

Original Research Article

On Transitory Stage: Vacillation in J. D. Salinger's *Catcher in the Rye*

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Abstract: This study is a critique of a transitional state of mind and a comment on a juncture of indecision in J. D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* (1951). It is about a teenage boy who got expelled from his school and avoided going to his home for a few days. Lonely, on the cusp of adulthood, Holden Caulfield reclusively vacillates between what he was and what he is going to be. Since its publication till present, J. D. Salinger's *Catcher* is perceived as one of the perceptible novels to protrude from post-World War II. It revolves around the mettle of a troubled boy, called Holden Caulfield, towards a revelation. Tracking Holden's biography allows Salinger to wander into the minds of his peer adolescents and create a microcosm for them. The analysis will, therefore, be designated as a coming of age novel and as a trauma of World War II. The paper aims at examining the psychological structure of adolescence and what lies beyond and of the trauma of war and what did leave behind. The notions of Holden's angst and alienation justify the concept of vacillation and deepen the psychological and mental disorder of his oscillatory time and age. In short, this article aims to give a comprehensive account of the ambience of adolescents and how certain psychological and social conditions are crystalized behind their vacillation.

Keywords: Adolescence, adulthood, Holden Caulfield, maturity, post-war, vacillation.

INTRODUCTION

Vacillation is a matter of either forward or backward but not in between. In other words, it is the questions of 'What would be if?' and 'How it will be if?' In *The Catcher in the Rye*, it is the inability to return to childhood or adapt to adults on the other hand. However, having an attention on how the age rate is volatile hesitantly does not mean that the article will focus mainly on the vacillated manners. On the contrary, much interest will be addressed to the stimuli and reactions of these attitudes. In a more straightforward manner, the discussion will concentrate on the effects of surrounding and past and present conditions of 1950s American society. Due to the nature of writing literary researches, the ideal model of presenting this paper would be critical and psychological and realistic analysis.

The *Catcher* is the novel that revolves around the reeling identity of Holden Caulfield and his unusual inclinations in his schools and New York during the post-war era. He is an exceptional character for the proliferating sites of his constant vacillation. As an anxious hero, he is the product of his obstinacy as well as his inability to cope with his surroundings of phonies. His vacillation partly springs from his nostalgia for his childhood where he was far from the hypocrisy of growing up stage, and partly from his longing to delve into the world of maturity and beyond. Soon after its publication in 1951, *Catcher* does not get the full entitlement and merits it deserves. On the contrary, it had negatively perceived by the readers especially the parents for it contains profanities that will encourage their sons to corrupt. Later, it gained its prestigious position and people start to consider it equal to other great post-war novels. This sudden appreciation was the result of the consecutive discussions and analysis of its context through which its moral and political connotations have been still unveiling.

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It is worth noting that Salinger's *Catcher* came in opposition to some American norms and values which were remarkably sacred in 1950; "Holden's critical image of post-war America is suggested throughout people's dissent from their social norms (Yahya and Babae, 2014, p. 1826). He explicitly transcends the taboos on the account of his novel success. For countless times, the novel was prohibited from publication and from reading in schools, libraries and academic centres, mainly for its obscene language and sexual scenes that violate the nature of American social codes at that time. In this research, Holden represents the vacillation that the American people are exposed to in the aftermath of war. His fluctuation is a normal impact of his uncertain identity and the confusion and despair of his post-war community.

The subsequent analytical discussion will take a place to find out the poles between which Holden Caulfield is vacillating. Holden is the archetypal adolescent for his vacillation between different decisions and situations, mainly between his past as a child and his forthcoming maturity. Holden constantly attempts to practice adult manners like smoking, drinking and going into clubs. Simultaneously, he acts like a child every time he has been in contact with an adult situation. This elucidates how he is puzzled about whether to live as a grown-up adult or stay a child. Therefore, Holden's stage of adolescence engages him with fits of inconstancy and with a question of what identity he should encompass to eliminate phoniness.

1. Vacillation in J. D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye*

Soon after being expelled from his school of Pencey because of his flunking, Holden Caulfield has been set in a quagmire of his vacillation between the worlds of adulthood and childhood. Samira Sasani and Parvaneh Javidnejat explain that he "is neither adult nor child; this being stuck in between the continuum makes him confused and results in his incapacity to act adequately where and when needed" (2015, p. 209). Similarly, Howard M. Harper in his tracing of Holden's condition states that he is "conscious of being trapped in the no-man's-land between two worlds, between his beautiful but impossible ideals and a sordid but inescapable reality" (1967, p. 69). Like a nomadic herdsman, his movement is not linear and void of destination. Once he is lost and while he internally aspires to his childhood, a shift from being an adult to his real age is taken apart. This sort of dispersion has not often been explained distinctly and few studies indicated Holden as a product of his vacillation. An aspiration to his mature identity tends him to resort intermittingly to his childhood questing for a refuge from the phoney sphere of maturity.

At an early stage in the novel, Holden's identity is early examined by his history teacher at Pencey, Mr. Spencer. This confrontation generates sessions of great significance to the structure of the novel. These conversations contribute to understanding some of Holden's nature as well as the settings of his failure that compelled him to leave Pencey. In his reaction to Holden's responses, Mr. Spencer moulds up a paradigm of a slack boy who strives to realize his existence. Yet, he is living in his presence and still vacillates between what he was and what he would like to be. To clarify, Mr. Spencer discovers Holden's indecisiveness when he asked him if he has particular qualms to leave Pencey. Here, Holden could not define a certain satisfying reason, but only because it does not hit him. That blurred answer justifies his vacillation and his inability to have specific decisions. He is not able to find the arguments that may sustain his position as a teenager but only thinks beyond his age. Another significant aspect of Holden's vacillation is his recurrence of words and phrases sometimes. This repetition is probably an assertion of his inability to decide and consequently define his vacillation. To illustrate, Holden's vacillation is maintained when Mr. Spencer asks him about his feeling toward the ambiguity of his future. He perplexedly recurs what he tries to say as if he is not certain of his answer that consequently reflecting his wobbly identity; "Do you feel absolutely no concern for your future, boy?" "Oh, I feel some concern for my future, all right. Sure. Sure, I do." I thought about it for a minute. "But not too much, I guess. Not too much, I guess." (Salinger, Ch. 2, 1994, p. 12). In return, old Spencer, in terms of parenthood, rebukes him for his oscillation and inability to take action; "I'd like to put some sense in that head of yours. I'm trying to help you" (p. 12, 13). In such a context, vacillation has become not only an accidental action but a problematic matter for Holden.

In his companionship with Old Stradlater, Holden keeps behaving like an old one too. He tries to prove his masculinity and revive the premature violence of his manhood. To preserve his aspiration to be an adult, Holden involves himself in some controversial discussions which might elevate him from his adolescence. Affairs and wading into conversations with girls were one of the mature aspects that Holden shared with Stradlater to take part a scope in the world of adults. Meanwhile, he invokes the innocent times of childhood and how purification was the title of daily life. Amid Holden's loss, he gets involved in a dispute with Stradlater with whom he violently hurts with blood all over his face and body. Despite this, a look of pride in his mirror is the predominant sense of himself as a mature of resistance and action. This feeling of precocity does not exclude him from adolescent acts in his reaction to Stradlater. Several times, he utters 'moron' to compensate for his lack of sobriety that a mature should characterize. Having the qualities of a man does not necessarily eliminate the facets of adolescence that Holden already has. Salinger explains this act of vacillation in the last of chapter six when Holden regarded his squandered blood as a sign of his maturity. He illustrates that Holden internally declares his manhood when he eliminates his pacifisms and writes that his bloody scene "partly scared me and it partly fascinated me. All that blood and all sort of made me look rough" (Ch. 6, 1994, p. 40)

To exceed his desolate stage of adolescence, Holden starts an unparalleled admiration with a lady riding next to him on their way to Trenton called Mrs. Morrow. He fluctuates between his age as a boy and his endeavour to justify his puberty he eagerly looks to be even with a woman around 45 years old. Interacting with her elucidates that he considers things more seriously than a boy at his age should behave. Holden, for instance, invites her to have a cocktail in a club and this attracts the attention of the lady expressing:

"Dear, are you allowed to order drinks?" "Well, no, not exactly, but I can usually get them on account of my height ... and I have quite a bit of gray hair" (Salinger, Ch. 8, 1994, p. 51)

Similarly and under the same stimulus, Holden seeks to define himself in a different context of age when he tries to lure a woman called Faith Cavendish. Again, his transitory stage and craving to experience what he might be thrust him to place in a timid situation in his calling Faith later at night. He pretends to be with a mature voice to come beyond his real identity; "I made my voice quite deep so that she wouldn't suspect my age" (Salinger, Ch. 9, 1994, p. 57). This swinging is what distracts Holden from being rational in his conduct and thinking. However, living in hesitant conditions is what characterizes Holden as a model of his unsettled society of the post-war time. The vacillated manner of Holden turned him into three personas to which he does not belong but only to one. The first figure is in the childhood stage which has temporally left behind. His real age is his second figure which is his adolescent age of 16 years old for which he strives to avoid and fails to transit. In his third figure, Holden reincarnates as a man of 21 years old, the age that he fails to adapt with. This contradiction and the precarious transits of personage that Holden exemplifies is one of the images of vacillation. To appear older than his real age is the preoccupation of Holden in an attempt to engross the attention and sustain his shaky identity on the other hand. In the course of time, Holden strips of his real age as escaping from a stigma. This evasion gradually turns into a syndrome that subsequently aggravates his concerns about vacillation. It is, in fact, the symptoms of most adolescents in the world. In return, it requires an indirect observation from the guardian who is in charge of this age group to have a health condition instead of a syndrome. In chapter two, Holden's real age obliges him to wobble into various attitudes and he admits that he is puzzled to determine his age:

I act quite young for my age sometimes. I was sixteen then, and I'm seventeen now, and sometimes I act like I'm about thirteen. It's really ironical, because I'm six foot two and a half and I have gray hair. I really do. The one side of my head –the right side – is full of millions of gray hairs. I've had them ever since I was a kid. And yet I still act sometimes like I was only about twelve (Salinger, 1994, p.8).

In alignment with Holden's speech, one could note his repetition of some words and phrases that unconsciously indicates his vacillation. Certain words, which are unnoticeably in their own right, have their positive or negative effects on the embodiment of a person. Such words are 'concerns', 'guess', 'qualms', 'but', are frequent in his speech that tacitly denotes his intermittent vacillation. Linguistically, Donald Costello contends the importance of Holden's language to convey his personality through his voice. He points out that certain phrases come to suggest important aspects of his personality through his frequent repetition. (1959, p. 172).

2. Between Sexuality and Masculinity: A Vacillated Attitude

The sexual manner is one of the mechanisms that Holden pursued in his quest for a mature identity. During his meeting with girls, Holden seeks to use them as a pier to his aspirations of an adult identity. Over the three days he spends in New York, Holden has offers of indulging in a liaison. Such enticements are a pitfall for his age and simultaneously an opportunity for him to figure out the other world of manhood; "I sort of figured this was my big chance . . . I could get in some practice on her, in case I ever get married or anything" (Salinger, Ch. 13, 1994, p. 51). However, the involvement of minors in a relationship is what Salinger implicitly warns to get into.

As far as sexual vacillation is concerned, it is Holden who interpolates into transient affairs that embed the concept of his uncertainty. The lack of mature stoicism, as well as his superficiality, is what makes Holden frequently hesitate to speak especially with girls. In chapter thirteen, Salinger narrates this vacillation between his desire and virginity of his experience in more than one position; "I was starting to feel pretty sexy and all, but I was a little nervous" (p. 83). Salinger seemingly aims to define Holden according to his sexual poignancy and ability to cope with girls older than him in age. While he is with girls not of his age, shadows of childhood appear to him as an alarm not to surge or rush over. Apparently, Holden is a man and able to engage in physical and spiritual relationships. In reality and in terms of maturity and his behaviour, he is still a virgin and frequently vacillates in his paces as much as he acts the role of an adult. In a unique narrative style, Holden addresses the reader as an actual companion in the novel and reveals his veritable identity that coincides with his age; "if you want to know the truth, I'm a virgin. I really am. I've had quite a few opportunities to lose my virginity and all, but I have never got around to it yet" (p. 83).

The premonition of not completing a certain experience contributes to expanding the chasm of vacillation in the novel. So, all of Holden's stumbles and pitfalls to assert his mature persona are perceived as fits of vacillation between his present and forthcoming age. Moreover, his doubts that do not parallelize with his peers' guys compel him grudgingly to stop some of his aspirations to be older; "They tell me to stop, so I stop. I always wish I hadn't" (p. 85). To illustrate,

he abstains from meeting with a prostitute in his room of the hotel where he has been lodging, but as quickly as he changes his mind and decides to be with her as she knocks at his door. This volatility in decisions manifests the mind scope of oscillation of an adolescent like Holden. Embarrassment and peculiarity are innately rooted in Holden's individuality as a teenager, particularity in his confrontation with girls with whom he recalls his innocence. He always thinks that he is nonchalant enough to wade into corporal and incorporeal relationships. However, he soon clings to his nature of innocence and internally declares that "Sexy was about the last thing I was feeling. I felt much more depressed than sexy" (p. 86) The turmoil of emotions that Holden has during his vacillation does not confine exclusively to girls but exceeds to his male friends Stradlater and Robert Ackley. He vacillates between his reluctance and his longing for them at the same time. This attitude justifies Holden's vacillation that he is irresolute, in other words, he cannot capture one certain emotion, but only fluctuates between; "we see Holden vacillating through five chapters between Ackley and Ward Stradlater, the equally unacceptable model of male aggressiveness" (Bloom, 2008, p. 10). Likewise, Salinger alludes to this state of vacillation in the final chapters when Holden yearns for Stradlater and Ackley, the guys he hates at Pencey: I don't hate too many guys. What I may do, I may hate them for a little while, like this guy Stradlater I knew at Pencey or this other boy, Robert Ackley. I hated them once in a while- I admit it- but it doesn't last too long, is what I mean. After a while, if I didn't see them, if they didn't come in the room, or if I didn't see them in the dining room for a couple of meals, I sort of missed them. I mean I sort of missed them, (Ch. 24, 1994, p. 168).

Commenting on the impact of sex on vacillation, James Bryan confirms Holden's state of vacillation when he considers his concerns with adult sexuality or corruption as equal to that of children's innocence (1974, p. 1068). That is, he is hovering to be mature and longing for the innocence of childhood at the same time. According to Joel Salzberg, The "confused feelings about Phoebe" (1990, p. 110) is another state of sexual vacillation that Salinger followed to emphasise his protagonist's inconstancy. To Holden, Phoebe is seemingly considered as a pier to the adult world and also as a refuge to his innocence. Sarah Graham sums up Holden's sexual fluctuations in the following observation: "At 16, Holden has transferred his sexual focus from his mother to his sister in a process that will eventually allow him to focus on other women. His desire for his sister is a product of his yearning for innocence and his developing adult sexuality." (2007, p. 85).

As a dreamer, Holden moves on in his illusion of being a man and keeps vacillating towards increasing his intensity and sense of personal worth. Huber discusses Holden's act of magnification as 'masculine protest' which paves for a rebellion against himself and his age as an adolescent. Based on his stereotypical masculinity, the obscene language that Holden undertakes in his interactions with phonies is taken as a sign of manhood. Holden keeps using profanities but mostly vacillates to recall his sister as a source of innocence to take him back to her world of childhood (1984, p. 127, 28). Meanwhile, he keens to protect his masculinity from being scratched or thwarted as a consequence of his innocence. This ambivalence of Holden is the justification of his qualms of vacillation as, for instance, his relationship with a girl called Sally Hays. Sara Graham admits that "The uncertainty of Holden's masculinity is reflected in his ambivalent attitude to women" (2007, p. 111). To elucidate, Holden has again vacillated between two choices in his relationship with women. This time, he attracts Sally and feels, at the same, time that she repels him; "she gave me a pain in the ass, but she was very good looking" (Salinger, Ch. 15, 1994, p. 96). He, therefore, starts to negotiate his sexual and innocent feelings toward her. In other words, it is whether to consider her as a mother as she is older than him or as a sexual partner. This doubt diverts his emotions and compels him to vacillate between his two dominant stereotypes of attitudes. Here, Sara Graham demonstrates how the concept of vacillation is crystallized in Holden's connection with Sally Hays: While the novel slots Sally into the two dominant stereotypes of women available in 1950s America (sexual object and mother), Holden's vacillation between the two, his reluctance to see Sally simply as a sexual partner, expresses his ambivalence towards a dominant model of Manhood ... Holden cannot play the role of adult partner successfully and, when he suggests running away with Sally to New England ... she refuses ... At this point, Holden's perception of her as desirable shifts and he repositions her as a judgmental mother. (2007b, p. 111, 112)

Concerning his sexual and masculine attitudes, Holden finds himself immersed in two bitter images. It is of being masculine with pain or to satisfy his normality with anxiety. Accordingly, Holden vacillates between his desire and repulsion and his leaping from one image to another is the plight of his existence; "Holden's vision of masculinity vacillates between images of safe but suffocating straight 'normality' and that of 'deviant' sexuality, which only seems another dead end" (Graham, 2007, p. 92). Besides, Sara Graham appends that his vacillation to be sexual or not will finally end him up to a closeted gay man; "his constant movement [vacillation] between desire and repulsion in relation to masculinity and sexuality may be interpreted as a sign of queer diversity" (92).

3. Psychological and Post-War Vacillation

Psychologically, Holden finds himself in a vacillated position of his being conscious and sometimes unconscious. Much of these reversals result from his inner struggle between the poles of adulthood and childhood. For Carl Stauch, Holden is afflicted with mental illness or what is called 'Neurosis'. Having symptoms of alienation, anxiety and depression are adequate components to have a vacillation. Howard M. Harper explains that "the psychopathic forces

get deeper and deeper in the alienated man in America that is doomed to be threatened or gotten desperate by a post-war chaotic universe" (1967, p. 44). Throughout Holden's yearning for both his childhood and maturity, Salinger implicitly attracts the attention of readers to post-war outcomes. He contends how a return to normal life has become a wish and how the future will be awful and phoney in post-war times. Salinger wittingly implies the casualties of post-war times when Holden describes his place of residence at the hotel; "The whole lobby was empty. It smelled like fifty millions dead cigars. It really did. I was sleepy or anything, but I was feeling sort of lousy. Depressed and all. I almost wished I was dead" (Ch. 15, 1994, p. 82).

Another point to be mentioned here is that Phoebe, Holden's sister, and the world of phonies he quite abominates constitute the two extremes he is in conflict with. This neurotic deterioration stimulates his apprehension of falling into adulthood's corruption. However, he finally realizes that he can stay combined with innocence through his contact with the world of the childhood of his sister with whom he starts vacillating and to whom he has finally settled. Holden's vacillation is the obsession that "resolved in a climax beginning in Phoebe's bedroom ... and ending at the caroused after Holden has refused to let her run away with him" (Bloom, 2008, p. 14, 15). Some psychoanalytical interpretations have emerged to focus on the issue of sex which acts as one of Holden's key concerns that leads him to vacillate repeatedly. Brain Way accentuates that the reason behind Holden's 'mental collapse' is his thwarted endeavours to have 'sexual satisfaction (962, p. 77). These attempts set the psychological disorders that Holden sometimes passes through and thus his tottering is conspicuously interpreted.

Holden has psychologically analysed in terms of inferiority and superiority complexes as well. In 1984, R. J. Huber accentuates Holden as a victim of the circumstances of his society and that he overstates the passivity to mitigate his feeling of inferiority. Although his contentedness that he is useless, he dreams to be 'the catcher in the rye' to have a superior position and to put an end to his vacillation to the other part of his identity. He pictures himself as a saviour or a god in an attempt to cover his actual inferiority. However, Harold Bloom urges that vacillation is scientifically inherent in humans and it "normally comes at puberty and that is so much more painful when it occurs as late as sixteen" (2008, p. 14). Based on this notion, one can deduce that vacillation is innate and natural in human beings and it will aggravate more as it comes late to a person. In *Catcher in the Rye*, it has explained as a psychological state and sometimes as a habit maybe, so as Salinger states that Holden doesn't like when somebody "sticks to the point all the time" (Ch. 24, 1994, p. 165). However, this conception does not necessarily imply to all adolescents and, at the same time, will not stop vacillation to be an outcome of certain traumas such as war.

As a state of mind, Holden's vacillation is a psychological stimulus that gradually carries him to his anxiety. An attempt to recapture the past has unconsciously made Holden think of the next of his age. The liminal position that he has been in constitutes nothing but a transitory stage that he and other adolescents should adapt to avoid the deleterious vacillation of personal settings. For Holden, the role of a teenager is the undesirable juncture in his life that gradually generates a revolt and inconstancy which, consequently, takes its effects on his identity identification. Therefore, he has become in a "relentless vacillation between self-doubt and self-aggrandizement" (Mcnamara, 2001, p. 8).

By evoking the experiences of a young man, Salinger undertakes the novel to reveal the trajectory of post-war settings in America. In previous studies, great effort has been devoted to the study of *Catcher* as a product of the post-World War II traumas of American society. Sarah Graham, for example, points out that some critics such as Marvin Laser and Norman Fruman were "interested in what the novel implied about post-war society and, in particular, the experience of young people" (2007, p. 80). The novel is thus a prediction for the forthcoming of life that will stand from an early age of people. It is further a perspective for the "enormous changes in American society in the decades following the Second World War" (82). Against what has already been known about Holden, the Ohmams refute that Holden is a typical teenager and instead argue that he is only the outcome of a specific time and place (1976, p. 19, 20). In their debate, they exclude Holden as a universal figure and rather employ him as a creation. They imply that he appears to act on behalf of post-war American males regardless of their age and gender. The hardships and vacillation that occurred in the novel offer the same world of post-war people of the 1950s that Salinger tacitly depicted throughout the perplexed life of Holden. *Catcher* is a coming of age novel while its context is an echo of post-war reality. In connection with American society and between Holden and the cold war, on the other hand, Leerom Medovoi focuses on the 1950s conditions of young culture. He regards the USA as similar to Holden in terms of its inconsistencies. It is as vibrant as Holden that both import confusion to form what is called vacillation (1997, p. 255).

The novel came to prominence only when it implied indications of psychological and mental disturbances in people. The rapid change in post-war American society eradicates the community's peace of mind. This radical change becomes a reason behind people's vacillated manner of life. Unlike Holden, Americans have swung towards one destination only. They incline toward a brighter future than their recent times of Great Depression spanned from 1929 to 1939, and a vivid reality better than their post-war presence. So, the phoney world is permeated in every era of their decades and all are the consequences of both the First and Second World Wars. Moreover, the definition of the post-war

era has already been indirectly explored through Holden's abusive words and phrases he used in the novel. More specifically, immediately after the end of the war in 1945, people's aspirations were poignantly influenced by the devastation of their presence and by the gloomy expectations of their near future.

Taking account of Holden's vacillation, one could reasonably infer the extent of contradictions of people in post-war times. Out of Holden, Salinger writes some insinuations of alienation, depression and psychological illnesses. Such traumatic conditions have effects on people's inability to coexist and consequently not to accept each other. In their vacillation between the disenchantment of their society and the ambition for a better reality, post-war American people find Holden's wobbling as a counterpart for their distresses and a resemblance to their social instability as well. In a concise exposition, the vacillation of Holden is typical of the post-war period that spanned from the late 40s to the late 50s that is significantly exacerbated in the early stage of the 50s. Salinger employed this period to give an account of how people were up the spout and how they were absent in their presence. Jack Salzman points out that *Catcher*; "may be identified with the ant-establishmentarian attitudes of fifties intellectuals ... it is demonstrably a product of the forties ... *The Catcher in the Rye* is itself a war novel once removed, a subliminal war novel in which not a shot is fired" (1991, p. 25)

CONCLUSION

Exemplifying the stage of adolescence and post-war American society is what Salinger intended to deliver to his readers. Being lost and indecisive in the adolescent stage is as equal to that of post-war people's state of mind. The novel is, therefore, not only to spot the light on the premonitions of adolescents in their critical age but further on the psychological and mindful conflicts of post-war times and how people have been living in a vacillated manner. The vacillation of Holden is transient that changes with moving to the other stage of life unless it is an innate ailment. The climax of Holden's vacillation culminates in the repulsion of his choices, especially in his encounter with hardships and the phoniness of the adults. In other words, he continuously dissents from the world he has already chosen to move to the other part of his identity. Thus, Holden's sporadic individuality that springs from his transitory stage constitutes the main reason for his vacillation.

Having a lot of spare time for a flunking boy, like Holden, distracts his attention from the cognitive distinction that he should obtain instead of idling. This unproductive demeanour becomes an exhortation to the whole generation of Holden's age to avoid and, in return, to employ their time discreetly. Salinger follows conspicuous indications for the waste of time as when Holden hangs around in the street of New York; "I had a lot of time to kill" (p. 123). Thus, Holden has been misled into a swamp of alternatives, whether to act his age but ignored or to perform as an adult and considered. This intellectual wobble creates the concept of vacillation in the novel. To sum up, it is how Holden waves into different options of his mind and how he keeps the spirit of his age concurrently. Such a conflict compels Holden, sometimes, to swing in an endless whirlpool. By his vacillation and the multiple deadlocks of his adaptation, Holden could scrupulously find out his dismantled identity and succeeds, ultimately, to determine his destination.

In short, Holden's constant vacillation between innocence and corruption poles manifests his inconclusive state of mind. His vacillation shows an explicit paradox in the novel. That is, while he exerts an effort to maintain his impetuous transition to adulthood, a yearning for the innocent life of childhood is substantially incubated. Besides, Salinger alludes to war and its ramification through the deviation of Holden from the moral and social codes as well as for his mental vacillation that rates as a feature of post-war people. In related references, it was observed that curiosity is a paramount concern of Holden that ultimately leads him to a life of angst and depression which in turn revives his vacillation. Throughout Holden's manner of vacillation, Salinger exposed his readers to the plight of disparity in both age and social conditions. His yearning to explore what lies in the aftermath of his age is the metaphor for the eagerness of post-war American people to have a world void of contradiction and phoniness. The last point to tackle here is that Holden's rebellion against his contemporary age places him in ambivalent situations and leads to psychiatric disturbances sometimes: As a preacher, I think Salinger casts the light on the age group of adolescents for moral and didactic purposes more than narrative objectives.

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