

Chapter One

Introduction

Background

This research study is an attempt to discuss and analyse the celebration of innocence in J.D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye*. The protagonist Holden Caulfield completes the circular journey of life that goes through innocence-experience-and higher innocence. As Holden visits and collects the experiences of the adult world, he realizes the discontents and dark sides of experience. He finally resolves to celebrate innocence and prefers to be among innocent children.

This study further attempts to analyze the postulations about the celebration of innocence and experience and some conceptions about higher innocence according to the visionary poet William Blake and the radical philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche. This analysis is solely based on Blake's and Nietzsche's original works and a necessary linkage of the same has been made cautiously with the plot development of the novel under discussion. It also makes necessary endeavors to investigate meticulously the celebration of innocence, in detail with the reference to the novel's incidents.

Innocence is the celebration of the values of childhood simplicity, children's loyalty to each other, and their purity of the spirit. At the same time, this adjective implies one who shows modesty, inexperience, or a sense of virtue. *Oxford Dictionary* defines it as the fact of not being guilty of a crime, lack of knowledge and experience of the world, such as evil or unpleasant things.

Accordingly, experience is defined as ability to explore the darker aspects of life. In experience, there is no longer the naive belief of a child that the world is

entirely good. This conviction and is shaken with the passage of time as a person gains more experience of the kind of place the world truly is.

Both Innocence and experience are the essential phases of life. Innocence alone are not enough to live a fuller life. One needs to go through the stages of experience even though it has somehow evil manifestation of life, but it is a necessary evil. Then, another and most significant stage of life is that of higher innocence. William Blake says that if one is fortunate enough, to cross the journey through the stage of experience, he realizes the bliss of innocence and playful life as that of children. The highest and most joyful life can be lived only when one learns to celebrate innocence.

Friedrich Nietzsche also has postulated on somewhat similar development of human soul in his masterpiece *Thus Spake Zarathustra*. In the very first essay of his masterpiece entitled "On the Three Metamorphosis," he says, human development has to go through three stages of transformation. The first stage is that of a camel, the second of a lion and the final stage, of a child. These metaphors describe various stages in the transformation of human consciousness. Just as we pass through physical stages on our way to adulthood, Nietzsche suggests that we pass through various stages of consciousness. We are constantly Becoming. We are not static creatures. This process of transformation is not necessarily linear. It seems to be more cyclical in nature.

As Nietzsche describes these phases of human development, the camel represents the stage in which a person is obliged to bear the burden and responsibility of others and obey the commands thoroughly. The second phase is that of a lion, who is not only capable to reject the responsibilities but also capable enough to command

others. He is well known about the ways of life and is somehow like a powerful ruler who prefers to rule and enjoy.

Even the life of a lion is not satisfying enough. Human consciousness attains another final stage of development, that of a child. The child possesses unique talents which make him the perfect choice for the third transformation. The child epitomises innocence as well as forgetfulness. The child is a new beginning. The child is a sport, or a game. At the same time, the child is a self-propelling wheel. The child is the sacred Yes. In order for new creation to occur, the spirit of the child must utter a holy Yes to life. Such celebration of innocence can only give mankind satisfying and blissful moments in life.

In the light of Blake and Nietzsche's postulations about the celebration of innocence, this study proceeds on, compares the details of the novel according to the above mentioned principles and conceptions of celebration of childhood innocence. The study reaches the conclusion that J. D. Salinger's novel *The Catcher in the Rye* is an overall celebration of innocence at its best.

Briefing of the Novel

As the novel unfolds its plot development, an adolescent, Holden Caulfield, is in a mental institution where he is recovering from some mental problems. The entire novel is a flashback of the events that had led up to his emotional destruction. The flashback begins with Holden leaving the boarding school he had been attending because of poor grades. Holden had been sent to boarding school by his parents where he could not do well and eventually as he is about to be expelled, he leaves the school and spends three days wandering in the New York City.

Holden, the protagonist and narrator of the novel, finds himself upset with the society in which he lives. Throughout the novel he goes on a journey to find himself.

Holden is immature although he makes attempts to act as if he is mature. Holden cannot accept those who value materialistic items and labels them "phonies." In all, Holden cannot feel easy among the crowd or society.

The novel goes on unfolding with the narrator telling the story of three days in his life. It is the adult world that has driven him restless. He just cannot relate to anyone except for his kid sister Phoebe. Everything and all other people seem "phony" to him. Holden is unable to accept life. Since Holden is becoming an adult himself, he is unhappy with what he world represent.

One Saturday night, after an unpleasant experience with his history teacher "Old Spencer," his roommate Stradlater and the boy next door, Robert Ackley, Holden decides to leave his school four days earlier for Christmas break. He knows that he cannot return to his parents because they are not aware that he has been expelled again. Holden spends the next three days wandering aimlessly around New York City. He stays at a cheap hotel for one night, goes to two night clubs, dances with older women, often talks and thinks about sex, even has a prostitute come up to his room.

The next day, he talks with some nuns about literature and has a date with his former girlfriend Sally Hayes. They go to the theater and also go ice-skating. When he asks her to run away with him, she gets mad and they part. He is "depressed," at this time Holden thinks and even talks to his deceased brother Allie. To Holden, Allie represented innocence. With nobody else around, Holden turns to the only person he can relate to, his sister Phoebe. He sneaks into his parent's apartment at night to talk to his sister. He tells her about his dream to be a "catcher in the rye," and that he wants to run away.

He then leaves to meet his former teacher, Mr. Antolini. They have a good talk, but Holden leaves in a hurry when he thinks his host makes a sexual advance on him. He spends the night in a train station, then runs around town. Finally, he meets his sister, who tells him she wants to run away with him and that she will never go back to school. Holden sees himself in her, finally changes his mind and decides to go back to his parents.

The synopsis of the novel very clearly depicts Holden's journey from innocence to experience and again he prefers to celebrate the innocence. His choice is enough evidence to visualize the stage of higher innocence. Below is a chapter division of the research study in short.

First Chapter

This introductory chapter gives an outlook of the whole thesis in a nut shell. It begins with background, gives a brief synopsis of the novel followed by a description of chapter division of the dissertation.

Second Chapter

This chapter analyzes the celebration of innocence according to the prominent visionary poet William Blake and philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche. Blake's visions are described based on his collection of poems entitled *The Songs of Innocence and Experience* and Nietzsche's ideas are illustrated focusing on his essay "On the Three Metamorphosis" included in his masterpiece, *Thus Spake Zarathustra*.

Third Chapter

This is a complementary chapter since it elaborates the same cyclical journey of humankind from innocence to experience and ultimately to higher innocence, that is the realization of the celebration of innocence after experiencing the dark sides of experienced (adult) world.

Fourth Chapter

This chapter attempts to review the literature focusing on the criticism on Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye*. Looking at the novel through the eyes of various critics, a conclusion has been drawn which elaborates the very hypothesis of this study. But such a conclusion is drawn with enough supporting arguments.

Fifth Chapter

It is a textual analysis of celebration of innocence in J. D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye*. It examines every minute detail that is concerned with the hypothesis of this research study. With sufficient supporting arguments, the study proves the objective of the thesis.

Sixth Chapter

This concluding chapter explains in a nutshell the hypothesis of the study and how the same is proved with supporting arguments.

Chapter Two

The Celebration of Innocence

Innocence is the celebration of the values of childhood simplicity, the loyalty of children to each other, and purity of the spirit. This is considered to mean one who shows modesty, inexperience, or a sense of virtue. A chaste or unassuming young boy or girl, or even a responsible or "moral" adult are considered to be innocent. J D Salinger depicts innocence as the only hope of the world which is corrupted by adult conventions. Salinger's ideas and the visionary poet William Blake's visualizations are not exactly alike. Blake emphasizes on the equal importance of both the innocent and experienced state of the human soul. But in the light of "On the Three Metamorphosis" of the human development as postulated by Friedrich Nietzsche, the visualization of J D Salinger turns out to be comprehensible. Still, it is worth analyzing the postulations of both of these philosophers. This chapter is focused on the detailed discussion of the celebration of innocence according to the visionary poet William Blake and philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche.

Innocence and Experience: Two Contrary States of the Human Soul

William Blake has meticulously examined the states of innocence and experience in his different compositions. The very subtitle of his legendary *Songs of Innocence and Experience* is 'Showing the Two Contrary States of the Human Soul'. The word 'contrary' had a very specific and important meaning for Blake. Like almost all great poets, he was an enemy of dualism. For two thousand five hundred years Western thought has been intensely dualistic, seeing everything as composed of warring opposites, head and heart, body and spirit, male and female, human and non-human, life and death, innocence and experience, good and evil, heaven and hell, as

though the split between the hemispheres of the human brain were projecting itself on everything perceived by that brain.

Even worse than dualism itself is the tendency consequent upon it in Western culture to make absolute judgment between the contraries, accepting, praising, empowering one, rejecting, suppressing, attempting to exterminate the other. If one praises spirit, it has to be at the expense of body. The rebel goes to the opposite extreme and praises body at the expense of spirit. In Blake's time dualism had taken the Christian churches into the spiritually sterile of preoccupation with sin, defined in obsessively sexual terms.

According to Blake, the contrary states of the soul are actually the complementary states. In the absence of one, the other remains incomplete. Blake attempts, in the two sections of his, to deal with the opposition between the innocent, joyous perspective of the child and the more experienced, less spontaneous, perspective of the adult. Somehow, Blake creates a dichotomy between wishes and desires on the one hand and duties and responsibilities on the other, always privileging the imaginative over the rational. Although children appear as the subject of individual songs in both sections of the work, their happiness or misery is determined by their relationships with the adults who maintain control over their lives, as illustrated in the contrasting poems "Infant Joy" from *Songs of Innocence* and "Infant Sorrow" from *Songs of Experience*.

Dualistic thinking is so built into the ordinary language, and the language of philosophy and theology, that the words hardly exist to enable us to think non-dualistically, holistically, that is in terms of systems, patterns, relationships, correspondences. But poetry is such a non-dualistic language, which is why poetry is invariably metaphorical, and the poet is the connection-man and healer. The language

and vision not just of Blake but of poetry itself insists that the contraries are equally important and inseparable. 'Without contraries is no progression', (qtd. in Allison 158) wrote Blake. He sought to transform the energies generated by conflict into creative energies, moving towards mutual acceptance, reconciliation, harmony, expressed in imagery of music and marriage. He was prepared to take on this difficult task even in relation to the most polarized and apparently most mutually exclusive contraries, as he indicated in his challenging title *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*.

Thus, by describing at the outset innocence and experience as 'contrary states of the human soul', Blake is warning us that we are not being invited to choose between them, that no such choice is possible or desirable, and that we are not simply going to be offered here the truism that innocent joy is preferable to the sorrows of experience. Blake attempts to enable all men and women to break through to a restored unity of the vision of both innocence and experience:

By such a vision all beings, together with the world they inhabit, will again be perceived as sharing the one life and the one humanity of that "universal Brotherhood," the Human Form Divine, who is imaged as creating such a universe by the very act of so envisioning it. (*The Norton Anthology of Poetry* 159)

Thus, Blake's idea of universalism proceeds from "identifying microcosm to macrocosm" (*Critical Theory Since Plato* 400). The contrasts Blake set forth in the *Songs* are echoes of English society's approach to the social and political issues of his era—a time characterized, on the one hand, by increasing desire for personal, political, and economic freedom, and on the other, by anxiety regarding the potential consequences of that freedom for social institutions.

It is obvious that most of the poems in *Songs of Innocence*, lacking contraries, lack also energy, progression and complexity. They mime the state of infancy in their simplicity and vulnerability. Even in those poems where there is no overt foreshadowing of experience, there is an element of desperation in the joy, because we cannot avoid supplying the knowledge that the joys depicted are exclusive to infancy and very short-lived. It is like the state of Adam and Eve in the garden before the arrival of the serpent. There are many images of atonement, but it is an atonement Blake can maintain only by forcing himself to take 'portions of existence' for the whole, by keeping at bay the contraries pressing to darken the scene, as the tiger prowls just out of sight, threatening the defenseless lamb, and the adequacy of meekness and mildness in any real world.

Blake seems to be fully aware of several dangers in this enterprise, the greatest of which is sentimentality, one form of which is to allow oneself to fancy another reality in which, for example, lions are vegetarian. But the god who walked with Adam in the garden in the cool of the day is the same god who numbered the predatory lion among the first of his creatures, demanding of Job to hunt the prey for the lion or fill the appetite of the young lions. This is very much at odds with his earlier claim to have given 'every green herb for meat' to 'every beast of the earth'. As John Milton failed to make his heaven as interesting as his hell, so Blake is desperate to give innocence its due before allowing experience to have its devastating say. He had rejected several excellent poems from the collection, presumably because in them he had failed to keep experience out; they are frequently more explicit in their reservations about innocence.

But Salinger has mentioned almost nothing about the significance or the necessity of experience as well to live a fulfilled and happy life. The major character

Holden Caulfield wants to be the catcher in the rye, meaning he wants to stop children or anything that may still be innocent from falling over the edge. This basically means he wants to preserve the innocence. That's why he likes Pheobe so much, because she's still young and naive, and most importantly innocent. It is obvious that Salinger does not believe in the necessary journey of the soul through the cycle of *innocence-experience-innocence* as envisioned by Blake. Salinger simply highlights the increasing degree of corruption that is an aspect of modern day existence. This corruption of society is represented by characters, such as Maurice, who lie, cheat, and bully to get what they want. There is also a horde of nameless people who seem to take perverse pleasure in things like filling public walls with profane graffiti.

At the same time, another theme that Salinger develops in his novel *The Catcher in the Rye* is the difficulty of adolescence. Growing up is often intolerable in a society that does not provide stability and values to the youth on the verge of adulthood. This is a recurring theme in Salinger's novels which is also similar to the visualization of William Blake's prophecy according which adulthood experience is equally important. Blake thinks that adulthood experiences are harsh realities but they are necessary ones for the complete life vision and undualistic thinking.

The major theme in *The Catcher in the Rye* is that of alienation within a society that is increasingly sacrificing its value system for the sake of monetary gain. But these aspects of the contemporary society could not be perceived by Blake who visited this planet just before the romantic period in literature began. The time setting Salinger wrote this novel is around the Second World War. So, his novel depicts that of alienation within a society that is conformist, where no one has the courage to be true, honest, and different. Holden Caulfield is a solitary rebel who is alienated

because he cannot conform. Holden perceives his loneliness and isolation and wants to break the confines of his seclusion by making some form of human connection. Unfortunately, all the people he reaches out are unable to accept him. Holden is faced with denial and rejection from all quarters. Throughout the book, Salinger stresses the need for interaction and communication, which seem to be disappearing in the post-war America.

Salinger paints a clear picture of the phoniness in life, where artists sacrifice their art for fame and mothers shed fake tears in movies. Holden Caulfield is totally disgusted at the phonies that people the world. Through Holden, Salinger is trying to make the reader see the need for honesty and integrity in the modern world.

It is by now obvious that the message Salinger attempts to convey is not exactly the same as envisioned by William Blake. But they go hand in hand to some extent in a parallel way because Blake also wishes to celebrate innocence as Salinger does whole heartedly. Salinger's visualizations can be seen more matching and stand in the same light with the postulations of Friedrich Nietzsche.

The Three Metamorphosis of the Spirit

Background

Friedrich Nietzsche is a German philosopher who endlessly talks about the development of the human spirit. His program is to uplift humanity from falling into the abyss of pessimism, from vanishing into the void of nihilism. Human civilization in Nietzsche's era was facing the threat of Schopenhauerean pessimism. Schopenhauer says that life is evil because the higher the organism, the greater the suffering. The

growth of knowledge is no solution. For him the only way to avoid the evil and painful life was through the extinction of the human race.

Slightly from a different stance, Charles Darwin somehow made the situation even worse. His *Origin of Species* (1859) scientifically proved that man is not the Son of God Father. Rather, man was considered to be a social animal, a bit higher than ape, a refined posterity of this very species. Till then God was the ideal, the greatest hope, the supreme power to care for humankind and to maintain justice in the world. After Darwin's discoveries, the last hope was shattered. The questions aroused, what is the meaning of life? What is there to live for? Who will punish or reward if there is no God? From this void nihilism emerged.

A striking change occurred in man's attitude towards science and religion. Nietzsche became terrified that changes in attitudes toward science and religion would result in a sense of purposelessness in human life. He does not care much about the absolute metaphysical truths. He puts forth a few but very significant philosophical doctrines based on life affirming concepts.

Nietzsche's "On the Three Metamorphosis" explains life affirming concepts in detail among many of his conceptions such as superman, will to power, and the eternal recurrence. According to Nietzsche, to become more than an all-too-human animal, man must become a creator. And it necessarily involves a break with previous norms. For example, Beethoven creates new norms with his works. Yet this break is constructive only when accomplished not by one who wants to make things easy for himself, but by one who has previously subjected himself to the discipline of the tradition. As Nietzsche visualizes in the "On the Three Metamorphosis," an essay

included in his masterpiece *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, in the cycle of human development, first comes the beast of burden, then the defiant lion, then creation.

In one of the most important passages of his *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Nietzsche describes three stages of human development. He explains how the spirit becomes a camel; and the camel, a lion; and the lion finally, an innocent child.

Each stage has its own virtue, and each contributes to developing the ideal which he calls the superman. What are the main qualities of the camel as he describes them? What criterion does the camel use to choose his tasks? What do all of the questions have in common which begin, "Or is it this?" why is it important for the lion to slay the dragon? In what way is this act of destruction creative? What is the difference between the sacred "no" and the sacred "yes?" What attitudes are conveyed by these expressions "yea-saying" and "nay-saying?" What does it mean to utter a sacred "Yes?" These queries must be explained first to clarify Nietzsche's postulations about the development of human spirit.

In *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Friedrich Nietzsche proclaims the death of God. For Nietzsche, this means that the philosophical abstraction known as "God" to institutional religion, especially Christianity, has died in the heart and soul of Western man. It also means that the dualistic metaphysics of Plato is no longer viable. But even though God's death leaves a gaping hole in Western man's Being, Nietzsche considered that the death of God is necessary to bring about transformation.

Prior to God's death, human consciousness is mired in a chaos of "Thou shalt," a controlling, will-less existence, where the new, the unique, is abomination. Creativity, which is mankind's birthright, is frowned upon when it is implemented to bring about new values, new opinions, and new attitudes, which deviate from the

norm. But when the ideals, the "eternal" standards have died, creativity can burst forth. As in the saying of Jesus, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abides alone: but if it die, it brings forth much fruit. Before, the existence of God guaranteed eternal standards of ethics, knowledge, politics, metaphysics, etc. But afterwards, all these are obliterated. Now, humanity is tossed upon a sea of uncertainty. Now, there are no absolutes. In the midst of such a tempest, however, a new creation is born. The problem, for Zarathustra, a visionary narrator, then, is to discover new realities—to create new meaning out of the chaotic aftermath of God's death.

In the section of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* entitled, "Of the Three Metamorphoses," Zarathustra describes a process of human transformation. The metamorphoses will be Zarathustra's answer about fulfilling the vacuum created by the death of God.

Nietzsche begins: "I name you three metamorphoses of the spirit: how the spirit shall become a camel, and the camel a lion, and the lion at last a child" (*Portable Nietzsche* 137). These metaphors describe various stages in the transformation of human consciousness. Just as we pass through physical stages on our way to adulthood, Nietzsche proposes that we pass through various stages of consciousness. We are constantly Becoming. We are not static creatures. In fact, for Nietzsche, nothing is static; all is in flux; there is no imperishable Being; all is Becoming. One point, however, should be noted: this process of transformation is not necessarily linear. It seems to be more cyclical in nature.

The Camel

First, let us think about the camel. A camel is a beast of burden. When commanded, it kneels down to accept heavy loads. It seems to possess a sense of duty

in bearing what it is ordered to bear. It can go for days through the desert without water. The camel-image seems to refer to the human tendency to confront that which is difficult for us out of a sense of duty. We do not have what we do at this stage, but do "what we ought to do." We are not free to make our own decisions because we give our will over to what we believe are our duties. Nevertheless, by doing "what we ought" we challenge ourselves, paving the way for further refinement.

Zarathustra says, "What is the heaviest thing, you heroes? So asks the weight-bearing spirit, that I may take it upon me and rejoice in my strength" (ibid. 138). In bearing the heaviest burdens, the camel-spirit becomes lofty in its strength, in doing its duty. This type of attitude reminds me of someone like Hegel, who would try to systematize all reality into a neat logical box, and then have the audacity to believe that everything has been explained. In order for further metamorphosis, this pride must be weakened because it is to debase oneself in order to injure his/her pride (ibid. 138). It would be a heavy burden indeed for someone like Hegel to admit that he was wrong. At least Thomas Aquinas did this. Shortly before his death, Aquinas had a mystical experience which caused him to describe his life's work as so much straw. Sometimes, *wisdom* must be mocked in order for new realities to be born.

Zarathustra asks if it is not a heavy burden "to feed upon the acorns and grass of knowledge and for the sake of truth to suffer hunger of the soul" (ibid.)? For someone who has devoted much time to the search for truth and understanding, it is a very heavy burden to discover that all our so-called wisdom and knowledge is fleeting. The seeker longs for a person, a book, or some other foothold that can lead him or her to bedrock of truth. It is burdensome because one discovers there is no such absolute foundation. One must consume what small morsels of truth one can find

on the cold, damp ground. One must suffer hunger of the soul when understanding dawns that all so-called truths are really uncertain.

Zarathustra asks if it is not a heavy burden "to wade into dirty water when it is the water of truth, and not to disdain cold frogs and hot toads" (ibid.)? Think of sloshing through a green, miry swamp. It is a nasty undertaking. One can get lost very easily. The air smells bad. There are dangerous creatures at every turn. The frogs and toads are not really dangerous, but they are a nuisance. Seeking for truth is exactly like this. It is a burdensome affair to search and search, only to find that one is going around in circles, not to mention all the troubles along the way. This is the realm of Becoming, where there are no absolute standards--no firm path on which to tread. Actually, there is no sense of Being, except that it is Becoming. The greatest burden here, however, is when one learns to wade into these waters without disdaining the difficult struggle of living in a world which is devoid of standards. This undertaking can bring about transformation.

The camel takes upon itself its heavy burdens and flees into a desert of solitude. Here, the camel must continually question even the "truths" it has accepted. It must interrogate this new idea, i.e., that there are no eternal standards.

The seeker of truth who carries the burden of uncertainty will eventually need solitude. Not actually literal solitude, but a separation in thought from those who still adhere to idealism. Only in solitude can genuine creation be brought forth. This is why Zarathustra climbed up to the mountains. It is in the desert that the camel changes into a lion, for "it wants to capture freedom and be lord in its own desert" (ibid.).

The Lion

The lion is, at the same time, a mighty, noble warrior, and a vicious killer. It is noble in the sense that it craves freedom. It desires to create its own freedom, but it must kill to get it.

The camel is only a beast of burden. A beast of prey is required for the task of capturing freedom. The might of the lion can perform the task at hand. Who is to be the lion's victim? "It seeks here its ultimate lord: it will be an enemy to him and to its ultimate God, it will struggle for victory with the great dragon" (ibid.). The great dragon, which the lion will battle for its freedom, is called "Thou Shalt." The lion's foe is the spirit of commandments, i.e., when others seek to instruct us in what we must believe and accept as truth. History is replete with examples of the enforcement of commandments.

The dragon believes that it is supreme, because it believes it possesses the One Truth concerning all existence. It believes in a transcendental realm of absolute ideas which can be understood by humanity through the faculty of reason. It believes in a transcendental Being (God) which has created this realm and now watches over it, so that Truth remains eternal. The dragon despises opposing opinions. "There will be no 'I will,'" it says. One either conforms, or one is trampled underfoot. But the might of the lion says, "I will!" The lion is the beginning of the will to power, or the will to create new realities.

The lion cannot create new values. However, its might is needed to capture freedom for itself. After the dragon has been mauled by the spirit of the lion, what then? The lion must understand that now there is no guiding hand of a transcendental God, or the firm foundation of a realm of absolute Ideas. There is no external

authority. Now, the lion is alone; it is responsible for itself. There are no more laws, no more duties for it to bear. Is this not the greatest burden?

The lion is victorious. It has uttered the sacred "No" to the dragon. But one thing remains: the lion is not capable of creating new values for itself. It is merely a warrior. Its talent lies in destruction. For creation, another metamorphosis must take place: "The lion must become a child. But, what can the child do that the lion cannot? The child is innocence and forgetfulness, a new beginning, a sport, a self-propelling wheel, a first motion, a sacred Yes" (ibid. 139).

The Child

The child possesses unique talents which make it the perfect choice for the third transformation. The child is innocence. It has no sense of what life was like when the dragon was still alive. There is no guilt because there is no awareness of Thou Shalt. It knows only Becoming—awaking each day to discover a new idea, a new game to play, a new world to explore.

The child is forgetfulness. It has forgotten the heavy burdens of duty and the longing for freedom. Now, it constantly abides in freedom. It has forgotten the golden scales of the dragon. It has forgotten the ancient ways of the past, the so-called eternal values and standards. It lives only for the moment.

The child is a new beginning. When long-held beliefs have been called into question by the camel, and then destroyed by the lion, one enters a new epoch. After a time, the values one has created for oneself become obsolete. These must not be allowed to become sacred cows, for, eventually; they must be destroyed and replaced by new values. The spirit of the camel will question whether these beliefs are still viable. If not, the spirit of the lion will destroy them. Then comes a new beginning, the spirit of the child, who will bring about the creation of new values. This cyclical

process never ends, unless one becomes stagnant, i.e., if one ceases to create by returning to a notion of static Being.

The child is a sport, or a game. Children are always inventing new games, along with a set of rules for each. They don't need any adults telling us how to play our game. They create it themselves. This is the attitude that Nietzsche is trying to get us to think about here. We need to adopt the attitude of a child. When faced with a problem, even if it is only how to play a silly child's game, the child will create a solution. He/She will allow spontaneity to flow freely, creating rules that fit the particular situation.

The child has no knowledge of anything eternal or transcendent. There is only spontaneity and creative play, that is, until adults pound their own values into child's heads. After enculturation is complete, they are fortunate if they ever break free from the Thou Shalt of the herd.

At the same time, the child is a self-propelling wheel. At this stage of transformation, the child possesses the will to power, or the power to roll its own wheel. Creation is the wheel which is propelled along by the will. As long as it is understood that all is Becoming, the wheel continues to roll along. However, when "wisdom" becomes firmly fixed in one's thinking, then the wheel comes to a screeching halt.

And the child is also a first motion. When the great dragon was still alive, no movement existed. There was only static Being; there was no creation. There were only "the values of a thousand years." The camel questioned those values; the lion destroyed them. Now, the child is the first motion, because the child is the creator. Creation is not static, it is dynamic.

It becomes clear if we think of how the earth continually creates and re-creates. Every spring, new life bursts forth from the earth. There is a period of growth, decay, and then death. In a similar way, Nietzsche envisions this process of transformation. Creators always pass through such periods of growth, decay, and death. The child represents growth, i.e., the growth of new realities. The camel eventually doubts these realities (decay), and the lion destroys them (death). Then, once more, the child creates new ones, and the process begins all over again.

The child is the sacred Yes. In order for new creation to occur, the spirit of the child must utter a holy Yes to life. "Yes, a sacred Yes is needed, my brothers, for the sport of creation: the spirit now wills its own will, the spirit sundered from the world now wins its own spirit" (ibid.).

Before, the spirit had no will of its own. It was controlled by the beliefs of others, by the beliefs of the herd. But the sacred No was spoken by the lion. The spirit now has no sense of duty; it is not impelled to act in any other way than the behavior it chooses. Now the sacred Yes is needed in order for creativity to be unleashed, for new values to be invented.

Nietzsche is not saying that we should simply adopt those values which give us the greatest pleasure. It is somehow much more complex. Nietzsche is saying that we should pass beyond the dualities (good and evil, for example) and create for ourselves a set of values which will allow us to envision the prospect of overcoming ourselves. Perhaps we will never get there. The Superman may only be a possibility. The main point, however, is to take the risk, to make the attempt, to struggle with the uncertainty. By doing this, we are constantly abiding in the flux of life.

The explanation above explores the stages of human development. More importantly, it emphasizes on the significance of being innocent just like a little child.

J D Salinger has seen the hope in a child but he did not bother to explore the full dimension of life. So, from the perspective of Nietzsche's *Metamorphosis*, Salinger's visualizations can be elucidated only partially.

It is a different thing to what extent Salinger's conception matches the visualization of the theorists. But as both William Blake and Friedrich Nietzsche had seen the hope for human civilization in innocence, Salinger also does have the same hope, and he has successfully and forcefully depicted it in *The Catcher in the Rye*. Holden Caulfield, the major character of the novel, differs from society which results in his rebellious nature throughout the whole novel. Holden does not have any friends and cannot keep relationships. This is because he finds and exaggerates any negative aspect of all the people he knows or meets. This can be seen when Holden cannot keep his relationship with his girlfriend Sally. As Ian Ousby says, Holden is "in rebellion against adult world" (*Literature in English* 340). Holden also rebels because he feels that all adults are phonies. Holden believes that these phonies are people who try to be something that they are not. Usually the mark of a phony is the desire for material goods. This is because people usually want these possessions in order to impress others and become something they are not. This is why Holden can only connect with his younger sister Phoebe. He did not want children to grow up because he felt that adults are corrupt he becomes clear when Holden tries to erase naughty words from the walls of the elementary school which his sister Phoebe attended. Holden believed that children were innocent because they viewed the world and society without any bias. This leads to Holden's dream of being the catcher in the rye, where the catcher prevents small children from falling off a cliff. Salinger does not believe that in this constantly changing world where norms and values have become more and more complex, any fixed cycle of human development is possible as stated

by theorists of the past. He simply celebrates the innocence as William Blake and Friedrich Nietzsche do.

Chapter Three

Innocence, Experience and Higher Innocence

The previous chapter elaborated the theme of innocence in *The Catcher in the Rye* through the eyes of different critics. This chapter once again deals the issues of innocence, experience and higher innocence in a diverse way. Through the eyes of a child, the concept of the almighty God is simple and good, and the world is seen in the same manner. But through the eyes of an adult, God and the world are not nearly so easy to comprehend.

In this light, this chapter begins and ends with the same inquiry, that how the world seems in the perspectives of innocent child and experienced adult. This chapter also attempts to fathom what William S. Burroughs and Brion Gysin say in *The Third Mind* that when one puts two minds together, there is always a third mind, a third and superior mind, as an unseen collaborator. The analysis is particularly based on William Blake's *Songs of Innocence and Experience* and his mystic visions.

Oxford dictionary defines innocence as "the fact of not being guilty of a crime, lack of knowledge and experience of the world, especially of evil or unpleasant things" (Wehmeier 669-70). Precisely, in a child's world, everything is simple and free of guilt. On the contrary, in an adult's world everything is more complex. As a person matures, he is able to explore the darker aspects of his religion and ask himself what the presence of violence and evil say about the unseen creator who created them. There is no longer the naive belief of a child that the world is entirely good. This loses its weight with the passage of time and a person gains more experience of the kind of place the world truly is. Along with the corruption of the world comes the suspicion about the whole existence and good will of God. He is no longer a purely good being,

but rather he becomes partially to blame for the state of the world because he created it.

William Blake's poem "The Tyger" collected in *The Songs of Experience*, is meant to question this. The tiger in the poem is symbolic of the evil and violence present in the world. The poem consisted entirely of unanswered questions and ended with the same ones it began with because an adult cannot accept a clear answer that God is good or God is bad; he has too much experience to know that neither is entirely true. Conversely, the narrator of Blake's another poem "The Lamb" collected in *The Songs of Innocence*, managed to answer his own simple yet profound questions, but he failed to account for, or even acknowledge the presence of evil and suffering in the world. The child also approaches the ideas of God and religion with a certain amount of naivness. He displays his complete trust in the goodness of his religion, again not acknowledging the uncertainties pointed out by "The Tyger". The simple riddle with which the child answered his question is symbolic of the God ulmighty in its references to the creator being both a child and a lamb, revealing the trust that he holds in divine faith and its teachings.

Through these two poems of Blake, it is obvious that an adult has slightly muddled view of God and the creation is very much different from the straightforward perspective of a child.

On the other hand, innocence is usually associated with youth and ignorance. The loss of one's innocence is associated with the evils of the world. However, the term "innocence" can be interpreted in a variety of ways. The loss of one's innocence can be interpreted in more than one way, and, depending on the interpretation, it may happen numerous times. The loss of innocence is culture specific and involves something that society holds inviolable. It is also bounded by different religious

beliefs. Still, no matter which culture or religion is at hand, there is always more than one way to lose one's innocence, and every member of that particular culture or religion experiences a loss of innocence at least once in their lives. In addition, the individual's loss of innocence will impair him or her emotionally and/or physically.

Committing a crime of some sort will certainly cause an individual to lose his or her innocence with emotional scars and perhaps with physical scars also. When one commits a crime, he suddenly feels a strength that had been dormant in him, a sense of control and power over another person.

Although the murder is accidental, the person who commits it experiences a loss of innocence that enables him to kill others also. Yet, with the power he believes he had acquired from his loss of innocence, he also obtains a heavy mind and burdened soul. He can never feel light hearted and playful. He suffers from fear and stress. Gradually, if he is intelligent enough and makes some attempts to understand the pleasure being innocent, he will gain higher innocence in the span of time. Then only once again he finds the joy of living with light heartedness.

The variation of Innocence and Experience

The pleasant world of innocence is exposed as naive and foolish by the subversive cynicism of experience. The world of Innocence is happy and loving, and can be compared to the Garden of Eden, the place of true innocence and lack of knowledge. However, experience is actual reality of what living in the real world is actually like, where people have experienced the problems in the world. They are aware of these problems due to experience.

However, the world of innocence encompasses no such problems, and so experience sees it as "naive and foolish", as it is not prepared for life. Whereas

innocence is all about the love of God, fertility and joy, experience is about jealousy, selfishness and general cold-heartedness. Love, in innocence, is portrayed as happiness and unity between humans and with the divine and nature, with God coming alive with divine love. Love is seen as something very special, with it being closely linked to happiness and harmlessness.

Innocence and experience can also be seen in the light of explaining the horrific working conditions of children as a means to magnify the inequality between the poor working class and the well to do aristocracy. Critics have criticized the hypocritical aristocratic society and ruling class who are indifferent about such a degrading condition of children and working class people as a whole. But William Blake himself says, "Less than everything can not satisfy man." (qtd. in *A Glossary of Literary Terms* 129) A growing man realizes a great age of new beginning and high possibilities is yet to come in his life. The charm of adulthood and knowledge lures him just as Adam and Eve were lured to eat the prohibited fruit of knowledge.

So, we tumble into the second cycle of life, that of experience, we are almost eager to do so. We no longer hear the voice of the child piping, the child who is playing. We prefer to hear with poets, philosophers and mystics the voice of knowledge which sees the present, past and future. As it is already stated, man is torn between the forces of experience and innocence, two states of the soul. Now, in experience, we see with Blake, "In a rich and fruitful land, /Babes reduced to misery" ("Holy Thursday" *The Songs of Innocence and Experience*). The land is rich and fruitful, but children are suffering, the sense of pleasure and light heartedness is gone. People live for the sake of their belly and material gain.

There is always a dialogue between the contrary states of the soul which manifest in shifting tensions that are designed to reveal the inextricable interplay between the two qualities. Although these two states are contrary, the former characterized by resilient purity, the latter by irreversible bitterness, they interact with one another to produce syntheses in turn beginning a new dialectic. Growth emerging from strife generates direction, negating any notion of stagnancy within either contrary. Fed-up and melancholic in tone, the *Songs of Experience* offers not only a recurring theme of ruined and embittered children, but also the frustration and miseries of the world as a whole. Thus, experiences equally leave mankind restless.

States of Mind in the Stages of Innocence and Experience

Children are simple like a pastoral shepherd, young in age, truly innocent and untainted. On the other hand, adults are aged, tarnished with crimes and guilt feelings. In a similar fashion, the analysis of the states of mind in different stages of innocence and experience can be applied in search of an ultimate Truth. No poet has understood and exploited this idea more successfully than William Blake, and this was solely due to his mysticism. A mankind is apparently facing with two different worlds that are of innocence and experience. A more careful analysis will reveal several interesting correspondences between the two. For example, a meek child becomes a fiery ruler.

The narrator of the experience poem presents a more complex understanding of reality. The child in the innocence poem is incapable of comprehending his situation, as he lacks the experience to do so. The poignant sense of injustice in our reading is clearly due to what we bring to it. Here we carry our experience not as pity for the innocent child, but as guilt for our own actions, realizing that we often side with God and ruler who make up a heaven of [the child's] misery. The infant archetype is applied

to calm people into their traditional social roles as parent figures, and in the second to jolt them into re-examining these roles.

Higher Innocence: Establishing the Validity of two Contrary States of the Human Soul

As a mystic, Blake had progressed in perceiving reality beyond duality. Or, in his own words, he achieved a condition where every thing would appear to man as it is, infinite. It has been proven that language on language, or mathematics on mathematics escalates into near nonsense because there is an infinite regress at work. The same result occurs in consciousness when it is pondering consciousness. Eventually it all explodes into infinity which means too many things to be meaningful. Blake's work is lulling the reader into thinking he is journeying from a perfect world of innocence, into a fallen world of experience. But, there aren't two worlds, only one. Therefore, what changes is perception. William S. Burroughs and Brion Gysin rightly say, "When you put two minds together, there is always a third mind, a third and superior mind, as an unseen collaborator" (*The Third Mind...*). So, after the second step there follows a logical third which is called higher innocence. Higher innocence is a mystical state where the realization occurs that we are models of ourselves, making models of ourselves.

In *The Catcher in the Rye*, the main character Holden can be seen as a troubled teenager growing up in a less than perfect society. Throughout the novel Holden struggles with the fact that many young and innocent kids will grow up and see the world from a different perspective. He naturally becomes worried for all future generations who will one day grow, as he did, and lose their innocence. The

fixation of youth and innocence can be seen in the title of the book, as well as throughout the novel.

Holden has matured in many ways all the way through the novel. He had grown from an immature child who only cared about himself to a mature adult who wanted to make something of his life. In the beginning of the story readers are introduced to Holden as a forgetful kid who just doesn't care. He is the manager of the fencing team, yet he forgets to take the supplies off the subway. As the book moves on, we find Holden in situations where the reader has realized that he has matured. An example of this is when Holden has a sudden urge to visit a museum, but when he gets there he decides not to go inside. "Then a funny thing happened. When I got to the Museum, all of a sudden I wouldn't have gone inside for a million bucks. It just didn't appeal to me..." (Salinger 122). This shows that Holden is maturing and by him not entering the museum his adult side takes over the kid in him. Through various instances, Holden's innocence is revealed and is slowly being taken as he grows up in a corrupt world. But, quickly enough, as German poet Lessing whose son was born and died the same day and the mother's life was despaired of, had written in a letter to his friend,

"... and I lost him so unwillingly, this son! For he has so much understanding! so much understanding! ... I know what I say. Was it not understanding? that he so soon suspected the evil of this world? Was it not understanding that he seized the first opportunity to get away from it?..." (qtd. in *Critical Theory Since Plato* 634)

Similarly, Holden is too tired of the experiences of adult world and is eager to flee from the adult world as Lessing's son or return back to the innocent world and wants to be the catcher in the rye.

Now, the conception can be developed as the implication that true innocence is impossible without experience, transformed by the creative force of the imagination. Life is a many-splendor thing and people are born everyday and people die everyday and along the course of life people change. People are born innocent but as they grow up their innocence is lost. In J.D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* Holden Caulfield struggles with the fact that everyone has to grow up. He feels that the adult life is corrupt and, as stated above, wishes to be the 'catcher in the rye' to 'save' innocent children from being corrupted by the adult morals of the world.

William Blake rightly announces, "Without Contraries is no progression. Attraction and Repulsion, Reason and Energy, Love and Hate, are necessary to Human existence" (*The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*). This simple statement, one can look at it in terms of a process of reunification wherein one falls from the state of innocence to the rather terrestrial sphere of experience, only to progress further on to some other position. At any rate, it is in this revaluation of chaos that one can perceive the subject who, by virtue of passing from the position of eternity (or innocence) to the void (or experience) may progress on to a third phase higher innocence. "This transvaluation of chaos serves as an index to the possibility of hope and the progression potentially inherent in the constitution of subjectivity" (Blake 2).

In the 50th, when Salinger wrote *The Catcher in the Rye*, critics say that the "idealization of childhood was in every respect superior to the life of a man faces. The idea of innocence has traditionally had overtones of American optimism..." (*Harvard*

Guide to Contemporary American Literature 269). Moreover, images of childhood and adolescence hunt our greatest works of all times. Salinger also exploited the prevalent theme of current writing but in a quite triumphant way. He brings and incorporates spiritual or mystical ideas in almost all his fiction writing. This fact has been pointed out by different critics. Some critics have said, "Salinger mixes religion and mysticism with his fiction" (*Contemporary American Novels* 98). This expression suggests nothing else but Salinger's postulation of the journey of human development from innocence to experience and ultimately to higher innocence which can be traced out in *The Catcher in the Rye*. Some other critics have somewhat different explanation about this. They say, "It is the new look of American Dream, specifically dramatized by the encounter between a vision of innocence and the reality" (*Radical Innocence: Studies in Contemporary Novel* 260). But above all, Salinger attempts to lead us or at least helps us to envision the state of higher innocence demonstrating the contents and discontents of innocence and experience. This conception will be more explicit in the following chapter dealing with textual analysis.

Each of us is placed in the state of innocence and experience, preparing us to head toward a higher innocence, a perfection culminating in divinity, the God-Man representing the ultimate in imagination, forgiveness and redemption. Then those who achieved this state of mind will find joy where others find misery.

To sum up, the ideas explained above, according to Blake, in growing up, people move from the state of innocence to that of experience, and then, if they're fortunate, to higher innocence - the most creative and joyful state of all. As the mystic vision unfolds, there is no birth and no death, but rather, always the movement towards eternity, towards higher innocence, the origins of which can be glimpsed in visions rather than fully realized in the world.

Though we can't capture our childhood innocence, perhaps like Blake, we can capture higher innocence. Blake introduced the philosophy of higher innocence, innocence that resonates or renews itself after experience. It is this type of higher innocence which emanates from the experience of adulthood coupled with the innocence of childhood.

Holden Caulfield's desire to be a catcher in the rye can be seen in the same light. Holden, experiencing the life in contact with adults for some days, has fully realized the restlessness of experienced world and, at the same time, he comprehends the significance and joy of living playfully with children. In a nutshell, Holden completes the cycle of innocence-experience and visualizes the stage of higher innocence which illustrates that seeing and knowing all, he finally prefers the celebration of innocence.

Thus, the state of innocence, possessed by each of us in childhood or in fantasy, is the proof that we possess the powerful, creative, and Divine Imagination. Experience is, on the other hand, the analytic state of mind that finds the limits of the world that our fallen perception gives us.

The ultimate goal set in Blake's writings was to enter the state of higher innocence which includes innocent elements such as children, the pastoral, joy and happiness, laughter, lack of envy and imaginative vision. The fusing of innocence and experience, results in the visionary inspiration which would be lovely and desirable for all. Creation involves knowledge of both ugliness and loveliness, joined with the imaginative ability to fuse both into a larger and higher loveliness is the great art of life which only very fortunate ones can achieve. According to Blake, only a mature

conceptual creation in which both joy and sorrow are present will produce this higher loveliness, or higher innocence.

Innocence is a temporary state, knowledge of which demands either a retreat to infantilism, or an advance to higher innocence through experience. One may return to the state of selfish delight or he may crystallize his vague feelings of change into a creative act. Holden Caulfield in Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* somehow crystallizes his feelings of bitterness into celebration of innocence. His desire to be a catcher in the rye indicates the same.

Chapter Four

Innocence and its Discontents

Innocence is a recurrent theme in fiction writing since time immemorial. Among many who popularized the same in literature are Anton Chekhov, Samuel Becket, Mark Twain and J D Salinger. As these writers have expressed the alienated sensibility of artists who have had difficulty adjusting to the often vulgar customs and values of commercial urban civilization, they find the only solace and hope for human civilization in innocence. Especially, Samuel Becket in his *Endgame* sees the hope of absurd existence in an innocent child. One of the characters named Clov at the end of the play sees through a telescope and says "something looks like a boy" (*The Bedford Introduction to Drama* 1076). This child is a more explicit symbol of hope in innocence or regeneration, whom, the character Clov calls a "potential procreator" (ibid.), a flicker of hope that can be savior of the whole human civilization from falling into the abyss of absurdity.

Somehow, in the same light and, to some extent, in other ways Salinger's novel is commented upon by different critics and reviewers. Especially, Salinger's ability to write about children and childhood innocence is much praised by almost all critics. Other short stories by Salinger, such as "A Perfect Day for Bananafish" and "Franny and Zooey," are also based around children and adolescents.

Ever since its publication in 1951, J.D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* has served as a firestorm for controversy and debate. Critics have argued the moral issues raised by the book and the context in which it is presented. Some have argued that Salinger's tale of the human condition is fascinating and enlightening, yet incredibly depressing. The psychological battles of the novel's main character, Holden Caulfield,

serve as the basis for critical argument. Caulfield's self-destruction over a period of days forces one to contemplate society's attitude toward the human condition. Salinger's portrayal of Holden, which includes incidents of depression, nervous breakdown, impulsive spending, sexual exploration, vulgarity, and other erratic behavior, have all attributed to the controversial nature of the novel. Yet the novel is not without its sharp advocates, who argue that it is a critical look at the problems facing American youth during the 1950's. When developing a comprehensive opinion of the novel, it is important to consider the praises and criticisms of *The Catcher in the Rye*.

Beyond the controversy that has surrounded *The Catcher in the Rye* since it first appeared, and beyond contemporary assessments of the novel's political/cultural relevance, J. D. Salinger's *Catcher* merits ongoing consideration because of the subversion it conducts, a revolt against all fixed values. Ironically, the comment of one editor who rejected *Catcher* for publication is suggestive of the nature of this revolt: "Is Holden Caulfield supposed to be crazy?" (Hamilton 114). It is the sense of madness, often expressed in the novel through Holden's characteristic humor, that-as Mikhail Bakhtin observes in regard to carnival-"makes men look at the world with different eyes, not dimmed by 'normal,' that is by commonplace ideas and judgments" (qtd. in "Studies in the Novel" 1). This carnivalesque aspect of *Catcher* has yet to be explored fully, but it is fundamental to the novel's import and value.

In addition to madness and laughter, Bakhtin identifies other principles of the carnivalesque that offer liberation from conventional values, principles that illuminate the essential concerns of *Catcher*. These include a "peculiar festive character without any piousness, [and] complete liberation from seriousness" (qtd. in *Studies in the*

Novel 1); free and familiar contact among people; behavior, gesture, and discourse . . . freed from the authority of all hierarchical positions such as social estate, rank, age, property and "disguise-that is, carnivalistic shifts of clothing and of positions and destinies in life.

In the spirit of the carnivalesque, Holden's story is set in the festive Christmas season, yet it is far from pious. Holden himself delights in and encourages the "liberation" of a classmate who farts under his headmaster's watchful eye during the speech of a respected alumnus. During Holden's two day stay in New York, he enjoys free and familiar contact with diverse people, regardless of social states, rank, age, [and] property; these people range from a nine-year-old girl (his sister Phoebe's friend) to a married society woman in her forties (his classmate's mother), and from a prostitute to a pair of nuns. Finally, "shifts of clothing" are a recurring motif for Holden and those around him, with lendings and borrowings of his hound's-tooth jacket, his turtleneck sweater, and his famous hunting hat. How these exchanges of clothing signify shifts of "positions and destinies" shall be considered at greater length. It is worth noting first, nevertheless, that the received values that the novel aims to subvert encompass not merely prevailing social conventions but also fundamental binary oppositions, including self/other, body/mind, father/mother, heaven/hell, life/death, writer/reader, and most notably, savior/saved.

However, much of Salinger's reputation, which he acquired after publication of *The Catcher in the Rye*, is derived from thoughtful and sympathetic insights into both adolescence and adulthood, his use of symbolism, and his idiomatic (natural) style, which helped to re-introduce the common idiom to American literature. One of the most widespread criticisms of *The Catcher in the Rye* deals with the adolescence

and repetitive nature of the main character, Holden Caulfield. Anne Goodman commented that in the course of such a lengthy novel, the reader would weary of a character such as Holden. Goodman wrote "Holden was not quite so sensitive and perceptive as he, and his creator, thought he was" (20). She also remarked that Holden was so completely self-centered that any other characters, who wandered through the book, with the exception of Holden's sister, Phoebe, had no authenticity at all.

Critics have praised the novel in noting that it was not merely another account of adolescence, complete with general thoughts on youth and growing up. But other critics see the novel as a humorous one. The humor in Holden's character comes from his communication with the outside world. His innocence, from my point of the view, his hunger for stability and permanence, make him both a tragic and touching character, capable of making dark activities on the surface seem hilarious and silly below. S.N. Behrman noted that the literalness and innocence of Holden's point of view in the face of complicated and depraved facts of life makes for the humor of the novel: haggles with unfriendly taxi-drivers, futile conversations with a prostitute in a hurry, an intellectual discussion with a man a few years older than himself, and a completely hilarious date with Sally Hayes, an old girlfriend (74).

Similarly, one of the most popular means by which *The Catcher in the Rye* is critiqued is through the comparison of Holden Caulfield, the major character to other literary characters. The novel is often compared to traditional period literature, particularly Mark Twain's novel *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. Both works feature naive, adolescent runaways as narrators, both commenting on the problems of their times, and both novels have been recurrently banned or restricted (Davis 318). John Aldrige remarked that both novels are "study in the spiritual picaresque, the joinery that for the young is all one way, from holy innocence to such knowledge as

the world offers, from the reality which illusion demands and thinks it sees to the illusion which reality insists, at the point of madness, we settle for" (129). Harvey Breit of *The Atlantic Bookshelf* wrote of Holden Caulfield: "(He) struck me as an urban, a transplanted Huck Finn. He has a colloquialism as marked as Huck's . . . Like Huck, Holden is neither comical or misanthrope. He is an observer. Unlike Huck, he makes judgments by the dozen, but these are not to be taken seriously; they are conceits. There is a drollery, too, that is common to both, and a quality of seeing that creates farce" (Breit 82). It is possible, in theory, to do an entire character study comparing Holden and Huck. Both are adolescents, runaways from society, seeking independence, growth, and stability in their lives.

It is evident by studying the reviews of *The Catcher in the Rye* that most critics enjoy picking apart the character of Holden Caulfield, studying his every action and the basis for that action. Reviewers of the novel have gone to great lengths to express their opinions on Salinger's protagonist. Some consider Holden to be sympathetic, others consider him arrogant, but the large majority of them find him either innocent or utterly entertaining.

Critics who commented on Holden Caulfield's innocence wrote that Holden was on the side of the angels, despite his contamination by vulgarity, lust, lies, temptations, recklessness, and cynicism. But these are merely the devils that try him externally, inside, his spirit is intact. Holden does not tilt against the entire adult world, for he knows that some decent citizens still remain, nor does he loathe his worst contemporaries, for he often hates to leave them. Virgilia Peterson commented:

For Holden Caulfield, despite all the realism for which he is supposedly depicted, is nevertheless a skinless perfectionist... Salinger speaks for himself as well as his hero when he has Holden say to little

Phoebe: "I keep picturing all these little 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 . . .

I'd just be the catcher in the rye and all. . . " (qtd. in Peterson 3)

That is why one can not look upon Holden as a reckless and cynic adolescent. Instead, Holden Caulfield is a good guy trapped in a bad world. He is trying to make the best of his life, though ultimately losing that battle. Whereas he aims at stability and truth, the adult world cannot survive without suspense and lies. It is a testament to his innocence and decent spirit that Holden would place the safety and well-being of children as a goal in his lifetime. This serves to only re-iterate the fact that Holden is a sympathetic character, a person of high moral values who is too weak to pick himself up from a difficult situation.

When critics consider the character of Holden Caulfield, many of them point to the novel's climactic scene, when Holden watches as Phoebe rides the Central Park carousel in the rain and his illusion of protecting the innocence of children is symbolically shattered. Critics regard this episode as Holden's transition into adulthood, for although the future is uncertain, his severed ties with the dead past have enabled him to accept maturity. James Bryan observed:

The richness in the spirit of 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

the telling of the story, Holden has given shape to, and thus achieved control of, his troubled past. (qtd. in Davis 318)

In this way, Bryn concludes that Holden has experienced the corrupted adulthood conventions and phoniness and then preferred to return to the childhood innocence. Similarly, another critic named John Aldrige while asked the final comment on the character of Holden Caulfield, has stated that the innocence of the main character was a combination of urban intelligence, juvenile contempt, and New Yorker sentimentalism. The only challenge it has left, therefore, is that of the genuine, the truly human, in a world which has lost both the means of adventure and the means of love.

One of the most intriguing points in Holden's character, related to his prolonged inability to communicate, is his intention to become a deaf-mute. So repulsed is he by the phoniness around him that he wishes not to communicate with anyone, and in a passage filled with personal insight he contemplates a retreat within himself:

I figured that I could get a job at a filling station somewhere, putting gas and oil in people's cars. I didn't care what kind of job it was, though. Just so people didn't know me and I didn't know anybody. I thought what I'd do was, I'd pretend I was one of those deaf-mutes. That way I wouldn't have to have any goddam stupid useless conversation with anybody. If anybody wanted to tell me something, they'd have to write it on a piece of paper and shove it over to me. They'd get bored as hell doing that after a while, and then I'd be through with having conversations for the rest of my life. Everybody'd think I was just a poor deaf-mute bastard and they'd leave me alone . . .

I'd cook all my own food, and later on, if I wanted to get married or something, I'd meet this beautiful girl that was also a deaf-mute and we'd get married. She'd come and live in my cabin with me, and if she wanted to say anything to me, she'd have to write it on a piece of paper, like everybody else" (Salinger 198-99).

Another step in the critical analyzing of *The Catcher in the Rye* is to look at what has occurred at or near the end of the novel. John Aldrige wrote that in the end, Holden remains what he was in the beginning- cynical, defiant, and blind. As for the reader, there is identification but no insight, a sense of pathos but not tragedy. This may be Salinger's intent, as Holden's world does not possess sufficient humanity to make the search for humanity dramatically feasible (Aldrige 131).

Other critics, however, have taken a slightly more optimistic view of the novel's conclusion. For example, S.N. Behrman has remarked that Holden knows that things won't remain the same; they are dissolving, and he cannot allow himself to reconcile with it. Holden doesn't have the knowledge to trace his breakdown or the mental clarity to define it, for all he knows is that "a large avalanche of disintegration is occurring around him" (Behrman 75). Yet there is some sort of exhilaration, an immense relief in the final scene at Central Park, when we know Holden will be all right. Behrman joked: "One day, he will probably find himself in the mood to call up Jane. He may become more tolerant of phonies . . . or even write a novel. I would like to read it. I loved this one. I mean it- I really did" (ibid. 75-6). In a different fashion, another critic, Charles Kegel wrote that "Holden will not submit to the phoniness of life, but will attain an attitude of tolerance, understanding, and love which will make his life endurable. There is no doubt that when he returns home to New York, for he will return home, he will be in the mood to give "old Jane a buzz"" (Kegel 56).

Finally, *The Catcher in the Rye* will continue to be a point of great public and critical debate. One must remember, however, in the study and critique of the novel, particularly for a researcher or critic in 1996 that the story was written in a different period. If published today, the novel would probably create little publicity and garner only average book sales. The fact that a novel of such radical social opinion and observation was written in a time of conservatism in America made it all the more controversial.

Some critics have criticised the novel as being too pessimistic or obscene, too harsh for the society of the 1950's. Others, however, nominated Salinger himself as the top-flight "catcher in the rye" for that period in American history (Peterson 3). They argued that Salinger's concerns represented an entire generation of American youth, frustrated by the phoniness of the world, just like Holden was. The popularity of the novel and debate over its redeeming social value have never faltered since its initial publication, due in no large part to the fact that J.D. Salinger is now a hermit. It would be conclusive to say that critics of *The Catcher in the Rye* have legitimate criticisms of the novel, while advocates and supporters of the story's message also have expressed genuine praise.

What is most revealing is that one can write volumes about such a thin little book. The story is almost incredibly simple. Still, the message it conveys is unbelievably forceful.

We ache for childhood and the innocence it offers, but we also long for the independence of adulthood, even with all its flaws. It is surely an American dilemma: At what price freedom? When the speaker of Robert Frost's "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" wants to watch the woods fill up with snow, he is torn because he also has "miles to go" and responsibilities to keep.

We can conclude that innocence in itself cannot be enough for a complete and perfect life. One must grow up and experience the whole world as it really is. Then again, one can return to the simplicity and innocence of childhood. Only when we see the necessary evils of the human society, celebration of innocence would be a fulfilling experience.

Chapter Five

Innocence in *The Catcher in the Rye*

The previous chapter has explained in detail the ways of human development as from innocence to experience and ultimately, if one is lucky enough, to the state of higher innocence. In this chapter, an attempt has been made to trace a somewhat similar journey in the novel, *The Catcher in the Rye*. Here, the major character, Holden Caulfield's expedition through these stages is depicted basically.

The plot of the novel, *The Catcher in the Rye*, follows the exploits of chronic liar Holden Caulfield, after his expulsion from a boarding school and his journey of self-discovery through New York City while avoiding running into his parents for as long as he can. Holden finds no comfort in the city or with a prostitute that he pays to make a connection with rather than for sexual activities. In the most touching scene, he expresses his deep desire to be the “catcher in the rye”, essentially saving children before they fall out of innocence. This theme is the most recurrent in the novel, best personified when Holden spots an obscenity written in his young sister's school and vainly attempts to erase it before concluding that you can never “rub out all the ‘fuck you’ in the world” (Salinger 202). It is an incredibly perceptive observation by Salinger, and one that works so well within the confines of the story.

Holden is a typical American teenager. He is self-centered and self-absorbed, contained by privilege to the point that he is locked within himself. This feature is very much part of what resounds so much with the angry loner, the idea that solitary experience of the world is the bedrock of existence in contemporary times. The book often presents the message that change is impossible from an individual position and this very much explains why Holden is constantly seeking out company, whether it be the prostitute, his precocious sister, his former neighbor, or a former teacher whose

care for Holden in his time of need is, in equal measure, genuine concern and what Holden perceives as inappropriate lechery.

What Holden encounters on his journey but never realizes for himself is that he is trapped by his very own prejudices and hypocrisy. He labels everyone as phony, he despises those he feels are dishonest in their presentation, despite constantly lying to nearly everyone he meets. What is most striking is Holden's inability to be honest with himself and his plentiful dishonesty permeates his perception to the point where he believes, quite wrongly, that he is the only honest person in the story. But this is not all. Another side of Holden's character is more revealing and significant while tracing innocence in *The Catcher in the Rye*.

It is true that in the character of Holden Caulfield, Salinger has essentially created an archetype of the paralyzed youth with great dreams and a perverse sense of the world and his place in it. Despite these facts, there are touching moments, such as Holden's inexpressible sadness when considering a former crush as just another girl that some guy will take advantage of and not even love (as Holden surely would have). There is also a great care for his young sister. These and many other instances clearly depict his straightforward journey from innocence to experience and then ultimately to higher innocence.

In the conclusion of the story, Holden acknowledges that children must make their own mistakes while watching his sister endanger herself in reaching for a ring on a merry-go-round.

There is a touching simplicity to the story that is in direct contrast to the complexity of the central character.

Fall of Innocence

In many of Salinger's short stories and especially in his most well-known novel he writes about how the main character falls from his or her own innocence, then rises to face their challenges. In Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye*, Holden Caulfield goes through a fall from his innocence throughout his journey and once again realizes the blessedness of innocence within no time.

One example of when Holden fell from his own innocence is when he is in the room with Phoebe and he can't name anything he likes. Holden reacts to this question by saying, "Boy, she was depressing me"(Salinger 169). The only three things he can name that he liked were Allie, James Castle, and sitting there chewing the fat with Phoebe. The reason this is a time when Holden falls is because he gets really depressed when he can barely think of anything he liked. The reason Holden gets so depressed may be because two of the people he names are dead. That's why he is so lonely all the time. Holden finds things in common with Allie and James Castle and since they're both dead he feels, at the back of his mind, that he should also be dead which makes him depressed.

Another example of a fall for Holden is when he realizes he can't erase even half the "fuck you" in the world as stated above. This doesn't sound very important, but it is symbolic because he realizes that he can not be the catcher in the rye. His dream of shielding all the innocent children from society's harsh elements has been ruined by this one statement. Now because of this realization he comes to the conclusion that he can not shield everybody, not even half of everybody. An example of Holden trying to be the catcher in the rye is when Holden first sees the "fuck you" on the wall. Holden says,

"It drove me damn near crazy. I thought how Phoebe and all the other kids would see it, and how they'd wonder what the hell it meant, and then finally some dirty kid would tell them- all cockeyed, naturally what it meant, and how they'd think about it even worry about it for a couple of days. I kept wanting to kill whoever'd written it". (Salinger 201)

His reaction when he sees the graffiti on the wall reflects explicitly where his position is. Holden's final fall comes when he is in the Egyptian Tomb in the Metropolitan Museum of Art. When Holden is deep within the Egyptian Tomb he feels he is in a safe and sanitary place free from society's cruel components until he sees the "fuck you" on the wall. When he sees this he starts to think about committing suicide because he feels that living is just a waste. During this time he spent in the tomb, he decides on life or death.

After going unconscious for a couple of minutes he decides to live because, death thus becomes not a gesture of defiance but of surrender. Once Holden wakes up he feels better and symbolically chooses life. This is when Holden begins to rise. When Phoebe is on the carousel Holden wants to protect her but restrains himself, "The thing is with kids is, if they want to grab for the gold ring, you have to let them do it, and not say anything. If they fall off, they fall off, but it's bad to say anything to them"(Salinger 211). When Holden says this, his dream of being catcher in the rye vanishes. He realizes that all children must fall, like he himself did.

Right here, Holden has realized the importance of experience in one's life. But this is not all. He has yet to see many things ahead. He has yet to realize that even

experience is not enough and fulfilling. The journey should reach yet another state, that is, higher innocence.

In conclusion, *The Catcher in the Rye* is a story of a boy falling from innocence to enter adulthood and yet the journey is not complete as stated above. An example of J.D. Salinger using symbolism to show Holden's Holding on to his childhood is in his name, Holden (Hold On). This is referring to Holden not wanting to enter society and all its phonies. Today, when people hold on to their innocence they are often considered outcasts; and in the person's mind everyone who considers him this, is a phony, like how Holden saw everyone.

After Holden Caulfield returns to his native New York and rents a room in a sleazy hotel, he makes a date with Sally Hayes. Before this date, Holden finds himself wandering the streets of the naked city. He is feeling depressed and finds himself on Broadway trying to purchase a record for his sister.

After making this purchase, Holden notices a poor family walking in front of him. This unit is composed of a father, mother, and "little kid." Holden notices the child who is walking in a straight line in the street and humming a tune to himself. Holden approaches him to determine the tune he is singing. This tune is "If a body catch a body coming through the rye" (Salinger 115). Holden finds it amusing that the child is strutting quite literally on Broadway and is so care-free. He notices cars screeching and honking all over the place, and yet the child proceeds. The child's happy disposition seems to encourage Holden's outlook on vitality. It struck Holden that the child was singing with "a pretty little voice...just for the hell of it" and brightens him up. A deeper interpretation of this scene would suggest that the child represents Holden's own personality and life. Holden is defiantly singing his own tune just for the hell of it and like the child, seems to have no regard for his own well-

being. At this point, Holden may see a side in himself that is care-free and this lessens his depression.

In many instances, what is frequently revealed in the novel is the fact that, despite his love of "childhood innocence," Holden is and acts far from innocent himself. In fact, he is its antithesis. He acts that way for many reasons. First of all, he has so many responsibilities. Second, he never fits in with the crowd, and finally, he never gets any real help for the problems that he deals with. But, as the plot of the novel moves ahead, we can notice that Holden does have much love for "childhood innocence" as seen across the book. Holden's agitation about what Stradlater's going to do with his old friend Jane Gallagher shows Holden's innocence and sensitivity about sexual matters, an innocence a little surprising for a boy of his age.

As Stradlater is going to meet Jane, Holden says to him, "Ask her if she still keeps all her kings in the back row" (Salinger 34). He knows she is that much innocent. At the same time he is well aware what a bastard his friend Stradlater is. Then immediately, he sits down and begins to ponder,

I sat there for about a half hour after he left. I mean I just sat in my chair, not doing anything. I kept thinking about Jane, and about stradlater having a date with her and all. It made me so nervous I nearly went crazy. I already told you what a sexy bastard stradlateer was. (Salinger 34)

Similarly, Holden's response after his fight with Stradlater (he feels "lonesome and rotten") shows that he's still a pretty innocent and sensitive boy. By choosing to strike out on his own for a few days, however, Holden suggest that he may be ready for a journey that will lead to a loss of some of this innocence.

When Holden is thinking about his innocent and sweet summer with Jane, he happens also to be sitting in a "vomity looking" chair. This sort of tension between Holden's often-innocent thoughts and his increasingly seedy surroundings and experiences is evident throughout the novel.

In another instance, Holden reveals his sexual innocence by blurting out that he's a virgin during his description of his encounter with Sunny, the prostitute. He's quite frank about this; as if he'd rather just get it off his chest than pretend to experience he doesn't have. He clearly reveals his ways of behaving with girls when it comes to sexual intercourse. He says,

"The thing is, most of the time when one comes pretty close to doing it (sexual intercourse) with a girl — if she is not a prostitute, she keeps telling you to stop. The trouble with me is, I stop. Most guys don't. I can't help it. You never know whether they are just scared as hell, or whether they are just telling you to stop so that if you do go through with it, the blame'll be on you, not them. Anyway, I keep stopping. The trouble is I get up to feeling sorry for them. (Salinger 92)

Holden is so innocent that he can not even realize girls' 'no' is in most instances 'yes.' It is the basic psychology of girls. As Keats says in his poem, "What mad pursuit? What struggle to escape?" ("Ode on a Grecian Urn," *Elements of Literature* 619), maidens usually escape to be caught and boys should pursue with maximum effort. But, Holden is ignorant even about this basic psychology of womankind.

The first occasion, *The Catcher in the Rye* is mentioned in the novel is when Holden sees a little boy and his parents walking down the street, singing a song about

the catcher. The little boy seems to be in his own world, yet he is still safe and protected by his parents. The cars in the street are zoomed by, brakes screeched all over the place. Still, the parents of the little boy paid no attention to him and he kept on walking next to the curb, lost in himself and singing if a body catches a body coming through the rye. Holden says, "It made me feel better. It made me feel not so depressed anymore" (Salinger 115). Holden feels ok whenever he encounters innocent children and gets restless whenever he faces an adult person.

This childhood innocence is what Holden seems to most long for later in the novel and what he strives to protect in others, too. When Holden tells the story about the trips he used to make as a kid to the Museum of Natural History, he's full of nostalgia for these old and innocent times. Thinking about how these times are gone forever, Holden is driven almost to despair. On another occasion, even though Holden has a lot to say about how annoying and phony Sally Hayes is, he ultimately wants to include her in an innocent vision of his: that the two of them might escape the phoniness and go off to live together in Massachusetts or Vermont. Holden says to his listener,

If you want to know the truth, I don't even know why I started all that stuff with her. I mean about going away somewhere, to Massachusetts or Vermont and all. I probably wouldn't have taken her even if she'd wanted to go with me... The terrible part, though, is that I meant it when I asked her. That is the terrible part. I swear to God I'm a madman. (Salinger 134)

This expression also reveals his astounding innocence to a greater extent.

Similarly, when Holden's sister Phoebe demands that he tell her one thing that he really likes, Holden's response - that he really likes Allie and he really likes just sitting there, talking to Phoebe - shows that he's most content in the simple and innocent world of his childhood.

At another juncture, when Holden explains his idea of the catcher in the rye more fully, it's revealed to be his vision of a protected field of innocence where Holden is the guardian stopping kids as they race towards the edge. He explains that he keeps picturing all these little kids playing some game in the big field of rye. Thousands of little kids and no adult around except himself. He pictures himself standing on edge of some dangerous cliff and he has to catch everybody if they start to go over the cliff. He thinks, if children are running and if they happen to come to the edge of the cliff unknowingly, he would be there from somewhere to protect them falling off the cliff. He says to his sister that this much he wants to do all day. "I would just be the catcher in the rye and all. I know it's crazy, but that's the only thing I would really like to be. I know it's crazy" (Salinger 173). He wants to be a guardian and protector of innocent children because it makes him happy. That is the only thing that appeals to him.

His teacher, Mr. Antolini presents Holden with a vision of the man he'll become if he continues down the path of turning his innocence into cynicism. In this vision, Holden will become bitter and hate everyone by the time he's thirty. Antolini says to Holden that, he is not the first person who was ever confused and frightened and even sickened by human behavior. Many, many men have been just as troubled morally and spiritually as he was right then. Antolini states, "Hapilly, some of them kept records of their troubles. You'll learn from them—if you want to. Just as somebody, if you have something to offer, someone will learn something from you.

It's a beautiful reciprocal arrangement" (Salinger 189). Even from Antolini's counsel, we can see how Holden is going through the stage of adulthood or world of experience.

In one circumstance, when Holden walks down Fifth Avenue, he feels as if he's falling off the edge of the world every time he steps off a curb. This can be read as symbolic of Holden's loss of innocence - there is no catcher in the rye for him. And when all of the *fuck you's* that Holden begins to notice scratched on the walls of places frequented by kids are particularly distressing to him. They demonstrate that the innocent world of children has already been infected by the profanities of the adult world. Still, when Holden watches Phoebe on the carousel, he's both afraid that she's going to fall off reaching for the brass ring and happy to watch his sister's happiness. He finally concludes that you have to let kids reach for the gold ring and you can't always worry about protecting them, since they have to grow up in their own way. "If they fall off, they fall off, but it's bad if you say anything to them." (Salinger 211). Here, at this very moment, Holden has realized the significance of the cycle of human development from innocence to experience and ultimately to higher innocence.

The book towards the end demonstrates significant growth in Holden. Although at first Holden is quick to condemn those around him as phony (like Stradlater and Ackley), his more recent encounters with others prove that he is becoming more tolerant and less judgmental. This is evidenced after the ordeal with Mr. Antolini, where Holden is determined not to make any conclusions about his teacher. This growth contributes to Holden's fantasy of being a catcher in the rye. Despite his inability and fear of becoming an adult, he has found his role in keeping the innocence of other children protected. This is shown when he tries to scratch out the obscenities at Phoebe's elementary school. He imagines himself on a cliff,

catching innocent children (like himself at one time) who accidentally fall off the cliff, bridging the gap between childhood and adulthood.

Holden, like the typical American characters of adolescence of the fifties, simply absorbs all experiences, good and bad, adding them to his own knowledge base. Really the poor teenager is so confused about what he should do; he simply regresses socially, hoping to escape the tough choices of adulthood by keeping others from them. But, ultimately he realizes the ways of the world and determines to be a catcher in the rye. Being experienced in the adult world and still holding faith in something different is a clear illustration of visualizing higher innocence so far as Holden Caulfield is concerned.

Chapter Six

Conclusion

This study, as stated earlier, is an attempt to examine the celebration of innocence in J. D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye*. Even though critics have analyzed the theme of the novel from various angles, an examination of the meticulous details of the novel clearly shows that Holden, the major character of the novel, walks out in a journey to the adult world and the completion of his journey ends when he finds satisfaction, calmness and the bliss of life after he resolves to devote himself to the celebration of innocence.

Holden, when asked by his little sister Phoebe what he wants to do in life, finally says that he wants to be a catcher in the rye protecting small children from falling of the cliff, that is saving innocent children from falling into the corrupt adult world. But, when Phoebe is on the carousel Holden wants to protect her but restrains himself to say 'the thing with kids is, if they want to grab for the gold ring, you have to let them do it, and not say anything. If they fall off, they fall off, but it's bad to say anything to them '.

This is a very clear suggestion that Holden has realized the significance of gaining experience of the adult world. He realizes that all children must fall, like he himself did. Still, he finds himself in ease being with children. That is why when Phoebe wants to follow him in his escape; he resolves to return with Phoebe. After seeing and knowing all, Holden prefers the celebration of innocence above all else.

These details are explained simultaneously within the conceptual framework referring to visionary poet William Blake and the philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche. Blake's mystic visions about the journey of human consciousness through innocence to experience and ultimately to higher innocence are explained in detail. Blake's

vision of higher innocence is analyzed as the celebration of innocence after collecting the experiences of adult world.

Similarly, Friedrich Nietzsche's postulation about the transformation of human consciousness which he describes symbolically naming the first phase as of a camel, the second phase as of a lion and the final stage of a child is applied to explain the ideas about celebration of innocence.

While putting forth the supporting arguments in order to prove the hypothesis, a single chapter entitled "Innocence and its Discontent" has been set apart. This chapter has made it easier to see the celebration of innocence from the eyes of different critics. This chapter is followed by textual analysis of the novel, examining meticulously the minute details in the novel concerning the same hypothesis. It proves to be a great support in the celebration of innocence in *The Catcher in the Rye*.

Holden's short voyage in the adult world symbolically gives him enough experiences of the adult world and he finally realizes that the joy of life can be found only in the celebration of innocence. So, he wants to be a catcher in the rye, watching innocent children playing and protecting them from the evils of the corrupt world. But all such ideas are implied symbolically and no literal explanation would help in capturing the essence of the underlying message of the novel as a whole.

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