

Holden: Salinger's inner child

Tomofumi YOKOYAMA

Introduction

As Leerom Medovoi states, *The Catcher in the Rye* (1951) seems more likely to reinject a sense of rebelliousness into the adolescent identity of young Americans. As a result, Mark David Chapman, who killed John Lennon, and John Hinckley Jr., who tried to assassinate President Reagan, say that factors of the novel lead them to do violence. They came to hate authority after reading the novel because they sympathize with Holden who has features of people who have trauma in their childhood. They have experienced trauma too, so they could not forgive society in which there is Phoniness. Holden fascinates them because they feel alienated from society as well as Holden. People who have trauma in their childhood cannot easily trust and feel alienated. A feeling of alienation from parents, friends and society make them more likely idolize Holden.

In *Homecoming* (1990), John Bradshaw calls the trauma in childhood "inner child" or "wounded inner child". Taking into consideration features of people who have inner child which Bradshaw explains, Holden's traumas would cause his antisocial behavior. Then, this paper will compare the features of inner child with Salinger's and Holden's behavior as Salinger's alter ego and prove that they are not a special antisocial hero, as Chapman believes, but only a child who has trauma in his childhood.

John Bradshaw makes clear how inner child influences people using the word of "contaminate". These are "Co-Dependence", "Narcissistic Disorders", "Trust Issue", "Acting Out/Acting In Behaviors", "Magical Beliefs", "Intimacy Dysfunctions", "Non-disciplined Behaviors", "Addictive/Compulsive Behaviors", "Thought Distortions", "Emptiness (Apathy, Depression)", and "Offensive Behaviors". This chapter will fit these factors to Salinger's and Holden's behaviors and prove that they had a wounded inner child. If these influences are recognized in people, they can be defined as having wounded inner child. Holden has many factors of the contaminates.

Co-Dependence

Bradshaw defines "Co-dependence" as the pathology of lost identity. People who develop co-dependence try to have a sense of identity without themselves. One example is that of a woman who is confided in by her boyfriend about his problem at work, and she cannot sleep on account of the talk. She feels his distress as hers. Her identity depends on

her boyfriend. Another example of co-dependence is that of people who continue to act fascinated by themselves in public. They do not notice their desire, regard themselves as ideal images for other's wish, and fulfill other's expectations. Their behavior deludes them into thinking that they fill their wants.

Co-dependence grows in unhealthy family systems. For instance, alcoholic family causes children to be co-dependent. The children observe their parents and try to adapt to the environment. As a result, the excessive caution in the family makes the children ignore their own wishes because there is no room in their heart except thinking about how to cope. As a result, a dysfunctional family arrests the development of their natural desire.

We can see a kind of co-dependence in Holden's performance like an actor. He tries to flatter in an attempt to win a person's favor. For example, on the train to New York, he encounters Ernest Morrow's mother. Holden likes her, so he uses an alias, Rudolf Schmidt. His performance begins from this moment. He tells a pack of lies about her son to give delight to her. Though he secretly thinks that "her son [Ernest Morrow] was doubtless the biggest bastard that ever went to Pency". (54) He creates another lie that "He's one of the most popular boys at Pency," (56) which is only for her happiness. No one are pleased with this lie but her. However, as the following quotation,

I'm [Holden] glad I shot it for a while, though. [...] after the crap I shot, Mrs. Morrow'll keep thinking of him now as this very shy, modest guy that wouldn't let us nominate him for president. (57)

He takes great pleasure in making her assume her son is an ideal boy, which implies that he changes his real thought and tells lies himself. He acts for her benefit. This is a feature of co-dependence. People who suffer co-dependence prefer to grant wish of others than their own. He has the symptom of co-dependence.

Narcissistic Disorders

Bradshaw documents that all children need to be loved unconditionally. Human beings grow up to the next phase by being loved. If children cannot accept love from parents, they have excessive desire for love because they become mentally handicapped owing to want of love in infancy and they cannot be satisfied with any love from others. That is, their natural narcissism is not developed. These kinds of people tend to be disappointed with human relations one after another, always seek a perfect partner who fulfills their desire of love, and become an actor or activist because of wanting for audience or followers.

Holden and Salinger are good examples of this. Holden is disappointed with all people who meet him. Though there are a lot of examples of his disappointment in this novel, giving an example, he is disheartened by even Antolini, who Holden respected,

because Antolini makes a pass at him. Moreover, he longs for an ideal girlfriend and regards Jane Gallagher as the ideal. He commits a violent act toward Stradlater who may deprive Jane of her virginity. Holden's behavior toward Stradlater means that Holden really values her and her virginity, in other words, her innocence. He places great importance on her girlfriend's virginity and purity. That is why he takes the position of her king to heart. She never moves her king, which is a basic strategy which children adopt. It is associated with people who have the naivety of a child. Furthermore, he makes a phone call to Jane many times, which implies that he is pursuing her.

Holden seems to love pure and innocent people because he would take it for granted that the people do not deny him. Sally Hayes is another of Holden's girlfriends. Though Jane makes her appearance only in Holden's recollection, Sally makes a date with him in reality. In despite of loving Jane in his mind, he is disappointed with the real Sally's behavior. His disappointment is caused by her turning down his escape from the world. Therefore, he uses offensive language to insult her. "You give me a royal pain in the ass (133)" He takes offense at her because she does not accept him and he is certain that she is not his ideal girlfriend.

Another of his ideal images of a woman is mentioned here. After being disillusioned with Antolini, Holden has delusion about his ideal life. In the delusion, he says that "I'd meet this beautiful girl that was also a deaf-mute and we (199)". He thinks the deaf-mute girl who cannot reject him with any language as ideal. She never refuses him anything because she cannot speak, which relieves Holden. This ideal image is nonsense and insubstantial. He cannot trust the words of others. His thought of escaping from words can be judged as a part of a narcissistic disorder.

Holden longs for a girlfriend who loves him intently and once he judges her as not his ideal, he abusively denies her. His rejection is caused by a narcissistic disorder, so he is soon disillusioned with people who are not pure and innocent.

Salinger has narcissistic disorder too. When he attended a school, he studied a play or drama and he wants to be an actor and make a living from it. However, he did not have talent and was not accepted. As a result, he denies actors in this novel. Though he longed for being an actor, he is disillusioned with acting because he was rejected by the world. This wish to be an actor is a factor of a narcissistic disorder.

Trust Issues

If children cannot trust their parents, they become suspicious. They always try to protect themselves and pay attention on the condition of their parents. As a result, they want to control others. They gradually turn out to be obsessed with control and cannot stand people who will not listen to what they say. Moreover, they extraordinarily have faith

in people. On one side, they naively trust people, are betrayed by them and lose their pride. On the other side, they completely keep others off.

Holden thinks that he can never put up with phony people indicates this control-desire. It is common that there is someone who people hate in community. However, Holden hates almost all people. He hates lies and an attitude to make oneself look better. It is too hard to meet his ideal. However, he wants people to be completely his ideal, which displays his intense desire for controlling people.

Holden strengthens his irritation and disillusion because he actually feels his ineffectiveness. People do not listen to what he has to say, which means making light of him. He understands that he cannot control them because he says about Spencer that "He [Spencer] wasn't even listening. He hardly ever listened to you when you said something (10)". He has conviction that the conversation partner cannot listen to him. It is clear that he feels uncomfortable about that. He takes offence at people who do not pay attention to him.

His fantasy about the deaf-mute girl indicates he is obsessed with control. A deaf-mute is handicapped, which expresses that he has advantage over her. In other words, it is easier to control her than other girlfriends. These things explain that he wants to control people. Moreover, he satisfies himself with caring for the girl because he thinks that he is required for her. He is deluded that he is loved by her.

His excessive trust in Phoebe indicates his trust issues. Needless to say, it is quite certain that he puts his trust in and loves her. There are few negative comments from Holden about Phoebe in this novel. He makes some kind of negative comments about other characters except Allie who previously died. He determinedly trust her because he confesses his real feeling without performance.

His trust depends on whether people sincerely listen to him. Holden feels that "She [Phoebe] always listens when you tell her something. And the funny part is she knows, half the time, what the hell you're talking about. (167-168)". Holden cannot rely on Spencer because Spencer does not listen to him. He believes in people who listen to and understand what he is talking about.

Once he trusts someone, he does so thoroughly. He evaluates everything about phoebe. He praises her figure, clothes, character, and notebook. His attitude toward her is love to destruction. By contrast with other people, who Holden sets a low value on, it is clear that he excessively loves Phoebe. If he can have faith in someone, his trust in her goes too far.

Antolini extremely disillusions Holden because of his excessiveness. He trusted Antolini but he rejects Antolini only because he may be gay. The event causes his

disappointment and sickness. This kind of his thought is aspect of trust issues.

Holden wants to control people and his trust is excessive. His trust issues certainly obstruct his behavior.

Acting Out / Acting In Behaviors

When people cannot express their feeling in childhood, they produce an unnatural acting. For example, a woman who experienced a fear of child abuse, and could not describe it tends to choose a similar violent man because her wounded inner child makes her think that "maybe this time I can get it right".

The other aspect of Acting Out makes people carry on idealized parental rules because their inner child forced them to give their children education which the people could not have in the best way. In Holden's fancy of his ideal life with the deaf-mute girl, he narrates that "If we [Holden and his imaginary wife] had any children, we'd hide them somewhere. We could buy them a lot of books and teach them how to read and write by ourselves. (199)" Even though that is an impossible idea, his ideal education is that they completely control their children. He makes their children acquire any information of the world by hiding them, which means he rejects all information except ones what he admits. He tries to protect them "goddam stupid useless conversations" (198) by his rejection. He dreams of the unrealizable rule.

Salinger has the unrealistic child-care rules too. He makes his children obey the rules in fact. The rule forbade his daughter, Margaret to grow up to be a woman. His ideal child is like Phoebe. He hoped his daughter to be innocent eternally. For instance, he rejected her to be mother. When Margaret became pregnant, Salinger strongly recommended that she terminate the pregnancy. Moreover, he proposed that if she didn't, he would disown her. His ideal rule was not a problem when she was a school child. However, when she started to physically and mentally grow up to be a woman, he seriously obstructed her mental growth. As a result, she was influenced for the worse, and had an eating disorder and mental problems. His strict child-care rule was likely influenced by acting-out behavior and his inner child.

Intimacy Dysfunction

People who have intimacy dysfunction fear to be controlled and are isolated forever, or refuse to leave destructive unions due to their terror of being alone. A woman cannot escape from her husband who uses domestic violence because of her intimacy dysfunction. For example, a woman remains loyal to a man who she went with for only three months and spent her life in loneliness because she lost the man in traffic accident. She used unconsciously the memory with him to deny communication with others.

Holden refuses to surrender to the phony world and strengthens his loneliness using

his memory about Allie. He regrets deeply and has strongly sense of guilt toward Allie's death. The following passages express his strong preference about Allie.

It rained on his [Allie] lousy tombstone, and it rained on the grass on his stomach. It rained all over the place. All the visitors that were visiting the cemetery started running like hell over to their cars. That's what nearly drove me [Holden] crazy. All the visitors could get in their cars and turn on their radios and all and then go someplace nice for dinner— except Allie. (155-156)

He cannot stand those people who leave Allie and go somewhere because of rain. Assuming Allie's feeling, Holden arouses indignation at them. However, making a charge against them who only take shelter from the rain and eat dinner to be priority the dead boy means his denying people real life and strong hold on Allie. Holden strengthens his feelings of dislike about others because of Allie. Saying in different words, he utilizes Allie to reject others. Edwin Haviland Miller documents that though Holden's behavior is difficult to understand, taking his act after Allie's death into consideration, readers can comprehend those. Miller states that Holden is locked into his grief about Allie's death and locked out of family and society. He has a sense of guilty because he could not save Allie from death. The sense of guilty and loss of Allie lead Holden to loneliness. His thoughts that send him into loneliness resembles people who have intimacy dysfunction.

Salinger appeared to have intimacy dysfunction too. After *The Catcher in The Rye* became a best seller, he purchased property in Cornish around the Connecticut River in New Hampshire and made a living with a little communication. His attitude toward others is an aspect of intimacy dysfunction.

Non-disciplined Behaviors

Children need parents as models for self-discipline. They learn more from what their parents actually do than preach it. When parents fail to be a model for discipline, the children become undisciplined. The children dawdle, procrastinate, refuse to delay gratification, rebel, and are self-willed and stubborn.

Holden seems to be not disciplined. As an example, after arriving at New York, he strolls in the city as aimlessly and practices soon something to take into his head. Feeling horny, he call Faith Cavendish even though this midnight. Wanting to drink, he goes a bar. Not minding money he has on hand, he makes a contribution to nuns. On the first place, he intended to waste free time in a Hotel until Christmas vacation starts. However, he drops the idea and goes back home because he wants to meet Phoebe. The kind of his behavior is a feature of undisciplined people.

Addictive/Compulsive Behaviors

Addictive/compulsive behaviors is one of the contaminates caused by a wounded

inner child. People suffers dependence to escape from trauma in childhood. They try to distract their troubles with dependence. Distracting is very important for them. The more they can distract their mental suffering with it, the more deeply involved they get. The major dependences are alcoholism and narcotism.

Holden does not develop an alcoholic, but he consumes a lot of cigarettes and alcohol. Looking into Phoebe's notebook, he says that "Then I [Holden] lit another cigarette—it was my last one. I must've smoked about three cartons that day. (161)". It is enough to judge that he is addicted to cigarettes. In addition to it, he drinks wherever he goes. He would tend to depend on something.

Not only Holden, Salinger had dependence. He depended inordinately on a cult religion. The religious precepts teach that medicine prescribed by a doctor is forbidden and recommend drinking urine. He continued to practice it. He was willing enough to follow the kinds of a strict commandments. Moreover, he forced his children to practice these and they were not permitted to go to a respectable hospital.

The three contaminates caused by wounded inner child influence his behavior. He depended on a cult religion by addictive/compulsive behaviors. He put idealized parental rules by acting out. He tried to control his family by trust issues. Inner child would deeply influence Salinger's behavior.

Thought Distortion

If children's developmental dependency needs are not fulfilled, in adulthood they are contaminated by their inner child's thought. It makes them universalize everything. Simply put, universalizing means assuming that one example applies to every pattern.

Holden tends to universalize things. For example, when Stradlater asks a favor of Holden, he says that "You take a very handsome guy, or a guy that thinks he's a real hot-shot, and they're always asking you to do them a big favor. (27)" and, when he encounters Mrs. Ernest, he says that "They're [women] always leaving their goddam bags out in the middle of the aisle". From his little experience concerned with these, he tends to make a judgment about things. In fact, all women are not always leaving their bags. His universalizing is the part of Thought Distortion.

Conclusion

This paper showed that Holden and Salinger have factors of a wounded inner child. That indicates that they would suffer from some kinds of trauma in childhood. These traumas cause them to reject to belong to society. That is, phony society doesn't make them hate everything, but they hate everything of their own accord. The world doesn't alienate them, but they themselves reject the world.

Taking these into consideration, it is wrong that Holden is regarded as an anti-social

hero. He is only a wounded child. He is suffering from his desire which he couldn't obtain in child hood, so he hates others to express his indignation. He cannot feel love. Holden is not a special character who Chapman recognizes him as but only a child who longs for love.

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