

Huckleberry Finn and The Catcher in the Rye: A Domain of Literary Kinship

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Abstract

This particular paper is aimed to divulge that there is a close link in between the *Huckleberry Finn* and *The Catcher in the Rye*. It is in the sense that they reveal the same spirit expressed in them through the guise of child protagonists by their authors. They serve as mouthpieces perfectly as desired by them. However, there is no doubt that between these novels and authors there is almost a century's gap but in the same manner they critique on American social waywardness. Besides, the novels hold a mirror on American society in a like manner. In both of them child protagonists such as Huck and Holden Caulfield have been created in order to make the narratives very much appealing and interesting. Through them both the authors have stated their own experiences and felt concerns for the purpose to contribute towards the amelioration of American society. The same has been successfully put forth by using common dialect, same narrative, characterization, critical significance and heroes. Moreover, they have created the similar environments to fit their creations in real life situations for severe criticism directed toward American Society.

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On the surface level when it is to be seen, Mark Twain and J.D. Salinger only differs in the sense that former one died almost a decade earlier than later ones birth but so for their approach of assessment to American society is concerned that they hardly differ from each other in highlighting the ugliness of their own society. In such a case for Mark Twain, Andrew Hoffman has an admiring proclamation regarding him as "MARK TWAIN Is the most recognizable figure in American letters. After Shakespeare, he is perhaps the most widely known writer the world has yet produced. (Hoffman ix)

Moreover, the protagonists they have created are very sensitive toward everything they come across. They only differ in one angle that Huck the creation of Mark Twain belongs to a very poor family which becomes his cause of restlessness. However, at the same time Holden Caulfield the protagonists in *The Catcher in the Rye* belongs to a very nice family but his parents hardly bother for him. He too dislikes the phoniness of American society. Also, both the authors use vernacular to fit their creations in real life situations.

Each of these experienced child characters know all about swindling and brutality but hold on to the charity of innocence. Each is appraise of the need and option for human love in his own society.

So, for Huck's society is concerned, it differs drastically from Holden Caulfield's as there we find a raft drifting down the Mississippi from a Broadway traffic jam a century later. So, far their flights taken by Huck through down the river and Holden Caulfield through New York Streets do not differ in terms of their spirit. The sample of Huck's experiences is reproduced fundamentally in Holden's. Salinger's novel carries the familiar rhythms and attitudes as already remained the case of Twain. Besides, the artistic imaginations of these two particular authors that blend given fact and child perception into expressive, dramatized narrative are remarkably comparable. *The Catcher in the Rye*, infact, is a kind of *Huckleberry Finn* in new style.

As Huck in the beginning of the novel, flees from tradition of the American society, limitation and horror. On the river Mississippi he meets fatal thieves, a deceitful fog, Negro hunters and a steamboat that breaks through the raft and thrusts him among feuding country of refinement. He sees a harmless drunk shot dead and a southern colonel almost lynched, observes some dramatic obscenities and at enormous personal danger saves the inheritance of three orphan Wilks girls. He is further taught by his own knowledge and experience that Truth is really fragile, trouble best to evade and evil frequently unavoidable. All this validates Huck's aesthetics and serene safety. However, particularly in his greatest effort, over Jim, he acts unexpectedly and rebelliously for good. Huck finally comes to the Phelps plantation, the homelike like place where from Jim finds freedom and where Huck takes leave of his society by going to west.

In the same manner Holden Caulfield, extremely troubled, escapes at first from the uninteresting environment and aggression of his Pency Prep school life. Like Huck he goes through a harsh world, which is New York City, where from he knows his way in this region he feels exceedingly alienated. There for two chaotic days and nights he pushes his track through rough treatment adventures with fear. On his journey instead to Jim's recurring image he has the image of Jane Gallagher his beloved in fantasy. As Huck saves to Adult Jim, at the cost by going himself into the Hell, in the same vein Holden Caulfield would save little children from crossing the line of innocence. Both these heroes have conflicts. Holden's adolescent sexual urges are somehow entangled with what is grasping in the "mean guys" to whom he extremely dislikes because they infect his sense of the glowing and good quality. The only quality that deems him down than Huck is his lack of self-sufficiency but Holden like Huck is habitually as realistic, and he too loves magnificence and harmony. So, far he values goodness above experience, deception, manners and accomplishments. After a secret visit to his home, he plans to lead a hermit's life in the West, but is prepared to accept the city by the love of his little sister Phoebe. Bodily weakened and injured, he is after everything else seen recovering in a sanatorium. In this way the same spirit has been presented in the *The Catcher in the Rye* which is also acknowledged by the Earnest Hemingway in *Green Hills of Africa* because the same novel comes under the range of American literature "All modern American literature

comes from one book by Mark Twain called *Huckleberry Finn*. All American writing comes from that. There was nothing before. There has been nothing as good since” (22).

So, overall Mark Twain and Salinger clearly present corresponding myths of American youth meets head-on their world –Huck Finn over months but Holden only over two days. Even their similarity and literary kinship has been expressed by Albert E Stone, Jr. as:

From a totally different social and artistic environment, J.D Salinger also accepts Twain as ancestor. From the moment when Holden Caulfield stands alone on the hill looking down upon the football game in which he cannot even participate as spectator, *The Catcher in the Rye* inescapably recalls *Huckleberry Finn*. Salinger has Twain’s same quick ear for adolescent’s crude, vigorous, unconsciously humorous talk. Holden’s quest for an adult world that is not “phoney” recalls Huck’s horrified reactions to the rascals he meets along the river. A final and irrevocable sense of alienation sends Holden Caulfield to Arizona Sanatorium; Huck Finn Had vowed “to light out the Territory.” In spite of the years and miles that stretch between Park Avenue and the tanyard, there is an affinity between these novels. (Stone 278)

Therefore, each novel makes use of a suitable first person vernacular. They somehow differ by their use of vocabulary they are composed in. In both of them heroes use slang but Holden has the refined words at his disposal. They observe as desired by their authors accurately and swiftly. They have power of expression through which they convey the relationship of feelings and scene. For example when Huck arrives at Colonel Grangerfords he observes:

Col. Grangerford was a very tall and very slim, and had a darkish-play complexion, not a sign of red in it anywhere; he was clean shaved every morning all over his thin face, and he had the thinnest kind of lips, and the thinnest kind of nostrils, and a high nose . . . Bob was the oldest and Tom next-tall, beautiful men with very broad shoulders and brown faces, and long black hair and black eyes. They dressed in white linen from head to foot, like the old gentleman, and wore broad panama hats.

Then there was Miss Charlotte; she was twenty-five, and tall and proud and grand, but as good as she could be when she warn’t stirred up; but when she was she had a look that would make you wilt in tracks, like her father, She was beautiful. (Twain 98-99)

In a like manner, Holden observes in a New York Street from a Taxicab:

What made it worse; it was so quiet and lonesome out, even though it was Saturday night. I didn’t see hardly anybody on the street. Now and then you just saw a man and a girl crossing a street, with their arms around each other’s waists and all, or a bunch of hoodlum-looking guys and their dates, all of them laughing like hyenas at something you could bet wasn’t funny. New York’s terrible when somebody laughs on street very late at night. You can hear it for miles. It makes you feel so lonesome and depressed. I kept wishing I could go home. (Salinger 81)

Besides, *Huckleberry Finn* and *The Catcher in the Rye* are parallel also in the moral-social significance. Each novel is a biting criticism of American society and voices an ethics of love and humanity. In various matters Huck and Holden Caulfield avow goodness, honesty and loyalty. Huck does so without thinking, regularly against his conventional sense of right and wrong and Holden does so with a distressing self-consciousness and a scathing spirit. In each the insight of virtuousness is fundamental: from their mouths come unenthusiastic judgements damning the social forms that help men less than completely human. In addition, Huck's language is generally unruffled and has agreeably rhythmical. At the same time Holden often conscious of the smothering omnipresence of sex, draws most things inflexible. Uneasy, jumpy recurrence often points up his emotional tensions. His speech is sometimes rough and harsh. He tends to bewail and denounce. Huck's undeviating anxiety gives us a real recording rich in connotation. His Vision engraves an open world, obvious, concrete, genuine, with living characters moving originally in it. Holden's apprehensive expression is a persuasive expression of his mental unrest.

As well, possibly Huck's insightful relation to life is being faith, an acceptance of truth that assimilates the ridiculous and unkind even while it condemns them in the course of revelation. That acceptance endorses a classic straightforwardness of style, the more dignified for sinister hints present. However, Holden's negative response and revulsion create an excited present day discord. Besides, Holden's speech is indeed suited to his neurotic experience of the all engulfing modern city. Huck's language is likewise well suited to his character and what Mark Twain had to say about a vanished age, a time allowing Huck's arduous victory over self and circumstance. Salinger's version of language to his hero's speech habits, character and times points up the stylistic link between the novels.

Particularly in its characterization of the protagonist, *The Catcher in the Rye* is a suggestive souvenir of *Huckleberry Finn*. If Holden wants to nurture the young by being the only grown-up person around but Huck is the youthful knight in shining armour of a grown-up men, and whether he knows it or not his efforts are directed toward making development possible. Holden is conscious romantic. Huck lives modestly and carefully to get what he wants. Further, if we talk about the expectation in Twain's novel is that a brat preadolescent acts wisely for what is good in an open society. The fundamental hopelessness of Salinger's novel is that an advantaged adolescent wants to act childishly for what he believes is good in a society broadened in offensiveness.

However, Holden is truly a kind of refashioned Huck. He is acutely sensitive to places and times. Holden has Huck's judicious mind and respect for fact and knowledge. Even in this fraudulent world Holden amazingly keeps the innocent heart that predominantly reminds us Huck. He truly loves natural beauty and the socially untouched. He is freer than Huck from conservative responses; he is a natural high-minded democrat. He sympathizes with the sympathetic, the suffering and the weak. He lies disgracefully to keep out a mother from the information that her son's basic character is displaced in his obsession for snapping, with his damp knotted towel, the backsides of the boys budding from the shower. Holden, in short, like Huck, respects human individuality and hates whatever degrades it. He knows that arrogance is

violence, and that subordinating people to ideas and things devastate profitable human interaction.

So, evidently Holden and Huck, who so repeatedly form their experience in akin patterns and have, parallel qualities. Holden's sharp self-consciousness and his clear neuroticism do not moderate the reality or merit of what he is and feels. Nor do they nullify the comparison between the two child characters. Rather, suitably distinguishing a typically modern personality from Huck Finn, still principally of the divine motionless but already, in his tremendous and responsive youth, bearing the blemishes of inconsiderate experience, they help to define the straight fall of Holden from Huck.

In conclusion it can be said that the two novels are clearly related in every aspect, whether it is narrative, characterization, technique, protagonists and critical significance-the areas assessed in this particular research paper. The kinship argues the continuing spirit of Huck's model story remained highly influential for generations and still creatively at work in present thought and literary composition. So, *The Catcher in the Rye* takes place in that literary tradition which encompasses Hemingway and William Faulkner that have one of its great sources in Twain's *Huckleberry Finn*. However, the literary kinship of these landmark novels assume a type of edifying continuity more basic than dynamics of literary tradition or the perseverance of Huck's story in the admired imagination. In this paper it is seen that each author of the study responds feelings of their times and depicts most appropriately through their heroes by choosing the facts and shaping their language and meaning to portray the social and moral realities put together in and about their heroes. Besides, the resulting differences do not obscure the relationship in the conformations of character and social relationships that emerge from the novels. Basically these novels are like twins for the reason they reflect a slowly developing but always familiar pattern of moral and social meaning that is an element of the active experience of young Americans that let free in the world, in the twentieth century and also the previous. Without reliance each author has probed their times so vividly contrasted in both the heroes' milieu but are showing literary kinship.

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