative, symbolizing his complete rejection of the Guardians' authority and his assertion of autonomy. It is an act of profound courage and individuality, as he ventures into the unknown, guided by the hope of finding a more authentic existence. This journey is fraught with peril, but it underscores Jonas's transformation from a compliant citizen to a self-aware individual willing to challenge the status quo.

Finally, Jonas's journey is a powerful exploration of individuality emerging through the challenge to the oppressive authority. First, there was unquestioning obedience to the Guardians but once he knew the internal reality, he grew courageous enough to challenge them. Thus, his relationship with the Guardians evolves from

unquestioning obedience to active rebellion. This rebellion marks his path to self-discovery and personal freedom. Once he is free and mature enough, he runs away from the society. In fact he plans for it, and after a careful planning he sneaks out:

He has stolen his father's bicycle. He has hesitated for a moment, standing beside the bikeport in the darkness, not wanting to anything of his father's and uncertain, as well, whether he could comfortably ride the larger bike when he was so accustomed to his own.

But it was necessary because it had the child seat attached to the back.

And he had taken Gabriel too. (Lowry 207-8).

The description of Jonas's defiance is symbolic for two reasons. First, Jonas is increasingly growing assertive in realizing his individuality. In order to form an individual identity, Golban outlines, "one has to balance the social and moral responsibility" (22). Thus, by carrying Gabriel with him, and by implication, saving his life Jonas successfully fulfills the responsibility.

Jonas's maturity can be understood in Lowry's use of river crossing symbol: Jonas reached the opposite side of the river, stopped briefly, and looked back. The community where his entire life had been lived lay behind him now, sleeping. At dawn, the orderly, disciplined life he had always known would continue again, without him. The life where nothing was ever expected. Or inconvenient. Or unusual. The life without color pain or past.

Jonas crossing the river and looking back at his sleeping community is rich with symbolic meaning. It powerfully illustrates his coming-of-age journey, representing his movement from ignorance to awareness, from safety to risk, and from conformity to individuality. It marks the beginning of his path towards self-discovery and the embrace of life's full potential, despite its inherent challenges and pains.

This image holds further importance. Rivers often symbolize boundaries or transitions. By crossing the river, Jonas is physically separating himself from his past and his community. This action represents his first step into an unknown future and a departure from the life he once knew. In an archetypal image water signifies cleansing and renewal. By crossing the river, Jonas is symbolically washing away the constraints and the sterile uniformity of his previous existence, preparing himself for a new beginning. Thus, when Jonas looks back, he reflects on his life within the community. This act of looking back signifies a moment of introspection where he acknowledges the differences between his past life and the possibilities that lie ahead. In the same vein, it could be argued that the dawn symbolizes a new beginning or a fresh start. As Jonas moves away from the community and towards the unknown, he is moving towards a new dawn in his life—one filled with possibilities, challenges, and true emotions.

Finally, the concluding chapter makes a full circle in Jonas's identity formation. His journey reaches its climactic moment, epitomizing his transformation and maturity within the formation narrative. As Jonas battles the elements and pushes his physical and emotional limits, his struggle symbolizes the transition from adolescence to adulthood: "Jonas felt more and more certain that the destination lay ahead of him, very near now in the night that was approaching" (218). The arduous journey through the snow and his protection of Gabriel reflect Jonas's growing sense of responsibility and his capacity for self-sacrifice are indicative of his maturity.

The chapter's ambiguous ending, with Jonas perceiving music and lights, signifies his departure from the rigid confines of his former life and his embrace of the uncertain, yet hopeful, future. This shift highlights his profound growth: Jonas has moved from a world of controlled sameness to one where he must confront and

embrace the complexities of human experience. His journey through the harsh landscape is not just a physical escape but a metaphorical passage into the rich, varied tapestry of true life, imbued with pain, joy, and freedom:

Suddenly he was aware with certainty and joy that below, ahead, they were waiting for him; and that they were waiting too, for the baby. For the first time, he heard something that he knew to be music. He heard people singing. Behind him, across vast distance of space and time, from the place he had left, he thought he heard music too. (224)

In the final scene Jonas reaches a climactic moment of awareness and revelation. The narrative, imbued with a profound sense of hope and resolution, captures Jonas's transition from the constraints of his dystopian society to a newfound freedom and emotional richness. This moment can be analyzed as a critical juncture in Jonas's coming-of-age journey, highlighting themes of perception, liberation, and the transformative power of memory and emotion.

In the larger context of formation narrative, Jonas's journey is a moment of epiphany. As he sleds down the hill, he perceives music for the first time, a symbol of the beauty and emotional depth he has been seeking. This auditory revelation signifies his full entry into a world of sensory and emotional richness, contrasting sharply with the sterile environment he has fled. The music represents not just a personal awakening but also the possibility of a community that embraces and celebrates the full spectrum of human experience

The final scene captures the themes of hope and continuity that run throughout the novel. Jonas's certainty that "they were waiting for him" and for Gabriel speaks to his belief in a future where individuality and emotional depth are cherished. The dual perception of music—both in his immediate surroundings and faintly from his past—

symbolizes a bridge between the old and the new, suggesting that the human capacity for change and growth can transcend even the most oppressive circumstances.

Lowry examines the inherent tension between societal conformity and individual identity, highlighting the importance of memory, emotion, and personal choice in defining one's self. Jonas's challenge to the Guardians is not merely a rebellion against authority, but a profound assertion of his right to exist as a fully realized individual.

Holden and Jonas: Emotional and Rebel

Salinger's Caulfield and Lowry's Jonas are two young protagonists who navigate their respective worlds through the lens of emotional rebellion. Despite the differing contexts of their stories—Holden in a mid-20th-century American society and Jonas in a dystopian future—their journeys share common themes of alienation, the quest for authenticity, and the challenge to societal norms.

Holden's rebellion is deeply emotional, rooted in his cynicism and disillusionment with the adult world. He is plagued by the death of his younger brother, Allie, which fuels his disdain for the phoniness he perceives in those around him. Holden's emotional turmoil manifests in his critical view of society and his struggle to find genuine human connections. His interactions are marked by a desire to protect the innocence he cherishes, particularly embodied in his dream of being the "catcher in the rye" who saves children from falling into the corruption of adulthood. Holden's rebellion is not just against societal norms but against the emotional detachment and superficiality he sees as inherent in adult life.

Jonas's rebellion in *The Giver* also stems from an emotional awakening, but his context is one of a highly controlled, conformist society. As the new Receiver of Memory, Jonas gains access to the full spectrum of human experience—both the joys

and the pains—that his community has suppressed to maintain uniformity and order. This awakening leads Jonas to question and ultimately reject the community's enforced sameness and emotional numbness. Unlike Holden, whose rebellion is more internal and often expressed through criticism and isolation, Jonas's challenge is direct and transformative. His decision to flee the community in hopes of restoring true emotions and memories to its people represents a radical defiance against the oppressive control of the Guardians.

Both characters experience profound loneliness as a result of their emotional and rebellious natures. Holden isolates himself as he navigates a world he finds increasingly intolerable, while Jonas finds himself estranged from his family and friends who remain blissfully ignorant of the truths he has uncovered. This isolation is a significant aspect of their emotional rebellion, highlighting their struggle to reconcile their inner experiences with the external realities imposed by their societies. Furthermore, Holden and Jonas both seek authenticity in their environments. Holden's relentless search for honesty and genuine interactions often leads him to disappointment, yet it underscores his refusal to accept the falsity he perceives around him. Jonas's quest for authenticity is catalyzed by his exposure to real emotions and memories, driving him to reject the artificial sameness of his community. Both characters, in their own ways, strive to reclaim a sense of reality that their societies have either corrupted or suppressed.

Thematically, both novels explore the tension between individual identity and societal expectations. Holden's and Jonas's rebellions highlight the cost of conformity and the value of emotional depth and personal freedom. Holden's critique of the adult world's phoniness and Jonas's rejection of his community's emotional repression both

serve as indictments of their respective societies' failure to nurture true individuality and emotional richness.

In short, Holden Caulfield and Jonas are emblematic of emotional rebellion against oppressive societal norms. Through their journeys, Salinger and Lowry critique the ways in which societies can stifle individuality and emotional expression. Holden's struggle is marked by a deep-seated cynicism and a longing to preserve innocence, while Jonas's rebellion is driven by his awakening to the richness of human experience and his quest to restore authenticity to his community. Both characters embody the fight for personal truth and emotional freedom, challenging the constraints imposed upon them by their worlds.

Formation of Character and Gaining Maturity

Both the protagonists serve as classic examples of the bildungsroman or novel of characters where the protagonists' journeys towards maturity and the formation of their characters are central themes. Despite their different settings and circumstances, both Holden Caulfield and Jonas undergo significant personal transformations that define their paths from adolescence to a more mature understanding of themselves and their worlds.

Holden's journey is characterized by his deep-seated cynicism and alienation, stemming from a profound sense of grief and loss. As a typical bildungsroman protagonist, Holden's story is one of self-discovery and emotional growth. His narrative is marked by a series of encounters and experiences that challenge his understanding of himself and the world around him. It appears that his worldview has been clouded due to his brother's death and subsequent reaction from his mother. She has become sad and alone in the loss of her child. In the series of events, Holden keeps losing people around him. Whoever he thinks is not phony will eventually leave

him making him alone and leaving him alone to bear the phony world. The second most significant loss has been the loss of Jane Gallagher. He loved her, but typical Holden would not dare to approach her. But, when he comes to know that she has dated his roommate who he thinks is an example of phony boy, it devastates him. His constant desire to phone her and talk to her because it gives him home and consolation, is an indication of loss.

His immaturity is evident in his initial outlook on life, where he views most of people as "phonies" and is constantly critical of the adult world. This perspective reflects his struggle with the concept of growing up and the responsibilities that come with it. The death of his younger brother, Allie, is a pivotal event that significantly impacts Holden's character. His inability to cope with this loss and his subsequent fear of change and loss of innocence manifest in his desire to protect children from the harsh realities of life, as symbolized by his fantasy of being the "catcher in the rye." Throughout the novel, Holden's interactions with various characters, such as his sister Phoebe, his former teacher Mr. Antolini, and the nuns he meets in the city, serve as catalysts for his gradual maturation. These encounters force him to confront his own vulnerabilities and the complexities of human relationships. By the end of the novel, Holden's breakdown and subsequent stay in a mental institution signify a crucial turning point in his journey. Although his future remains uncertain, there is a sense that Holden is beginning to reconcile his desire to protect innocence with the inevitability of growing up.

Jonas's journey in *The Giver* is similarly marked by a process of awakening and self-discovery, but it takes place in a highly controlled dystopian society that suppresses individuality and emotions in order to make a homogeneous society where citizens don't feel pain and suffering, emotions are controlled through medication and

even by using law. Yet, Jonas matures. Jonas's transformation begins when he is selected as the new Receiver of Memory, a role that exposes him to the true breadth of human experience, including pain, love, and joy, which his community has eradicated to maintain uniformity and order. But, Jonas realizes how important these emotions are in order to understand and live in a society. Thus he decides to return those memory to the society and he finally releases them in the community.

At the start of the novel, Jonas is a compliant and obedient member of his society, much like his peers. However, as he receives memories from The Giver, he becomes increasingly aware of the depth and richness of life that has been denied to him and his community. This awareness leads Jonas to question the ethical implications of his society's rules and the loss of individual freedom and emotional depth. And, Jonas's journey towards maturity is marked by his growing sense of responsibility and his willingness to act on his newfound knowledge. Unlike Holden, whose rebellion is often passive and internal, Jonas's rebellion is active and external. His decision to flee the community in an effort to restore memories and emotions to its people signifies a courageous step towards independence and maturity. This act of defiance is a pivotal moment in Jonas's character formation, as it reflects his transition from a naïve child to a self-aware individual capable of making difficult and morally complex decisions. Jonas, in this sense achieves a balance between his inner rage against the Guardians and their rule and his desire to free the memory to the community so that the community will also be able to feel and pain and happiness. In short, he rebels against the homogeneous ideas of society and supports diversity and multiplicity.

Holden Caulfield in *The Catcher in the Rye* and Jonas in *The Giver* resist the societal norms in their own ways—Caulfield resists the norms overtly going against

social structure where Jonas conforms to the norms and lives through it enough to question the role of social expectations in curbing the individuality in order to rebel it by rebelling against the very social system that controlled him. However, neither Holden nor Joans negate the social boundaries. No matter how rebellious Holden sounds in his articulation of frustration, he always follows social decorum, respects his teachers whom he finds genuine. The most important fact about Holden is he does not cross social boundaries, partly because the agency is not available to him and partly because he does not want to. Thus he is an emotional rebel. On the other Jonas, once he has become the Receiver of memory, he has an unrestricted access and he could have done anything. But, he holds himself back for he could hurt the whole social structure.

Chapter V

Conclusion

Coming off Authority: Coming of Age

Both Holden and Jonas undergo significant character development that aligns with the bildungsroman tradition. Their journeys are shaped by their responses to the environments and circumstances they inhabit. Their formation identity marks their assertiveness as well as their ability to take a decision. Holden's maturation is more introspective, focusing on his internal struggles and his quest to find authenticity and meaning in a world he views as fundamentally flawed. In contrast, Jonas's maturation is driven by an external quest to change his society, motivated by his newfound understanding of the value of emotions and memories. Despite these differences, both characters' paths to maturity involve a deepening understanding of themselves and their worlds. They both confront and challenge the norms and expectations imposed upon them, ultimately seeking to carve out their own identities in the process. Holden's story concludes with a sense of cautious hope, suggesting the beginning of a path towards healing and maturity. Jonas's story ends with a more definitive act of rebellion and hope for a better future, symbolizing his complete transformation and acceptance of his role as a catalyst for change.

The formation of character and maturity in both novels exemplifies the bildungsroman genre's exploration of self-discovery and personal growth. Though, Holden's personal growth takes a path of rebellion to everything he does not like including his parents, Jonas's path to personal growth takes a form of submission and inclusion. Both of the characters' psychological growth and emotional maturity comes from different trajectories. The protagonists' negotiation, thus, takes two different modes and ends into similar result.

Finally, the rebellion as well as complicity draws the same result. Holden grows through friction and Jonas grows through submission. At the end they reach to the same point: the attainment of individuality. Both Holden and Jonas navigate their respective challenges and societal constraints, ultimately emerging as more self-aware and mature individuals. Their journeys underscore the universal themes of the coming-of-age narrative, highlighting the complexities of growing up and the quest for identity and authenticity.

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