

## UNDERSTANDING PSYCHOLOGICAL REALISM IN J.D.SALENGER'S WORKS

*Abdullayeva M. –*

*postgraduate student at Samarkand state institute of foreign languages*

*Asadova G. –*

*supervisor, senior teacher at Samarkand state institute of foreign languages*

J.D. Salinger, one of the most influential American writers of the 20th century, is renowned for his intricate and deeply psychological portrayal of characters. His works, particularly *The Catcher in the Rye* and *Franny and Zooey*, have captivated readers for decades with their profound exploration of themes like alienation, identity, innocence, and spiritual searching. Central to Salinger's literary success is his distinctive approach to character description, which goes beyond mere physical attributes and focuses instead on the internal, emotional, and psychological landscapes of his protagonists. Unlike many other writers who rely on external traits to shape their characters, Salinger uses a range of methods such as dialogue, internal monologue, narrative perspective, and symbolic elements to create richly developed characters that engage readers on a deeply personal level.

In Salinger's works, characters are often portrayed as individuals in search of authenticity in a world they find confusing, overwhelming, or even hypocritical. Holden Caulfield, the protagonist of *The Catcher in the Rye*, is a prime example of this complex characterization. His internal battles with identity, alienation, and the idea of "phoniness" are central to the novel, and much of what we learn about Holden's character comes from his internal reflections and interactions with the world around him. Similarly, in *Franny and Zooey*, Salinger delves into the spiritual and intellectual crises of two siblings, exploring their search for meaning and their struggles to reconcile personal beliefs with societal expectations. Through

these characters, Salinger reflects not only the internal conflicts of youth but also the broader, universal questions of human existence.

The methods Salinger employs to describe his characters have been the subject of extensive literary analysis [4, 240]. One key aspect of his technique is his reliance on indirect characterization, where the inner lives of characters are revealed through their actions, thoughts, and interactions, rather than through direct descriptions. This allows for a more nuanced and layered understanding of his characters, giving them a sense of realism and complexity. For instance, in *The Catcher in the Rye*, Holden's disjointed and often contradictory thoughts reveal the depth of his emotional turmoil, offering readers a window into his psyche that transcends the simple recounting of events. This style of character development creates characters that feel both unique and universally relatable, as readers are invited to uncover the layers of personality and motivation beneath the surface.

In addition to indirect characterization, Salinger frequently employs internal monologue and stream-of-consciousness techniques to reveal the personal and often fragmented thoughts of his characters. These monologues provide insight into the characters' struggles, desires, and fears, allowing readers to experience their journeys of self-discovery [2, 23]. The use of narrative perspective is also pivotal in Salinger's character descriptions. In *The Catcher in the Rye*, for example, the first-person narration through Holden's voice creates a deeply intimate connection between the reader and the protagonist. This perspective, marked by Holden's sarcastic and confessional tone, allows for an unfiltered glimpse into his character, making his emotional and psychological struggles more immediate and palpable.

Moreover, Salinger often uses symbolism and recurring motifs to deepen the portrayal of his characters. Objects, settings, and even specific words are imbued with meaning, offering further insight into the inner world of the characters. For example, Holden's obsession with the "catcher in the rye" image symbolizes his desire to protect the innocence of children and shield them from the disillusionment

he feels in the adult world. Similarly, in *Franny and Zooey*, the spiritual references, including the use of religious symbols and meditative practices, reveal the characters' ongoing search for enlightenment and personal peace.

Psychological realism is a literary technique that aims to depict the inner workings of the human mind with authenticity and depth [3, 24]. This form of realism seeks to represent not just external reality but also the intricate, often ambiguous, and multi-layered nature of human consciousness. Writers who employ psychological realism delve into their characters' thoughts, emotions, and motivations, using various narrative techniques to convey these complex aspects effectively. This essay explores the different narrative techniques used to represent psychological realism and how they contribute to a more profound understanding of human nature in literature.

Psychological realism emerged as a response to the limitations of traditional realism, which primarily focused on external events and actions. Unlike conventional realism, which seeks to depict reality as it appears on the surface, psychological realism prioritizes the subjective experience of characters [1, 56]. This approach became prominent in the 19th and 20th centuries, particularly in the works of authors like Henry James, Fyodor Dostoevsky, Virginia Woolf, and James Joyce. By exploring characters' consciousness, these writers offer readers an intimate perspective on how individuals perceive and process their experiences.

By immersing readers in the narrator's thoughts, Salinger provides a direct window into their psychological struggles, anxieties, and existential dilemmas. Whether through Holden's rebellious cynicism or Buddy's introspective philosophy, the first-person perspective brings out the emotional and intellectual depth of his characters. J.D. Salinger's mastery of first-person narration has left an indelible mark on modern literature. Through Holden Caulfield's raw and unreliable storytelling and Buddy Glass's philosophical reflections, Salinger creates deeply personal and psychologically rich narratives. The first-person perspective enhances the themes of alienation, identity, and existential searching,

making his works timelessly relevant [4, 245]. By using this technique, Salinger invites readers into the innermost thoughts of his characters, allowing for profound emotional and intellectual engagement.

*The Catcher in the Rye* is a novel about the seventeen-year-old boy Holden's experience in school. The writer Salinger lets the whole life of Holden full of irony due to his action to pursue moral order in order to satire the phenomenon of the society and the adult world. Salinger uses the artistic style—anti-tradition in language features and lets Holden become the narrator and uses Holden's eyes to see and feel the adult world. It makes the story more genuine and attractive. The usage of technique of stream of consciousness made *The Catcher in the Rye* cause tremendous echo among the youth and also attracted the attention of adults. They took the book as a key to understanding the inner world of the young generation.

Salinger's philosophical conversations are often marked by pauses, silences, and subtext. Much of the tension in *Franny and Zooey* arises from what remains unsaid between the characters, allowing readers to infer deeper meanings. Similarly, in *The Catcher in the Rye*, Holden frequently withholds his true feelings, making his interactions layered with unspoken emotions. This use of silence as a narrative tool enhances the depth of Salinger's themes.

Ultimately, Salinger's fiction suggests that a simple glass of water, a suitcase, or a story about bananafish can hold the key to understanding one's place in the world, making his exploration of objects a powerful tool for thematic depth and spiritual inquiry.

### References

1. Ayers, David (2004). *Modernism: A Short Introduction*. Oxford: Blackwell.
2. Barnard, Philip (2004), *Revising Charles Brockden Brown*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press.

3. Brozan, N. (1991). "J. D. Salinger Receives an Apology for an Award," New York Times.

4. *Salinger's Alien and Lonely Characters in American Literature*. Available from: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/329701797\\_Salinger's\\_Alien\\_and\\_Lonely\\_Characters\\_in\\_American\\_Literature](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/329701797_Salinger's_Alien_and_Lonely_Characters_in_American_Literature) [accessed Mar 06 2025].