

The Catcher in the Rye Narrative Essay

J.D. Salinger, The author of the marvelous book *The Catcher in the Rye*, is a very controversial topic to talk about. Even though he is an extremely intelligent man, people sometimes negatively criticize his writings because he has a lazy tone in them. It even seems as if an array of people can make connections from their personal life to his literature. There are many scholarly articles with opposing viewpoints about their view of this amazing author.

A very concerned characteristic about Salinger is that he is very mysterious. However, this characteristic adds a big advantage to his writing style. The first article to talk about was published in the New York Times on February 20, 1997 by Michiko Kakutani. The article is about how out of no where Salinger goes into silence and doesn't come out with any new books, but after Three decades come out with an old story, *Hapworth 16,1924*, and puts it into book form. The question many people were pondering is, why is J.D. Salinger so Mysterious? Some people said its is just his character and others said he did it on purpose.

I believe and on the side of that he did it on purpose to keep the fans and readers of his content on their toes at all times. If yours a business type man the worst thing you can do is let your clients be able to predict your next move. He said in the book I'm reading, "Don't ever tell anybody anything. If you do, you start missing everybody." (Salinger 277) That connects to my personal life because even though I don't right books

or a venter of a sort, I'd hate for people to just be able to know what I will do next, because then I'll become uninteresting to them.

Sometimes what people fail to realize is even though most greats might have come up by their self most of them had someone, or even multiple people, to look up to. Greats such as Martin Luther King Jr. who looks up to Mahatma Gandhi and our very own president Barack Obama who admired Abraham Lincoln are both great examples. J.D. Salinger also had role models; some were Kafka, Jane Austen, and Dostoevsky. Dostoevsky was the most influential, Salinger's *Book* and short stories contain a surprising number of references to Dostoevsky's novels and two of his short stories quote from *The Brothers Karamazov*. Individuals acquire role models to follow in their footsteps, learn from their mistakes, and duplicate their positive actions. In *The Catcher and the Rye* Salinger said, "Among other things, you'll find that you're not the first person who was ever confused and frightened and even sickened by human behavior. You're by no means alone on that score, you'll be excited and stimulated to know. Many, many men have been just as troubled morally and spiritually as you are right now. Happily, some of them kept records of their troubles. You'll learn from them—if you want to. Just as someday, if you have something to offer, someone will learn something from you. It's a beautiful reciprocal arrangement. And it isn't education. It's history. It's poetry." (Salinger 246) So he understood that the best way to advance in life is to learn from your own and others mistakes. My personal role models are two professional basketball players named Kevin Durant and Jeremy Lamb. I look up to them because they both have terrific work ethic that will not stop until they are the absolute best. As role models are important in

human life, one thing that is also important that we seem to never get a hold of is tranquility, maybe one of the most important essentials to life seem to be non-existent now.

Some people think peace is the key to unlock of problems in the world. They say once we cant get that, people will finally have the time to think and come up with new ideas to end phenomenon's in the world that we have today. One thing that Salinger said in the Novel that really caught my eye and stood out to me was when he said, "That's the whole trouble. You can't ever find a place that's nice and peaceful, because there isn't any. You may think there is, but once you get there, when you're not looking, somebody'll sneak up and write, "Fuck you" right under your nose. Try it sometime. I think, even, if I ever die, and they stick me in a cemetery, and I have a tombstone and all, it'll say "Holden Caulfield" on it, and then what year I was born and what year I died, and then right under that it'll say "Fuck you." I'm positive, in fact." (Salinger 264) I was so intrigued because the statement was so true, one of the most politically correct statements I've ever heard. J.D. is an author that says everything just how it is and he does not care if you like it or not.

Peace is a very limited resource in this would. Just as he said, right when you think you have even a bit of peace and quite, someone will come right up and mess it all up. This connects to my personal life because I try to not associate heavily with people with a chaotic stature. I don't like a lot of drama in my life and I can say that eliminates a lot of it. I also agree with the people that say peace is the beginning to solving problems

in the world. However just as another thing Salinger said is, “but people are always ruining things for you.” (Salinger 114)

Something that has always lingered in my life is my inability to amount to nothing. Everything I do and participate in I have to be one of the best. In school I have all A’s and In basketball I am the Starting Small forward. I have a very competitive personality so I put myself in those positions so 1.) No one can say they are better than me in anything and 2.) To make sure I am in the best outcome I can possibly be in. Probably my favorite quote of all time from J.D. Salinger, which is actually not currently in the book I am reading is, “I’m sick of not having the courage to be an absolute nobody.” To me that quote is self-explanatory, Salinger is saying that it is virtually impossible to not do anything with his life and not be the best at it. That is probably the most relatable quote I’ve ever read. I really want to be relevant in the world and really will do anything to get to that point.

Another excellent quote from Salinger that connects to the previous one is when he said, “The mark of the immature man is that he wants to die nobly for a cause, while the mark of the mature man is that he wants to live humbly for one.” (Salinger 244) To me this means a man that is not completely developed mentally would rather die and be famously remembered for a cause. While a mature man would rather contribute to a cause and except whatever credit they receive. I agree that people are just as the quote says; I personally think I would be the mature man, not because it’s the ideal choice, but because it is the right choice. These two quotes connect because the “immature” man

would be perfectly fine with amounting to nothing. However, the mature man would not except that and do anything in his power to be relevant.

Of all the contemporary writers J.D. Salinger is of the most prominent. The use of his literary writing skills in his literature is excellent. However the only knock on this contemporary guru is his apparent lazy, uninterested, tone. One thing people like about him because of the way he uses his arsenal of literary weaponry is the way you can connect your personal life to his writing. You can clearly see what I'm talking about in the previous paragraphs in which I connected my own life to his quotes from the book I'm currently reading *The Catcher in The Rye*.

Work Cited

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