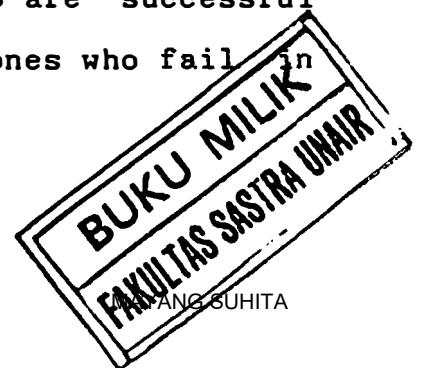


## CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

### A. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Each person must undergo his or her developmental stages of life; he or she must move from one stage of life to another. One of the stages of life is 'adolescence', a period in which an adolescent has to leave his childhood and begins to move to adult world. The search for identity in this period, then, arises because adolescents are forced to be able to integrate past experiences and to identify with their present role expectations; they are also expected to actively seek perspective on their functions as adult members of society. Therefore, the search for identity becomes an unavoidable experience in adolescent life.

The search for identity itself among today's adolescents is much more complicated than before. It is because these adolescents have to live in modern society with its much more complex people and their various problems. These circumstances then drive them to experiment with many kinds of roles, work, attitudes, and values that might wholly fit them. The result that can be found in our society, then, is not only adolescents who are successful in attaining self-identity, but also the ones who fail in



the discovery of self and being trapped in a state of role confusion.

This phenomenon, then, is brought up by some writers into their literary works. They think that literature is the right medium to express their ideas and their concerns about these adolescent matters. As the result, so many literary works emerge as the expression of an age group. In this case, the novels of twentieth century seem to be richer than other period in history in expressing a segmented spirit, the spirit of an age group, social group, or racial group and not the spirit of an entire society in a particular phase of history. At this point, novels, then, can certainly be used as a tool for the better understanding of a departed age. The unrest and bewilderment of the young in the period after World War II still speak in novels like J.D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* (Anthony Burgess 131).

*The Catcher in the Rye* itself is a modern novel which talks about an adolescent boy of sixteen, a native New Yorker, named Holden Caulfield, who runs away from his boarding school as a part of his long protest. Being unwilling to go home, he decides to drift about in New York City for a few days, getting himself into a series of adventures in which he finds a great abundance of phonies. *The Catcher in the Rye* was received by critics and

reviewers as a literary sensation when it first appeared in July, 1951. Since its publication, a large mass of critical opinion has grown up around this controversial novel. Some of the criticism has resulted from Salinger's use of inappropriate expressions in the story such as profanity, atheism, and homosexuality. Salinger's purpose is actually very moral by using these controversial matters. It even becomes his weapon in building his main character, Holden Caulfield, as an adolescent boy drifting about in New York for three days, who becomes depressed over the great abundance of phonies he finds in adult world.

Jerome David Salinger as the writer of *The Catcher in the Rye*, has been admitted as the one whose writing is original, first rate, serious and beautiful. He has a saving grace of humor that makes even his somber stories very pleasant reading. In the *Saturday Review* Granville Hicks states that for the college generation of the Fifties, Salinger has the kind of importance that Scott Fitzgerald and Ernest Hemingway had for the young people of the Twenties. He is not a public figure as they were; but he is felt as a presence, a significant and congenial presence, therefore, there are millions of young Americans who feel closer to Salinger than to any other writer (qtd.

in Curley, Kramer and Kramer 121). In *Nation* David L. Stevenson notes that Salinger's characters exist outside the charmed circle of the well-adjusted, and their thin cries for love and understanding go unheard (ibid 120). In J.D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* this characterization will be found in its main character, Holden Caulfield.

It is obvious, then, that the power of the story is on its characterization. In the novel Salinger creates Holden Caulfield, the main character and the narrator of *The Catcher in the Rye*, supplying the angle from which the 'phonies' of his world can be viewed and judged, his world that can be understood only in terms of his attitude toward it, the impact of incidents and people on him, the kind of language he brings to his narrative, and his age and consequent limitations (Guerin et al. 82). At this point, Salinger depicts his main character as a complex one like that of all human beings, therefore, difficult to judge (Frangedis 75). He also portrays his hero having a spiritual illness characterized by the individual's inability either to distinguish between important and unimportant experiences or to realize that he cannot retain them all. Therefore, his ideal heroes are usually doomed either to suicide or insanity, or to moral dissolution.

The experience of Holden Caulfield who acts as the

representative of adolescent group in the story is described clearly by J.D. Salinger : how he passes through his adolescence, how he has to search for his identity in adult world, and how he has to face a lot of difficulties and confusion in his search for identity. All these points then not only bring J.D. Salinger into his success in winning the attention and admiration of youth but also put *The Catcher in the Rye* into a status symbol among discontented adolescents (*Webster's Guide to American History* 1214). What makes *The Catcher in the Rye* interesting to be analyzed is not only because it appears as the expression of adolescent group but also as a serious art from which we can get help to understand our experience.

#### B. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Based on the background of the study above, it is interesting to analyze the problems of the main character as an adolescent who has to search for his identity in adult world. The problems to be analyzed in this study are formulated into these following questions :

- a. What is the significance of the main character's experience in his adolescence ?
- b. How does the main character search for identity ?

### C. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

Referring to adolescent matters, this analysis attempts to reveal what has been experienced by the main character of the novel, who acts as the representative of adolescent group. It is also to know how the main character searches for his identity in adult world where he found a great abundance of phonies which makes him become a frightened, confused and depressed young adolescent.

### D. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

By this study which is concerned with adolescent matters, the readers are expected to get a clear description of adolescent experience especially their experience in going through the search for identity. It is hoped then that adolescents can find *The Catcher in the Rye* as the reflection of their lives and try to take a lesson from it.

It is also expected that this analysis can give a new insight to the readers of *The Catcher in the Rye* who have complaint against it especially for its controversial elements such as homosexuality, profanity, and atheism. It then means to bring them completely accept *The Catcher in the Rye* as a good literature which can help us to understand what is undergone by our today's adolescents.

## E. SCOPE AND LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

In this study, the analysis concentrates on the main character of the novel, Holden Caulfield, about how he passes through his adolescence in which he has to search for his identity and how he has to deal with a lot of difficulties and confusion in his search for identity.

The analysis is not only focused on the character himself but also the social setting of the novel emphasizing on the social context of the main character such as his family, school, and friends. It is aimed to get a description of the relationships of the main character with the other characters in the story, especially how he interacts with them and how it influences him in his position as an adolescent who tries to find a meaningful place in adult society.

## F. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

This study concerns the analysis of the intrinsic elements of the novel, that are the character of Holden Caulfield as the main character of *The Catcher in the Rye*, who searches for identity in adult world, and the social setting of the novel which emphasizes on the social context of the main character. Therefore, the intrinsic approach is applied to the analysis.

It is appropriate then to support the analysis by

using the psychological and sociological backgrounds. The psychological background is used to explain or analyze the complexity of the main character of the story who experiences so many psychological pressures especially in his search for identity. It can be understood easier, then, by applying Erik Erikson's theory. And the sociological background is also used in the analysis because it will help us to give a description of the relationships of the main character with the other characters and also to see its influence on the main character's discovery of self. The concepts of personality development from C.H. Cooley and G.H. Mead are then applied to the analysis.

#### G. METHOD OF THE STUDY

To analyze the problems, the library research that is a process of finding information which are important to help directing the research is needed. The data and information are collected from various books, encyclopedias, articles, and any kinds of materials related to J.D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye*.

The method used in the analysis is 'descriptive analysis method', that is the descriptive explanation of the problems through characters' dialogues, events and actions. This method is applied based on the novel itself



and also supported by other related information.

#### H. DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

There are several terms which appear often in *The Catcher in the Rye*, and they are :

Phony : a person who is pretending or claiming to be what he or she is not.

Phoniness : the quality or state of being phony.

Search for identity : a sense of who one is and what one is to do with one's life.

## CHAPTER II

# THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK