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WORLD LITERATURE

A VARIETY OF APPROACHES TO THE ANALYSIS OF THE WORK OF JEROME DAVID SALINGER IN ENGLISH CRITICISM

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Abstract

The article reviews the modern English literary criticism of the work of J.D. Salinger. The existentialist interpretation of the author's works, Marxist reading, postmodernist analysis and the analysis of works using the achievements of psychoanalysis are taken into account. The set of literary critical works is a critical reception of Salinger's work in the English-speaking world. This article can serve as a starting point for the study of the author's reception in the national literature, as well as in the study and research of the work of the American author.

Keywords: Salinger, reception, narrator, psychoanalysis, existentialist analysis, Marxist interpretation, postmodernist analysis.

The works of Jerome Salinger have repeatedly become popular in his homeland, and therefore received a variety of reviews from scholars, critics, and ordinary readers. Their combination is the reception of Salinger's work in the English-speaking world. Many academic papers have been written about Salinger, in which various research methodologies are used. After all, these works are examples of the scientific reception of Salinger's work in the English-speaking world. Thus, the review and systematization of the scope of these scientific works becomes a starting point for further analysis of the reception of Salinger's works in national literatures, determines its methodological component and becomes the subject of comparative analysis together with the national scientific approach to the work of the American writer.

The most complete and comprehensive review of the work of J. D. Salinger, in our opinion, was made in the collection «Bloom's Modern Critical Views: J. D. Salinger», compiled by Professor Harold Bloom.

In the introduction, he notes that Salinger is not so important author at the moment, and his work is the so-called period piece. [3, p. 1] – i.e. typical for only a certain historical period.

The compiler also briefly draws parallels between the work of Salinger and F. Scott Fitzgerald, Mark Twain. He highly appreciates the literary abilities of the author of «The Catcher in the Rye» but claims about hardly a persuasive fictive representation of his characters. Some works are even mocked by Bloom. For example, he admits that he was never able to read «Seymour: An Introduction» to the end due to the excessive complexity of the text by the narrator's thoughts and the lack of the story itself: «contemplation has no stories to tell» [3, p. 2].

Instead, Bloom recommends reading further scientific research, as it analyses the work of the cult American writer from various angles with the help of many modern techniques, and all together is a holistic review and analysis of Salinger's work.

James Bryan in the work «The Psychological structure of The Catcher in the Rye» conducts a detailed psychoanalysis of a novel. He argues that the work consistently demonstrates how Holden came to a nervous breakdown. The first scene of a football match is a sym-

bol of civilized human aggression, in which the teenager does not want to participate. After all, he is frightened by the imperatives of adult life, especially those related to sexuality. Holden oscillates between two poles: reversion – return to childhood and maturation – adulthood.

In this regard, according to the researcher, the whole novel, is built around impossible alternatives, personified by Holden's neighbors on campus: Ackley – as impotence (impotent), Stradlater – sexuality (sexual). Meanwhile, as many as five chapters are devoted to Holden's hesitation, during which he will continue to associate sex with death, that is, something forbidden, fatal for himself. The reason for such a persistent rejection of adulthood, according to J. Bryan, is Holden's subconscious sexual attraction to his younger sister Phoebe. Hence his desire to save the children, and Phoebe – from himself. Holden's conflict with Phoebe is an internal confrontation between the desire to protect and hurt (protecting and violating).

To prove the hypotheses, the researcher analyzes the actions, thoughts of Holden, indicative of this is also the language of the hero. After all, the closer to failure, the more confusing his speech and behavior are: «the nearer Holden's desires come to surfacing, the more hesitant his language and behavior become» [5, p. 17]. The turning point in his inner struggle is the scene in Phoebe's bedroom, where they play a mock romance. The innocence of their closeness symbolizes the maturing of Holden.

In the next article, «The Love Ethic» from «Bloom's Modern Critical Views: J. D. Salinger», David Galloway conducts a thorough existentialist analysis. The scientist justifies his choice of methodology by saying that Salinger's heroes, like Camus's absurd man, try to live by ethical standards in an indifferent nihilistic world. The difference between them is that the person of the absurd is aware of the absurdity and his struggle with reality, and Holden, Zooney, Franny and others are almost unaware of it.

Holden, in particular, commits absurd acts throughout the novel: in the face of aggressive reality, he tries to erase all obscene inscriptions on the walls to protect children from them. Such a messianic desire to protect all children naturally leads the researcher to the association of Salinger's hero with Christ: «suffering

the little children to come unto him» [8, p. 30]. Holden's defeat is due to the mutual exclusion of his intentions, their destructive contradiction – because he seeks to protect children from reality.

In addition, other Salinger's perfectionist heroes suffered from the hypocrisy of the real world, each escaping from it in his or her own way. Holden and Esme commit absurd acts, finding meaning in love. After all, Holden, ending his story, admits that he missed everyone he told about: «I sort of miss everybody I told about» [Ошибка! Источник ссылки не найден., p. 98], it denotes his need for love. In the same way, among the absurdities of the war, Esme sends the sergeant her father's watch, which she had always had with her before. This brings the young man out of deep depression, saves him. But Franny and Zooey escape from the absurd world in love with art, which fits perfectly into the framework of the existential struggle for Albert Camus: «Camus saw art as the most complete and successful form of rebellion, since the artist reconstructs the world according to his own plan» [8, p. 47]. However, some heroes decide to overcome the absurdity of the world by leaving it. Seymour commits suicide out of unwillingness to live a mystical life, resisting the crude human existence, just as Teddy shortens his life because he has attained enlightenment (satori). In Salinger's early works David Galloway brings out an unhappy hero who finds salvation in the love of children. In further short stories the mysticism of the heroes grows, but it is defeated by an «absurd love stance».

A Marxist critic Alan Nadel is the author of «Rhetoric, Sanity, and the Cold War: The Significance of Holden Caulfield's Testimony». He integrates the context of the Cold War and the realities of the Cold War to the analysis of «The Catcher in the Rye». Literary critic argues that Holden's speech is rhetorical, because the boy often uses a generalization, gives it a concrete example and derives a rule: «Caulfield tells us that someone had stolen his coat (example), that Pencey was full of crooks (generalization), and that “the more expensive a school is, the more crooks it has” (rule)» [13, p. 54]. Such a speech model, according to Alan Nadel, has an authoritarian character, because Holden not only explains the world, but also legitimizes his explanations, deriving rules from them. Speech saturated with such rules creates the effect of authoritarianism of all statements, even those that are not supported by the above scheme.

The Cold War in the United States is a period of struggle against communism, a time of «hunters» and «victims»: «a domestic clash in the United States between hunters and hunted, investigators and investigated» [13, p. 55]. The American government urged citizens to follow each other in search of spies, traitors. For instance, employees of all enterprises had to take an oath of allegiance, that is, swear that they are decent. Holden does the same, always swearing, assuring himself of his rightness. That is, the teenager seems to follow all the institutions of power, assuring his reliability. Moreover, Holden's red hat is interpreted as a symbol of hunting for reds. For example, as a vigilant «informant», he mentions many specific details, names during his story: people's clothes, brands of clothes, personal

things, medications everybody takes, books he reads, etc.

Thus, unwillingly, Holden joins the game, he begins to think in terms of the system, that is, he becomes like those whom he despises.

In the article «Keeping it in the Family: The Novellas of J.D. Salinger» David Sid tries to bring all of Salinger's stories together. He draws parallels between the characters, motifs, scenes, building a whole structure of the Glass family: «It is a family which is the real subject» [17, p. 80], and all the stories together are the story of Seymour's life and his teachings.

Summing up the analysis of all of Salinger's early stories, the literary critic names their common features: a generalized situation, opposition of one character to another, internal crisis of the main character and ambiguous ending.

In the next work, Ruth Prigozy continues the process of unification of Salinger's works. She focuses on nine stories, trying to unite and explain their secrets. The researcher's work is well structured and well-founded, that's why clear connections between the stories emerge and they are easy read.

The scholar pays great attention to the order of the stories, arguing that every two adjacent stories create additional meaning different from the main message of the collection. For example, in «A Perfect Day for Bananafish» and «Teddy» there is a need to get free from the materialistic world. In «Uncle Wiggily in Connecticut» and «Down at the Dinghy» – there is a child's experience, emotional vulnerability. «The Laughing Man», «For Esmé – with Love and Squalor» indirectly raise the issue of writing, the art of storytelling, because the narration of these stories is sometimes self-conscious and self-reflective. Also, professor Prigozy lists secondary, small mysteries that appear in the works and do not have clear answers. For example, in «Teddy» it is the reason for his sister Booper's hatred and the extraordinary gift of prophecy of Teddy himself.

Thus, the features common to all works are listed: in each of them the war is somehow reflected, and the time of action is the post-war 50s; in the center – children, teenagers; all works depict death – spiritual, emotional or physical; the central characters are verbal – they express themselves in words, they are special, intelligent, they all belong to the American or British upper middle class.

With the help of unifying elements, the researcher shows that fragmentary mysteries combine with each other and shade each story. For example, the first two stories are similar in place and character, the last two are similar in repetitive speech; «For Esmé – with Love and Squalor» and «Pretty Mouth and Green My Eyes» – for redemption and love betrayal; «Just Before the War with the Eskimos» and the two previous ones show emotional openness and compassion; «The Laughing Man», «Down at the Dinghy», «For Esmé – with Love and Squalor» raise controversial issues.

In «Along this road goes no one: Salinger's «Teddy» and the failure of love» Anthony Kaufman focuses exclusively on «Teddy» and the lack of love. After all, if we reject all mysticism, this story is the result of the whole collection. It tells the story of a frightened

ten-year-old boy whose behavior is a protective reaction to this world. Because he was disliked by his parents, felt isolated, showed passive aggression towards his parents, convinced himself of having an extraordinary power.

Moreover, Teddy's suicide is seen as his accusation to his family and the desire to make them feel guilty, thus punishing the whole adult unloved world. There is also a sexual connotation in his act, because another possible date of suicide, recorded in the diary, falls on Valentine's Day in six years, when Teddy would be a teenager.

There is also a small self-revealing story, which, according to the researcher, shows the inner feelings of the hero – about a man and a coconut and the like (about a banana fish or a man who laughed).

By the way, it is Seymour's diary from «Raise High the Roof Beam, Carpenters» that deciphers the events in «Teddy». This one and other Salinger stories are about the difficulty of being born in the American body and the problem of not receiving enough love.

The following article describes the psychological reflections of Sigmund Freud's daughter Anna on the character of Holden Caulfield. As a practicing psychoanalyst she had to deal with this character of Salinger, because many of her patients constantly mentioned Holden in sessions, talked about him, compared themselves to him, treated him as a real person. The doctor diagnosed him with a «narcissistic personality disorder» [19, p. 126], because he took everything personally, projected every situation on himself, and sometimes his self-confidence turned into pride.

In «The Catcher in the Rye as Postwar American Fable» Pamela Hunt Steinle places Salinger's work on a par with the works that shape American mythology. The researcher relies on the fundamental work of Robert Lewis – «The American Adam». He, analyzing the works of mainly the nineteenth century, focuses on a certain type of hero and derives his features. Based on this, Lewis formulates the myth of «American Adam»: «the authentic American as a figure of heroic innocence and vast potentialities, poised at the start of a new history» [19, p. 133] – a pure unblemished man at the beginning of the world, has limitless possibilities and heroic temperament. He is the only one who contrasts with the cruel world around him, having a moral advantage over him. In some places, the American Adam himself shows cruelty, which, according to the literary critic, is an integral part of the American narrative as a whole: «American narrative of “regeneration through violence”» [19, p. 135]. He must show cruelty and healthy aggression on the way to rebirth, recovery. So, he becomes a hero, preventing the fall of others, saving them. All these features of the American Adam are easily found in Holden as its modern embodiment.

The teenager stands aside from society, rises above it, exposing his flaws, separating himself from the hypocritical environment. He has to engage in fights here and there, without success, though hardened morally. In the end, his wanderings seem to break him – expulsion from school, difficulties in communicating with peers, a negative experience in the nightlife of

New York – but now he seeks to protect others, to protect children from their bad experiences.

Much attention in this work, as in many others, is devoted to Holden's attempt to erase all obscenities on the walls. Here the author connects the reasoning of Ihab Hassan, who considers this act of Golden a rare quixotic gesture. The postmodernist researcher, like the aforementioned theorists who analyzed this act, calls it absurd, but full of hope and the most conscious throughout the work: «the rubbing out of obscenities is the most self-conscious (and self-defeating) effort in *Catcher*, the very fantasy of being the “catcher in the rye” is itself a notion of quixotic hopefulness» [19, p. 140]. Thus, the novel «*The Catcher in the Rye*» is an example of quixotic hope. While innocence cannot be maintained, it can be valued in others, and this gives hope.

Eberhard Alsen's article «*The Catcher in the Rye*» is a thorough and comprehensive analysis of the novel. It begins with the origins of the work – Salinger's early stories, where Holden Caulfield first appears and the motives later developed in the novel.

It's «*Slight Rebellion Off Madison*», «*I'm Crazy*», and some unpublished 90-page story, probably an expanded version of «*I'm Crazy*». The following is a classification of critical responses to the novel. First of them were mostly negative, accusing the author of vulgarity, rude vocabulary, because of which the author was temporarily banned in American schools. Only a few reviews in the late 1950s focused on the purely literary qualities of «*The Catcher*». Thus, as early as 1956, the work was added to the tradition of quest literature: «ancient and honorable narrative tradition of the Quest» [1, p. 147], placing the protagonist Salinger next to Homer's *Odyssey*, Joyce's *Ulysses*, Twain's *Huck Finn*, Fitzgerald's *Gatsby*. These characters embody the image of a knight errant and the search for love. Yes, Holden seeks and finds a virtue similar to love – love of his fellow man. In general, the tendency to such a thorough analysis has been observed since the early 1960s.

Then the author of the article gives a brief analysis of the narrative structure and points of view in «*The Catcher*». The plot of the work is divided into episodes consisting of specific events. At the heart of the novel, Eberhard Alsen traditionally sees the conflict between adolescence and society, which finds its solution, while in the predecessor work on *Huck Finn*, it remains unresolved, according to the scientist. The researcher outlines four narrative strands that define the development and location of episodes. The first is the conflict with the adult world, in which Holden's peers, Stradlater and Sally Hayes, are already behaving like hypocritical adults. The second narrative line – the gradual immersion of the protagonist in suicidal depression – from time to time he embraces the feeling of disappearance, the desire to die. To the third tendency the literary critic attributes the deterioration of his physical health, and to the fourth – the internal changes in Holden: he comes to the realization that not all adults are hypocrites. Alsen also singles out Holden's own voice as a component that determines the narrative structure of the work. The narrative perspective is determined by the contrast

between the inability of a boy to feel himself and his ability to perceive himself through the eyes of others.

In the image of Holden, the researcher lists a number of contradictions in age, appearance, attitude to cinema, literature, religion, money, sex. There are contradictions at the level of the main character's language: meaningless phrases in his speech and emotional epithets of high style at the same time.

It is also claimed that the image of the protagonist is complemented by oppositional pairs of minor characters, and in general Salinger's work is full of such binary oppositions: «Salinger's propensity to work in patterns of twos» [1, p. 155]. This tendency of the writer is manifested most vividly in «The Catcher», where this parity formed the basis of the characteristics of the image of Holden. A number of minor characters form pairs, through contact with which Holden is better revealed, while he is more inclined to one of the halves of the pair. That is, there are two Holden's brothers, that he talks about a lot, but he does not approve of D.B.'s Hollywood career, he's more kind to his younger brother Allie. There are two teachers – Spencer and Antolini, Holden likes the latter more because he once tried to save James Castle. Holden's neighbors are repeatedly mentioned: he despises Stradlater and gets closer to Ackley. Two girls – Jane Gallagher and Sally Hayes embody different values: Jane – cute, innocent, interesting, Sally – lush, showy, fashionable. Phoebe is separate, she has no pair in the novel, and maybe that's why she has the most influence on Holden and reveals his character.

In the following parts of the article, the scientist explains in detail each symbol found in the work. We are talking about the diorama in the Museum, Phoebe's school, ducks in Central Park, red hunting hat, obscenities on the walls and a carousel in the park, in particular.

Among the leading themes of the novel Alsen refers to kindness, selflessness, unwillingness to make real life choices. Alsen also pays close attention to the critical reception of the novel «The Catcher in the Rye». A plenty of reviews, articles and essays he conventionally divides into four groups. The first, historical, includes comparisons of the work with previous ones – Huck Finn, in particular. The second approach is sociological, in which the work is analyzed by means of social criticism.

In the third, psychological approach, the peculiarities of the protagonist's transition from adolescence to adulthood can be traced. In the fourth approach, number of critics actualize the moral and religious content of the novel. For further objective research, we must take the results of the analysis of each of the approaches into account.

It was not until the mid-1970s that the socio-economic interpretation of «The Catcher in the Rye» appeared. For example, Carol and Richard Omann call the novel a classic example of capitalist critique, offering a Marxist interpretation of the work. Critics are convinced that the hypocrisy, that is so unacceptable to Holden, lies in the economic and social system of capitalism. They cite a lot of quotations, confirming the thesis of the existing class criticism in the novel.

Among the articles on psychological problems in the novel, the literary critic singles out a purely psychoanalytic approach. The aforementioned James Bryan presents a Freudian version of the analysis of the work – Holden desperately needs to save his sister from himself. Later appeared Adler's analysis of the novel – «Adlerian Theory and Its Application The Catcher in the Rye to The Catcher in the Rye — Holden Caulfield» [1, p. 157], authored by R.J. Huber. This type of psychoanalysis finds out whether a person feels confident or depressed and whether there is a social interest in his or her struggle. According to R.J. Huber, Holden has deep feelings of inferiority, which he tries to compensate by the desire for grandeur.

There was also a Lacanian reading of the novel: «The Disappearing Subject: A Lacanian Reading of The Catcher in the Rye» by James Mellard. It is claimed that Holden, according to Lacan, passes through the stage of alienation and separation from the Other, eventually achieving symbolic integrity with the Other. Holden becomes complete again as he sits in Central Park, watching Phoebe on the carousel. According to the author, at this point he is experiencing almost Lacanian jouissance [1, p. 167].

Many critics claim that Holden was in a psychiatric hospital at the time of writing. However, the writer's biographer Warren French is convinced that this is not factually confirmed in the text, and that Holden is likely to be cured of some physical illness. One of the themes of the novel he calls the shift of emphasis from himself to the outside world, reconciliation with the world that does not accept you. One of the conclusions of the novel is that people should love each other. Although Salinger himself, according to the researcher, does not deliberately call for this.

As part of his psychological approach, Alsen singles out Jonathan Baumach's article about Holden as a saint in search of a spiritual father, because, wanting to save others from falling, the boy also wants someone to save him. His sister Phoebe is such a spiritual mentor.

Among other notable receptions of the novel, Alsen draws attention to the reception of the work by readers from other countries, including the German translation by Heinrich Böll. Also noteworthy is the feminist reading of «The Catcher», because, according to Marie Susan Schreiber, female readers do not identify themselves with Holden, so, given their feedback, the novel would not be so highly valued [1, p. 170].

Summing up the careful work of collecting, processing, generalizing and analyzing information, Eberhard Alsen calls the novel a surprisingly well-constructed work that has become a classic of American literature: «The Catcher in the Rye is a classic of twentieth-century American literature. The novel deserves that distinction because it is an extremely well-constructed piece of verbal art» [1, p. 170]. At the same time, the critic points out the shortcomings of the work: unmotivated repetitions, inconsistencies. Early critics considered it sporadically, without seeing the internal development of Holden's character, whereas modern researchers analyze the internal changes of the protagonist. The literary critic emphasizes that Holden is a

complex and controversial person, endowed with extraordinary kindness. He also notes the extensive symbolism of the work, the richness of the topics raised. In addition, he outlines ideas for further critical attempts, including a holistic psychoanalytic analysis, in-depth socio-economic, and analysis of the reader's reception.

Among others, it is worthwhile to dwell in more detail on the critical work of the already mentioned Ihab Hassan as a theorist of postmodernism. He is the author of the following critical works on Salinger's creative work: the book «Rare quixotic gesture: the fiction of J.D. Salinger» and «Almost the Voice of Silence: The Later Novelettes of J. D. Salinger». Hassan sees «The Catcher» as not a teenager's training or initiation, but as a dramatic outrage that ideal has no place in real life. This work also tells how lying has become an integral part of urban culture.

Hassan's article «Almost the Voice of Silence: The Later Novelettes of J. D. Salinger» is devoted to the analysis of Salinger's later stories. Here, firstly, attention is focused on the form of works. Hassan argues that this form is so asymmetrical and open to numerous deviations that it can safely be called an antiform: «a form, that is so asymmetrical, so tolerant of chance and digression, as to warrant the name of antiform» [9, p. 5]. An important role here is played by language, by means of which a surreal effect is created. The works are constructed in such a way that the traditional form proves its failure, the usual notions of time and space are denied, so that the reader can see the true meaning of the violated conventions. By the way, this technique resonates with the defamiliarization of Russian formalists.

After a detailed analysis of the story «Raise High the Roof Beam, Carpenters» Ihab Hassan wonders: «May he [Salinger] not, at least, be tempted to so muffle the truth that remains unheard?» [9, p. 7] – Did it not happen that Salinger confused the true meaning of the work so much that it is simply impossible to understand.

The theme of «Raise High the Roof Beam, Carpenters» is Seymour's love and heritage, namely the reaction of people to his behavior and the consequences of his spiritual upbringing of the youngest children in the family. He was a spiritual mentor, the best poet and the most loving of all for the whole family. After his suicide, Seymour's brothers and sisters are forced to deal with the imperfections of the world on their own, to solve complex psychological issues and even to get out of depression. Buddy is outraged by Seymour's behavior, his boundless love for everyone, which, however, the world around him does not understand.

And Zooye is already internally resisting Seymour's upbringing, Franny and he are finally freed from the influence of their older brother, which is both Seymour's defeat and victory. After all, he wanted his brothers and sisters to become independent, from him mostly.

According to the observations of Ihab Hassan, the language of the works is destroyed by numerous indentations, notes, memoirs, letters, notes. Such a confusing organization of the text creates an artistic reality with a

surreal haze: «confusion[s] in language <...> envelop reality in a surreal haze» [9, p. 8].

The story in the work «Seymour. Introduction» is so confusing that it evokes extremely emotionally colored epithets in the researcher – «maddening shaplessness of the narrative» [9, p. 5] – the formlessness of the story, which leads to madness. However, behind all the linguistic distortions the problem of the artist and the purpose of art is hidden. The researcher claims that it is because of Buddy's verbosity that he tries to explain the essence of art and Seymour as the most talented artist.

Seymour's problem and the reason for his suicide is that he was devastated by his boundless love for the world. Hassan calls verbosity and confusion of speech the reverse side of silence, in which the literary critic sees the main theme of selected works. He reinforces his conclusions with the apt epigraph of the composer-innovator John Cage, who attached great importance to silence in music: «I have nothing to say and I'm saying it and that is poetry» [9, p. 5]. The tangled ruined narrative creates the aforementioned antiform, which is silence. The critic explains his opinion as follows: Salinger's aesthetics is the aesthetics of love for everything, all things around. Sometimes things speak for themselves, then the artist is silent for a while: «the "aesthetic" <...> to an extent of Salinger is not one of purpose, but of love. It seeks to honor things rather than coerce them. It accepts, therefore, the possibility that things may sometimes wish to speak in their own voice. Let the artist, for a time, remain silent!» [9, p. 19].

In view of this, Hassan draws an incredible conclusion at the time: how Salinger himself can achieve silence in art: «... how can Salinger resume the voice of silence in art? It is impertinent to predict what Salinger will do next» [9, p. 18].

In 1963, the critic predicted the writer's seclusion even before his last work, Hepworth's 16th Day 1924, was published in 1965, before decades of silence. Thus, a detailed review of the main scientific works of English literary studies on the work of Salinger was made. Articles from different years, from the 1960s to the present, were taken into account. English criticism is marked by close attention to the text, the use of various modern methods and philosophical ideas. Thus, in this critique there is a tendency to a literary-historical approach to the works of Salinger. This is especially true of the novel «The Catcher in the Rye», which fits organically into the American literary tradition. This historical principle was used in the works of Pamela Hunt Steinle, Eberhard Alsen and others.

Criticism of Salinger's work actualizes the concept of the man of the absurd and various ways of combating the absurd – love, creativity, death. The concepts of existentialism were used by David Galloway, Ihab Hassan, Anthony Kaufman, Pamela Hunt Steinle, Eberhard Alsen.

James Bryan, Roger Huber, and James Mellard took up psychoanalysis – the philosophical and medical heritage of the twentieth century. The actions of the characters are explained by their deep mental experiences related to sexuality, self-awareness and self-dominance or subordination to others, passing through various stages of interaction with the Other.

A number of critics, on the other hand, focused on the social essence of Salinger's work, mostly in the novel «The Catcher in the Rye». Such analysis certainly takes into account the social atmosphere of the day, namely the period of the Cold War and its realities, such as the oath of allegiance, the hunt for the «reds», political propaganda. Among the Marxist critics considered are Carl Friedman and Alan Naidel.

The achievements of postmodernism were used by Ihab Hassan in his critical articles on the work of the American writer. He focuses on the disappearance of the real, namely through the distortion of language achieves a surreal effect. Hassan's center of interest also includes manifestations of literary narcissism, when works focus on their own. The achievements of postmodernism were used by Ihab Hassan in his critical articles on the work of the American writer. He focuses on the disappearance of a real: a surreal effect is achieved through the distortion of language. Hassan's center of interest also includes manifestations of literary narcissism, when works focus on the process of their own creation.

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