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J.D. Salinger's "Catcher in the rye" as a novel of escape

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Abstract

The present research paper aims to study the J.D. Salinger's "Catcher in the rye" as a novel of escape. J.D Salinger was very famous novel writer. He has written novel truly different from other English novelist-both male and female of the world. He wrote differently to a great extent. His body of work confined to the 'cult' novel, The Catcher in the rye, Franny and Zooey, Raise high the roof beam, Carpenters and Seymour: An introduction. Catcher in the rye published in 1951. It is an extremely popular novel whose 16 year old narrator has spoken to generation's teenagers about life, or try to live, whereas to remain placed to accept death.

Keyword:- J.D. Salinger. "Catcher in the rye", Escape, Novel, Novelist, Teenagers

Introduction

J.D. Salinger is one of the author who has fiercely guarded his privacy all along. His body of work confined to the cult novel. His entire corpus of work consists of this one novel and thirteen short stories. Salinger's name and writing style became increasingly associated with the New Yorker Magazine which published almost all of his later stories some of which made use of his war time experience. The humor and colorful language place "The Catcher in the rye" in the tradition of Mark Twain's Huckleberry Finn and the stories of Ring Lardner, but its hero like of Salinger's child characters views his life with an added dimension of self-consciousness.

The reclusive habits of Salinger in his later years made his personal life a matter of speculation, while his small literary output has been a subject of controversy among critics. He showed the problems of generations about the escapees from the life.

Discussion

This research paper explore the J.D. Salinger is an American writer and his “Catcher in the rye” is an escape novel. *“Each novel”, Says Frederick R. Karl, is based on the feeling that to escape is to live, or try to live, whereas to remain placed is to accept death. Since the point is quintessential American and hardly original by the 1950s, the novels which focus there themselves contain an original point” (P.294)*

The original point of The Catcher in the rye is indeed different from its predecessor's. The novels of escape of the nineteenth Century. Harman Melville's Moby Dick or the Whale (1851) and Mark Twain's Huckleberry Finn (1885). In social side of Melville's theme in Moby Dick, the accent heavily upon the great individual who is “stimulated or piqued into incessant self-assertion, is evermore thrown back upon the instincts of his inward infinitude” by “the antagonism which nature presents to him” “lordship over the powers that govern the universe. Melville's tale sketchy and awkward in places as it is. Speaks so intimately to a bewildered generation, failed to survive the disillusionment of war-torn history.

The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn marks in so many ways a turning point in the history of American fiction. Its crucial influence on subsequent writing in the country is widely recognized today. Twain may call the George Washington of American letters because, by investing the national language with autonomous dignity of great work of art, he virtually created it. According to Ernest Hemingway, all modern fiction derives from this single book. According to Lionel Trilling, Twain's masterpiece belongs in a more important sense with the major novels that preceded it in the nineteenth century. Among other things, its theme is a fresh and distinctive restatement of the theme of isolation and escape. With Huckleberry Finn, the story has come full circle to the very terms in which William Bradford had launched it into American literature almost two-and-a half centuries earlier. Bradford narrative had also celebrated the heroic adventure of escaping from a corrupt society in order to establish “a community of saints” in the raft, when compared with those of the puritan fugitives, are wholly secular in character. There is nothing of the saint about Huck or Jim unless we use the term as a common figure of speech to denote the contrast between them and the genera run of surroundings humanity.

Mark Twain's Character Huck Finn is indeed the representative of American hero cast in the image of a southwestern boy, much in the same manner as Holden Caulfield is the representative American postwar hero cast in the image of a New York adolescent coming to terms with a world gone awry-a world where everything is ‘phony’ that's make him ‘puke’.

Salinger's lifelong obsession with this big-city boy who is expelled from Pencey Prep makes Holden Caulfield a sort of misfit in society. Except for his elder brother D.B. who has sold his soul to Hollywood prostituted himself his dead younger brother Allie and his younger sister "old Phoebe" Holden does not seem to connect with anything else as he unfolds his experiences of two days after he is expelled from Pencey Prep for failing in four subjects out of five. He is at loose end.

He goes to New York for a weekend between Saturday and Wednesday because Christmas holiday will begin and his parents would meet him. They will receive the headmaster's letter and expelling him. Holden visits old friends and teachers, dates Sally Hayes, calls up old flame Jane Gallagher, has an unsuccessful tryst with a prostitute at a New York hotel. The world for Holden Caulfield is full of flits, perverts and jerks. Their actions make him puke. In a bid to escape this world, he decides to go West where he plans to live in a log cabin and spend the rest of his days. But the emotional pull of his younger sister Phoebe draws him back to civilization and he lands up on a psychiatrist's couch. The experience is unsettling for the sixteen-year-old who vicariously lives out Salinger's own adolescence and youth.

He became frustrated because of his teacher and friend and turned into a cynic in a world full of phony slobes. His history teacher, his roommates Ackley and Stradlater. Holden is a heavy smoker and drinker at such a young age and his efforts to act as a grown-up are met with a solid wall by all sections of society he comes across. He is a great fibber, a compulsive liar, a fantasizer, but a sentimentalist when it comes to D.B., Allie and Phoebe. Caulfield is a youngster of his time who wishes to escape from such a stifling atmosphere. He belongs to a big-city boy who is struggling to overcome such a critical atmosphere but he failed. So he decided to escape from such an atmosphere like Huck Finn. His feeling of escape is spoken by Sally Hayes:

"Look," I said here's my idea. How would you like to get the hell out of here? Here's my idea. I know this big guy down in Greenwich Village that we can borrow his car for a couple of weeks. He used to go to the same school I did and he still owes me ten bucks. What we could do is, tomorrow morning we could drive up to Massachusetts and Vermont, and all around there, see. It's beautiful as hell up there." (Chapter-17 p.2)

Sally's refusal depresses Holden and she hits "the ceiling". The resolve is firmed after his experience with the homosexual teacher Mr. Antolini. Holden finally decided to go to New York in the feelings to escape from the 'phony' world. When Caulfield wrote a note to Phoebe to meet him for the last time after school:

"I thought how it might be the last time I'd ever see her (Phoebe) again. Any of my relatives, I mean. I figured I'd probably see them again. But not for years. I might come when I was about thirty-five, in case somebody got sick and wanted to see me before they died, but that would be the only reason I'd leave my cabin and come back. I even started picturing how it

would be when I come back. I knew my mother's get nervous as hell and start to cry and beg me to stay home and not go back to my cabin, but I'd go anyway".(p.25,26)

J.D. Salinger exposed the depression of young generation through young Holden Caulfield. He tried to escape from such chaotic and exploited surroundings. He afraid for each and every one of this world. He wanted far long from this atmosphere and return when he will be thirty – five because it will better for him to face such disgusting things and overcome from it. he didn't want meet his mother because she can become nervous about the picture which is happening in the surroundings Of course, Holden does not make it. He can't escape the phony world when phoebe tugs at his heartstring and insist on accompanying him. He leaves his house and the take rest in a blur so he says:

"That's all I'm going to tell you about. i could probably tell you what I did after I went home, and how I got sick and all, and what School I'm supposed to go to next fall, after I get out of here, but I don't feel like it. i really don't. That stuff doesn't interest me too Much right now.....I mean how do you know what you're going to do till you do it? The answer is you don't"(Chapter25 P.2)

In this way, end the adventures of Holden Caulfield who is desperately trying to escape from a 'well-ordered' society because he finds himself out of place there. Holden Caulfield, the protagonist, is very much in despair for losing his girlfriend, so Caulfield reads a passage in the bible. And though Holden claims he wants to be left alone, more than anything he wants to make a connection with someone. The term catching the act of saving involves the paradoxical imperative of touching. In this way we learnt, *"The Catcher in the rye"* is the last novel of escape in American fiction. The novel captures the frustration and Unstable situation of America about child.

Conclusion

It can say that J.D. Salinger is one of the writers in American literature who wants to expose the youngster's life and sufferings in American society at 1950s. With the help of Holden, the protagonist of the novel, Salinger wanted to show people that childhood is the best period in our life, not because it is careless and because children have no worries. Holden is representative of all children of the world. Through this protagonist character he explains the problems of youngsters and their mentality of escape from the such problems. Escape is a recurrent theme within both J.D. Salinger's 'the Catcher in the Rye' and Mark Twain's 'Huckleberry Finn' and both Twain and Salinger use linguistic and literary features to develop the theme of escape. The 'Huckleberry Finn' extract occurs after Pap has taken Huck to live in his cabin. Huck decides that he needs to escape from Pap's violent and drunken state- "I made up my mind I would fix up a way to leave there". The 'Catcher in the Rye' extract occurs after Holden has had a fight with Stradlater and is about to decide to escape from Pencey - "I decided what I'd really do. I'd get the hell out of Pencey- right that same night and all." Both extracts

concern themselves with the main protagonist deciding to escape after a violent situation. Huck physically escapes from the cabin by elaborately faking his own death. Twain uses verbs such as ‘smashed’, ‘beat’ and ‘hacked’ to portray how desperate Huck is to escape. The verbs have negative connotations which make the reader think about Huck’s situation and why he needs to plan his escape carefully and get it right first time so that no one will find him. This shows us that Huck is a very determined person and will go to any lengths to do something which he believes is right; this is reflected later in the novel when Huck rips up the letter to Miss Watson in order to save Jim. By contrast, Holden's escape is more impulsive than Huck’s and he does not consider whether anyone will come looking for him. Salinger uses short sentences to represent Holden’s mind lurching from one idea to another as he is packing.

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