

CHAPTER II

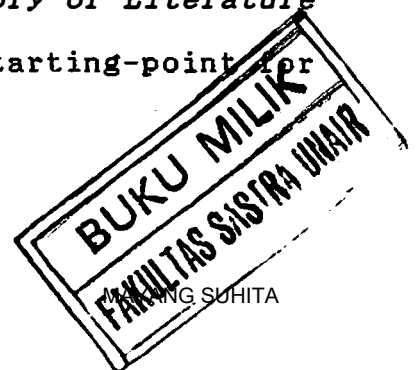
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study attempts to analyze the search for identity of Holden Caulfield as the main character in *The Catcher in the Rye*. To analyze the problems, the intrinsic approach is used since the study focuses on the inner elements of the novel, those are character and setting emphasizing on the social setting.

To deepen the analysis of the main character's search for identity, the psychological background supported by Erik Erikson's theory is needed. And to know better the relationships of the main character with the other characters in the story and its influence on his search for identity, the sociological background supported by theories of personality development from Charles Horton Cooley and George Herbert Mead will be also used. By applying these theories and backgrounds, it is hoped that a vivid description of the experience of Holden Caulfield in his adolescence in which he searches for identity can be achieved.

A. INTRINSIC APPROACH

René Wellek and Austin Warren in *Theory of Literature* stated that "the natural and sensible starting-point for



work in literary scholarship is the interpretation and analysis of the works of literature themselves" (139). This statement then leads to the understanding that the emphasis of literary works is the analysis of the intrinsic elements, such as plot, theme, character and setting. And the study will concentrate on these two elements, character and setting--which emphasizes on the social setting.

The intrinsic approach is then used to find the character of Holden Caulfield as an adolescent who searches for identity and the setting which influences him especially in his discovery of self. The analysis of the main character itself is viewed from his positions as an individual and as an adolescent--his position as the member of society.

A.1. Character

Richard Gill in his *Mastering English Literature* revealed that characters in novels have been specially created by authors. They do so by selecting some aspects of ordinary people, developing some of those aspects while playing down others, and putting them together as they please. The result is not an ordinary person but a fictional character who only exists in the words of the novel. There are some characters whom readers feel they

know very well. They seem alive, independent and, in many cases, original. At this point, the readers will come to a feeling that there are some similarities in the novel and in reality so that they can follow both the characters and the story very well (90-91).

Even though Holden Caulfield may not really exist in reality, his character which is so complex like that of all human beings in real world makes him easy to follow. Therefore, the readers can also find it easy to see Holden Caulfield's life as the reflection of their own lives.

A.2. Setting

Richard Gill has explained in his *Mastering English Literature* that *setting* is a broad word. It covers the places in which characters are presented; the social context of characters, such as their families, friends and class; the customs, beliefs and rules of behavior of their society; the scenes that are the background or the situation for the events of the novel; and the total atmosphere, mood or feel that is created by these. Thus, we may find ourselves having to talk about, for instance, the social setting of a novel, or the way in which landscape is used as a setting within the book (106).

The analysis of setting in this study will, then,

help us to see how society or people around the main character, Holden Caulfield, give him a big influence not only on his attitudes, his way of thinking and acting but also his personality development which finally comes to affect his discovery of self.

B. PSYCHOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

In *Theory of Literature* René Wellek and Austin Warren has explained that the study of the psychological types and laws presenting within works of literature is included in *psychology of literature* (81). It means that psychology can illuminate the creative process or in other words, psychology can be used to interpret and evaluate the literary works themselves.

Psychology deals with human mental and emotional processes, focusing primarily on individual experience (Kornblum and Julian 5). Therefore, this approach supported by Erik Erikson's theory which concerns the adolescent's search for identity is applied to the analysis since it not only helps to discuss the problems of Holden Caulfield as an adolescent who searches for identity but also his psychological states as an emotionally disturbed young adolescent, which finally influence his relationships or his interaction with others.

B.1. Erik Erikson's Theory

Erik Erikson contended that each stage of life has its own psychosocial task, each has its own problems and conflicts. For adolescents, the task is to synthesize their past, present, and their future possibilities into a clear sense of self. Erikson calls this attempt to establish a sense of self the adolescent's *search for identity* (Myers 95).

B.1.1. Identity Formation

Adolescents have a lengthened adolescence which has created special problems--among them, finding or forming an identity. Adolescents' major psychological task is, then, to answer the critical questions : "Who am I ? What do I want to do with my life ? What values should I live by ? What do I believe in ?"

According to Erikson, arriving at answers that provide a stable and consistent identity is essential to the adolescent's finding a meaningful place in society. And to gain this sense of identity, adolescents usually try out different "selves" in different situations (Myers 95).

For Erikson, the search for identity is the fifth of eight stages of psychosocial development. It is the stage that occurs during the adolescent years. For many young people, adolescence brings very little confusion in terms

of attitudes, beliefs, or values. Many teenagers are able and willing to accept without question the values and sense of self that they began to develop in childhood. They form their identity simply by taking on their parents' values and expectations. Some teenagers have a sense of giving up the values of parents and teachers in favor of new ones--their own. Others prefer to form a negative identity in which they define themselves in opposition to parents and society (Myers 96 and Gerow 423).

B.1.2. The Adolescent Crisis of Identity

According to Erikson events of late adolescence challenge the adolescent's self-concept, precipitating an identity crisis--the struggle to define and integrate one's attitudes, beliefs, and values should be. In this crisis, the adolescent must develop an integrated image of himself or herself as a unique person. This is done by pulling together self-knowledge acquired during childhood.

When the child moves into adolescence (roughly the ages 12-18) he will mature mentally as well as physiologically and, in addition to the new feelings, sensations and desires he experiences as a result of changes in his body, he develops a multitude of new ways of looking at and thinking about the world. Adolescents can now think of

them. At the same time they can conceive of ideal families, religions and societies which they then compare with the imperfect families, religions and societies of their own experience.

Adolescent's task now is to bring together all of the things he has learned about himself, and integrate these different images of himself into a whole that makes sense and that shows continuity with the past while preparing for the future. If he succeeds in this endeavor, he arrives at a sense of who he is, where he has been and where he is going (Elkind 9-10).

B.1.3. Role Confusion

Erikson theorized that a young person who cannot attain a sense of personal identity shows a certain amount of *role confusion*--a sense of not knowing what one is, where one belongs or who one belongs to. Some young people seek a "negative identity," an identity opposite to the one prescribed for them by their family and friends. Others may even prefer to have no identity at all.

Failure to establish a clear sense of personal identity at adolescence does not guarantee perpetual failure. On the other hand, the person who attains a working sense of ego identity in adolescence will of necessity encounter challenges and threats to that identity as he moves

through life. Life is constant change and that solving problems at any particular stage in life is not a guarantee against the occurrence of new problems (ibid 10-11). Thus, if Holden Caulfield fails to attain his self-identity in his adolescence, it does not mean that he gains a perpetual failure. On the other hand, he may be successful in attaining self-identity along with his time to undergo the next developmental stage of life, the adulthood.

C. SOCIOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

In his study *Sociology* Rodney Stark stated that sociology is the scientific study of the patterns and processes of human social relations (7). It means sociology is concerned with our daily lives which intertwine with the lives of others--what we do is influenced by those around us.

The theories of personal development from Charles H. Cooley and George H. Mead are, then, used to explain the process by which social interaction affects the development of the individual's personality. In this study, these two theories will help us to find out how Holden Caulfield's relationships with others can influence his forming of identity. In other words, these theories are impor-

tant to explain that the difficulties of Holden in interacting with others or in adjusting himself to society affects his personal development, meaning that it also affects his attaining self-identity.

Charles H. Cooley has mentioned that people transform themselves and their worlds as they engage in social interaction. This notion is best exemplified by his concept of *looking-glass self*--a process by which we imaginatively assume the stance of other people and view ourselves as we believe they see us (Zanden 70). In short, Cooley used the phrase *looking-glass self* to capture his idea that person's self-conception is based on the responses of others.

This theory then helps us to analyze the character of Holden Caulfield who often acts based on what he believes that it is what society or others want him to do or not to do.

Another theory of self development is stated by George H. Mead. In Mead's analysis, the basis of humanity is the self--the individual's active awareness of existing in the midst of society. He sees the self as inseparable from society. He asserted that the self emerges as a result of social experience. The self develops only through social experience--as one individual comes into contact with others. In the absence of such experience, the body

may grow but no self will emerge (Macionis 127-128).

D. RELATED STUDIES OF *THE CATCHER IN THE RYE*

In his study, *Salinger : A Critical and Personal Portrait*, Henry A. Grunwald informs that J. D. Salinger as a professional writer has spoken with more magic, particularly to the young, than any other U.S. writer since World War II. Almost all his fictional characters seem more real and more plausible than he (4).

In Introduction of the same book, John Aldridge views Holden as a boy who refuses to grow up, ...he fails to see as well as to learn seems utterly wrong. It is precisely because Holden does see the realities, precisely because he does recognize the phonies and perverts as a "fair average of what the culture affords" that he despairs. But he refuses to accept the situation. In other words, he is capable of "recognition" but not of "conversion."

Still in the same book Arthur Mizener comments that Salinger is probably the most avidly read author of any serious pretensions in his generation. He speaks our language, or to be exact, makes a kind of poetry out of the raw materials of our speech. He also uses with great skill the very American device of conveying meaning by describing object, gesture, and action. For him *The Catch-*

er in the Rye is a lyric monologue in which the complex feelings of an essentially static character are gradually revealed (25).

On the other hand, David L. Stevenson regards Salinger as a sociological writer whose theme is man vs. society, the individual vs. conformity. He also reveals his opinion that *The Catcher in the Rye* is a full-length novel, and yet gives much the effect of his shorter pieces. Its dimensional depth is extrinsic to the narrative, and is measured by the reader's response to the dialogue, and the background of city America. It is supplied by one's recognition that Holden Caulfield, sensitive, perceptive, is too aware of the discrepancies between the surface intentions and the submerged motives of himself and of his acquaintances to feel at ease in any world. Through him, Salinger has evoked the reader's consciousness of indefinable rejections and rebellions that are part of the malaise of our time (ibid 39-40).

CHAPTER III

HOLDEN CAULFIELD'S SEARCH FOR IDENTITY