



HWA CHONG INSTITUTION (HIGH SCHOOL SECTION)

Project Work Category 2a Written Report

Topic: *Phoniness vs Authenticity: Societal and Individual Influences in *Catcher**

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Declaration

I declare that this assignment is my own work and does not involve plagiarism or collusion. The sources of other people's work have been appropriately referenced, failing which I am willing to accept the necessary disciplinary action(s) to be taken against me.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background

The United States of the 1950s, set in the Golden Age of Capitalism, was seemingly a time of miracles and prosperity. Post World War II economic booms translated into optimism for future peace and harmony for the growing middle class, and the expectation that material abundance was a norm where “everyone was either already part of the middle class, soon to become part of it, or aspiring to become part of it” (Brinkley, 2012). But beneath this utopia was a culture of stability and conformity, “so stifling to alternative views”. (Brinkley, 2012)

A classic published and set in the 1950s, *Catcher in the Rye* (hereafter referred to as *Catcher*), is J.D. Salinger’s “critical mimesis” of this Golden Age of Capitalism, according to the Ohmanns (1976). The recount of heavy slang and expletives follows Holden, the protagonist, who condemns “phony” (Salinger, 1951 p.3) characters in his encounters and memories, finding comfort in the genuine few. This results in him fantasising of being a “catcher (Salinger, 1951, p.186), stopping children playing in imaginary rye from falling off a cliff into inauthentic adulthood. As a whole, Holden’s surprisingly empathetic perspective of his environment critiques the inauthenticity rampant in the 1950s American society.

1.2 Rationale

There are predominantly two types of readings or perspectives of Holden from *Catcher*. One, whereby his disgust for adulthood and reality arises only from his individual naive and rebellious mindset; and two, whereby the societal structure and convention shapes his view entirely. However, such binary perspectives of Holden and *Catcher* are not fully representative and

encompassing, as the individual and society are interdependent. One cannot exist without the other because individuals make up society and individuals are invariably influenced by other individuals.

By connecting theories of Capitalism and Authenticity, this research aims to add nuance to both theories, bridging the objective, economic workings of society (Capitalism) and the subjective, personal choice, as well as determine the factors contributing to Authenticity.

1.3 Research Questions

1. How are the character in *Catcher* Authentic/Inauthentic, based on Taylor's (1991) theories of Authenticity?
2. How does Althusser's (1970) theory of Ideology cause a character's authenticity/inauthenticity? And if it does not, what are the alternative reason(s)?
3. Therefore, what are the connections between Authenticity (Taylor, 1991) and Capitalist Ideology (Althusser, 1970)?

1.4 Thesis Statement

Characters in *Catcher* do not necessarily fall neatly into categories of Authentic and Inauthentic, as individual identities are both nuanced and obscure. Inauthenticity can then be attributed partly to Capitalist Ideology. It will always form the context of each individual action as it is interpellated into their identity, but the individual also has a role in meaningfully differentiating their identities and being true to it.

1.5 Scope/Delimitations

This paper will mainly draw on the theories from Louis Althusser's 1970 essay, *Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses*, as well as Charles Taylor's books, *The Ethics of Authenticity* and *Sources of the Self* (1989, 1991). This research also focuses on the 1950s American society, given that many of the texts are written with this context and are more applicable to this time and place.

1.6 Significance of Research

To add to the Rationale, the perspective that being Authentic allows individuals to do completely as they desire is widely accepted, which is an extreme view of Authenticity. This monocausal and hedonistic view may lead to morally unjust behaviour, which can no longer be truly Authentic. This research serves to suggest a less extreme alternative to this which is not only fulfilling for the individual, but also healthy for other individuals and the greater mankind.

By being aware of such tacit mindsets that many individuals in the modern world possess, as well as the better alternative of Authenticity, individuals can then work toward such an ideal without lapsing into its ignoble and unhealthy form.

1.7 Limitations

As mentioned in 1.5 Scope/Delimitations, this paper will be focusing on the 1950s American society, and as such may not be directly applicable or relevant to other time periods and societies as there will inevitably be differences between them, for example before the eighteenth century when Authenticity was of lesser importance. Also, these texts revolve around white characters,

and generally do not consider factors like race, culture or gender, and hence is not all-encompassing.

As for the theories chosen, Althusser's theories originated from his essay written in French, and the version used is one translated into English, possibly causing certain details to be lost in translation and therefore the theories to be interpreted slightly differently. Taylor's theories of Authenticity are quite controversial, given that the widely accepted definition of Authenticity is what Taylor's research seeks to disprove, which seems to take away from its credibility. However, it has been chosen for this research for its compatibility and relevance with other theories and the rationale (further discussed in **Chapter 2.4**).

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This Literature Review would first introduce *Catcher* and various reviews and readings of it, then the conception and revision of established theories of both Capitalism and Authenticity, as well as explain the choice of specific theories.

2.2 Readings and Reviews of *Catcher in the Rye*

Since *Catcher* was first released in 1951, it has been an extraordinary bestseller, with hundreds of essays and reviews following. Readings that suggest valid reason (for example whether it is rooted in reality) to Holden's perspective and actions, is the most relevant to this research.

The reviews from multiple outlets of mass media immediately following the newly published *Catcher* seemed to take it at face-value. They highlighted Holden's "unique 'voice'", or "were troubled by [his] use of expletives" (Graham, 2007, p. 80). "What they were concerned to do, was to relate *Catcher* to life", determining its value by how much Holden resembled an actual white, male teenager (Ohmann, 1976, p. 19-20). Such judgement of character is superficial and descriptive, without meaningfully suggesting the reason behind Holden's perspective.

As for the academic critics, they "compar[ed] the novel with more canonical texts" (Graham, 2007, p.82) such as *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, considered Holden's journey an epic, valiant quest, or attributed Holden's predicament to flaws "in himself, in his soul or in his psyche". The critics offered various insight into the protagonist's actions, but suggested that Holden is simply an imperfect anti-hero controlled by the plot to be interesting, or that it is

ingrained in him to behave as such, which is not only monocausal, but irrelevant to this research as well.

Ghasemi (2010) suggests that Holden is dejected by the social stratification along class lines that break the relationships of people in different classes, and commodification (of time, one's body, emotions etc.) in exchange for capital (economic, social, cultural, symbolic). By taking on a more Marxist perspective, Ghasemi attributes Holden's perspective to Capitalism, a more insightful and objective reason. However, this reason is quite one-dimensional, as it suggests Holden is completely controlled by Capitalism, which still goes against this research.

Similarly, the Ohmanns (1976) argue there should be a better reading of *Catcher*. They suggest that "phon[iness]" (Salinger, p.18) is caused by the "economic and social arrangements of Capitalism", but also by this fact's "concealment" by social convention (Ohmanns, 1976, p.29). The resulting erosion of relationships caused by this is what causes Holden to reject and rebel against society. However, they also highlight Holden's conflicting bourgeoisie identity and personal perspective, a nuanced, non-binary assertion that sparked the rationale above, given that they did not fully address this conflict.

Overall, these one-dimensional readings of *Catcher*, attributing Holden's behaviour to only either individual (the reviewers and some critics) or societal, systemic flaws (Ghasemi), and thus providing the rationale behind this research.

2.3 Theories of Capitalism

Research into Marxist theory on Capitalism for this paper was prompted by Ohmanns' Marxist reading of *Catcher*, and it provides an objective explanation of societal workings that is very applicable to the rationale of this research. Marxist theory was then narrowed down to theories of Class Relations and Ideology to better suit this research as well, since these specifically explain how society affects individual identity.

Beginning with classical Marxist theory, Marx himself (1846, 1847) suggests that society can be seen as a "base-infrastructure model" (Marx, 1846, 1847). Marx suggests that the base, the economic workings, has a strong influence over the superstructure, or culture (such as the arts, religion, politics etc.). In more technical terms, the conditions (forces, means, relations) of production (base) influence the Ideology of a society (Marx, 1846, 1847).

Marx (1846, 1847) also asserts that the ruling class is both the "material" and "intellectual force" of society, which, in capitalist societies is the bourgeoisie. They not only have more and control capital such as money, assets and knowledge than the working class, they also determine the ideology of exploitation by "represent[ing] it as the only rational, universally valid ones", and it is this control over the base and ideology that keeps the ruling class in power over the workers. (Marx, 1846, 1847).

Classical Marxist theory, despite suggesting many valid points on the objective societal workings, "adopt[s] a 'determinist' position" (Barry, 2017, p.166), single-dimensionally classifying individual identity as completely resultant of society, which is what this research seeks to disprove.

Althusser (1970) seeks to refine such ideas, since the metaphorical base-infrastructure model is overly simplistic (the base's influence on the superstructure cannot be unidirectional, since culture is influenced by individual choice, not just economics) and needs to be expounded on. He first asserts that for production to occur, the conditions of production have to be reproduced. For example, the ruling class, being able to replenish the material capital required to continue production (wages and new workers' knowledge), as well as reproduce the Ideology of exploitation of workers, continue to remain in power. (Althusser, 1970)

They are able to reproduce these conditions with "Repressive State Apparatuses (RSAs)" and "Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs)". RSAs such as the military or police function "predominantly by *repression* ... [and] secondarily by ideology", with ISAs such as school, church and family functioning vice versa. These Apparatuses, making up the superstructure, perpetuate the conditions of production and hence also influence the economic base. Also, because these Apparatuses have already and will always influence every individual in the society, the identity of individuals are "always-already interpellated"(i.e. their identities are always-already given to them) and thus have some fundamental similarities.

Althusser's revisionist theory allows that individual behaviour need not be directly caused by class (i.e. the objective workings of society), "without giving up the Marxist perspective all together", effectively supporting this research better than classical Marxist theory. (Barry, 2017) However, it, being very objective, insufficiently explains the human subjectivity that deviate from Capitalist Ideology, and hence requires other theories, like Authenticity, to add nuance to it.

2.4 Theories of Authenticity

Authenticity, in everyday terms, means being true to oneself. Given Holden's constant complaint of "phony" or inauthentic people, the rich philosophies behind this concept would be quite applicable to this research.

The conception of Authenticity can be traced to Rousseau and the Romantics. Rousseau believes that the natural state of man is good, and is corrupted by societal influences, as "the social man only knows how to live in the opinion of others" (Lacuelle, 2018). In order to be Authentic, one must first understand one's inner realm, before expressing those inner values through, physical means not copied from another. Some flawed assumptions made by these theories are that, the 'true self' is innate and natural, and that society prevents one from understanding and expressing his individual values. In other words, one cannot live in society and be Authentic. (Lacuelle, 2018)

The Existentialist philosophers such as Kierkegaard, Nietzsche and Heidegger attempted to improve on such theories. They suggest individuals understand themselves in relation to societal values through notions like God (Kierkegaard) or inevitable death (Heidegger). Through this relation, individuals will encounter, either suddenly through identity crisis (Kierkegaard and Nietzsche) or constantly (Heidegger), an internal question about their meaning in life. If they answer it truthfully and strive to fulfill it, they are authentic. If they ignore it and continue to "function as merely place-holders" in society, they are inauthentic. ("Authenticity", 2017) These theories, unlike the Romantic version, assert that the identity is greatly influenced by society, but still assumes that the "influence of others is... a source of inauthenticity" (Lacuelle, 2018,

p.202), which cannot be applied to *Catcher* since its characters suggest authentic individuals exist in society.

The most recent theory on Authenticity, Taylor's (1991), agrees that the above theories are valid in that they push for individuals to be morally upright in the face of flawed institutions and hierarchies. This is exactly Taylor's (1991) definition of Authenticity (alluding to Lionel Trilling, 1972), which is "the avoidance of being false to any man by being true to oneself". However, he believes they have been misinterpreted as encouraging "atomistic" (Lacuelle, 2018, p.202), 2) and hedonistic behaviours ignoring ethics. Such extreme individualism not only harms other individuals, physically, mentally or morally, but is also "self-defeating" (Taylor, 1991, p.37). Taylor (1991) asserts how individuals can only differentiate themselves to form an individual identity by engaging with "horizons of significance" (what society collectively values) (Taylor, 1991, p.39), of which includes Ethics, through dialogue with it. Hence, authentic individuals should not reject these horizons, which extreme individualism does) (Taylor, 1991).

Furthermore, Taylor (1991) disagrees with the previous conceptions of Authenticity that "identity-defining relations can't be seen as dispensable and destined for supersession" (Taylor, 1991, p.53). when it conflicts with the identity of an individual. As he previously asserts, the formation and evolution of one's identity is dialogical and "requires the recognition by other" (Taylor, 1991, p.45) important people around him that his identity is meaningfully differentiated. If one is to view one's intimate relationships as a means to an end, he not only ignores the fact that he cannot be authentic without meaningfully differentiating himself from others, he also

disregards the importance of Authenticity and is simply exploring “some modality of enjoyment”. (Taylor, 1991)

However, his theories are also extremely applicable to this research, since it complements Althusser’s theories very well. Both theories share large similarities, in that they agree institutions like Capitalism strongly influences individuals and result in “instrumental reason” (Taylor, 1991, p.5) In addition, Taylor’s (1991) theories builds on Marxist explanations of the societal influence by providing insight into the greater implications of such interpellation, both effectively complementary.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

This Methodology will be heavily guided by the above Research Questions, which effectively separates this research into two layers. The first is where 3 specific characters of *Catcher*, namely Stradlater, Phoebe and Mr Antolini (they are all major characters and are the most nuanced characters), and Holden would be held up against Taylor's (1991) theories of Authenticity, to see how much Holden's opinion of their Authenticity aligns with that of Taylor's (1991). This is to have a different perspective of Authenticity to be applied for a more nuanced understanding of the various characters in *Catcher*, which also accounts for the individual, subjective influence.

The second would be the analysis of the same characters with Althusser's (1970) theories of Capitalist Ideology (representing the objective influence of society), allowing for a deeper insight into why actions are authentic/inauthentic, and whether larger societal institutions and societal influence like Capitalism are the reasons behind it. Finally, with both analysis in mind, the final research question would be answered by to explain the connections between theories of Authenticity and Capitalist Ideology in **Chapter 5**, to understand how both societal influence and individual choice affect the Authenticity of an individual.

Chapter 4: Discussions and Analysis

4.1 Characters in *Catcher*

4.1.1 Analysis with Taylor's (1991) theories of Authenticity

One of which is Stradlater, whom Holden deems as narcissistic and phony. According to Holden, his roommate always “strok[ed] his bare chest and stomach, with this very stupid expression on his face” (Salinger, 1951, p.43), and usually walks around the dormitory bare-torsoed as he thought he had a “damn good build” (Salinger, 1951, p.27). Furthermore, Stradlater would coerce his dates for sexual favours in “this Abraham Lincoln, sincere voice”, one that made Holden “damn near puke”, despite his partner’s obvious discomfort and unwillingness (Salinger, 1951, p.52).

Stradlater’s self-obsession with his physical features such as his chest and abdomen is telling that his identity is built around an inflated self-image, a subject that is by no means significant to others, as seen in Holden’s obvious repulsion of it. Hence, he is unable to meaningfully differentiate his identity from others and cannot be Authentic.

Furthermore, the allusions to the earnest former, president and Holden’s exaggerated reaction highlights the obviousness of Stradlater’s pretense. Stradlater holds no regard for his romantic relationships, view them as a means to fulfilling his sexual desires. This shows that his intention is not to engage in dialogue with his significant other to explore and shape his identity to that of greater significance, but instead to obtain selfish self-fulfillment, reinforcing the fact of Stradlater’s inauthenticity.

Phoebe Caulfield is the opposite of Stradlater, being the most Authentic character in Holden's eyes. Something Holden adores about his sister is her childish behaviour, as after he read the below excerpt of Phoebe's notebook, he commented on how he could read "that kinda stuff... all day and all night long" (Salinger, 1951, p.173).

Why has south eastern Alaska so many caning factories?
Because there's so much salmon
Why has it valuable forests?
because it has the right climate
What has our government done to make life easier for the alaskan eskimos?
look it up tomorrow!!! (Salinger, 1951, p.173)

Phoebe's childish innocence is recognised by Holden not just because only Holden chooses to value it, but because it representative, in this case, of Phoebe's curiosity and imagination. These traits are almost universally valued and are "horizons of significance" (Taylor, 1991, p.39). By defining her character around such horizons, Phoebe is able to meaningfully differentiate herself from others and especially adults who lack such traits, proving her Authenticity.

Furthermore, at the very end of the book, Phoebe takes Holden's red hunting hat and puts it atop his head, resolving their fallout with the simple action, which "damn near killed" Holden. (Salinger, 1951, p.228). The red hunting cap is a significant symbol of Holden's confidence and inner beliefs, given that Holden seems to put it on in vulnerable moments to give him confidence. Phoebe putting the hat atop his head is therefore representative of her hoping to give confidence to the deeply discouraged Holden, highlighting her empathy. This is not only another horizon of significance, but also shows how she recognises the identity of her brother thereby engaging in dialogue to aid Holden in his exploration of identity, further reinforcing that she is Authentic.

Unlike the above 2 characters, Holden is very conflicted about the Authenticity of Mr. Antolini, a former teacher. On one hand, he immediately brought a student who committed suicide (jumped from the window) to the infirmary. “He didn't even give a damn if his coat got all bloody”, which Mr Antolini blanketed Castle in (Salinger, 1951, p.188). Furthermore, he allowed Holden to visit him in the middle of the night, and gives lengthy yet sound advice, and “you could tell he was concentrating and all” (Salinger, 1951, p.201).

Such actions are the direct embodiment of avoiding being false to any man by being true to oneself, Taylor's (1991) definition of Authenticity. Mr Antolini's selfless care for his students is a pillar that he builds his Authenticity upon, a horizon widely recognised and valued. By being so true to his identity, it is no wonder that he gains the respect of Holden.

However, the way Mr Antolini approaches certain relationship raises questions about his Authenticity. He is married to Mrs Antolini, a very wealthy yet unattractive woman who is “lousy with dough” and “about sixty years older” than Mr Antolini (Salinger, 1951, p,195). “They were always kissing each other a lot in public” (Salinger, 1951, p.200), though “both of them were never in the same room at the same time” (Salinger, 1951, p.196). Also, when Holden was asleep, Mr Antolini was “petting or patting [him] on the goddamn head”, to which Holden “bet [he] jumped about a thousand feet” (Salinger, 1951, p.207). “[F]alling over [him]self in the dark”, he immediately left the place, away from where “something pervery like that happens” (Salinger, 1951, p.208).

Shockingly, there is a lack of attraction and intimacy between both spouses, suggesting that the marriage was one of convenience. Mr Antolini's previous warmth toward Holden was also

interpreted as sexual grooming. He seems to view these relationships extremely instrumentally, where he seeks to gain money and sexual favours respectively. By viewing these relationships as a means to an end, Mr Antolini doesn't engage in dialogue to determine his identity, instead focusing on the material benefits of it, causing his identity to be self-determined and no longer meaningfully differentiated. Hence, such actions dilute his Authenticity, and the only conclusion to be made is that Authenticity does vary in different aspects of one's life.

4.1.2 Analysis with Althusser's (1970) theories of Ideology

Stradlater's narcissistic actions can be attributed to his social status. Being a student from Pencey, a private and elite institution that many wealthy members of society send their boys (Salinger, 1991, p.4), it's quite clear that Stradlater comes from a privileged background. Furthermore, he is gifted with "Year Book kind of handsome[ness]" and a "damn nice [athletic] build". Hence, it is likely that being of upper class and privilege has interpellated his identity with the Capitalist Ideology of exploitation, which encourages him to view himself as superior, fuelling his arrogant and aloof attitude. While this may seem superficial, it shows Capitalist Ideology did play a role in the formation of Stradlater's identity other than it being largely shaped by his individual choice.

His coercive sexual advancements during dates are also very transactional, given that he tries to buy sexual favours with pretence of sincerity and concern. Once again, the economic influences of Capitalist Ideology resulted in Stradlater's instrumental mindset, causing him to be calculative in the domain of romantic relationships. Therefore, it may seem that Ideology is entirely responsible for Stradlater's Inauthenticity, but it should be noted that it was his individual

choice to build his identity around his own selfish desires. Capitalist Ideology served to encourage such mindsets, before Stradlater decided to take it to the extreme. Therefore, Ideology did play an important role in causing Stradlater's Inauthenticity.

Phoebe, being very Authentic, is not expected to be swayed by Ideological influence. However, when she found out that Holden had been expelled from Pencey, she exclaimed "Daddy'll kill you" repeatedly. This suggests that family, especially her parents, plays a big role in her life. Family is an Ideological State Apparatus, which interpellates subjects with Capitalist Ideology. However, despite this Ideology still influencing her, they do not seem to permeate into her actions, suggesting that certain extents of economic or ideological influence is not harmful to Phoebe's Authenticity.

As for Mr Antolini, the latter examples in **Chapter 4.1.1** seems to suggest that his marriage to his wife was one of convenience. If so, such a relationship is extremely instrumental, where Mr Antolini simply hopes to gain extra economic capital for an increased spending power to consume better goods and services. All this is in order to rise up to an upper class, a clear influence of the Capitalist Ideology in the domain of love, where the relationship should matter more than the benefits. If he (as interpreted as Holden's first impression) also welcomed and counselled Holden simply to gain sexual favours, his actions are transactional, similar to Stradlater. Economic concepts such as cost-benefit ratio has already been interpellated into Mr Antolini's identity, which caused him to be as calculative as he did in his previously friendly relationship with Holden.

However, Holden's interpretation of the situation could very well be flawed, since "that kind of [pervert] stuff happened to me about twenty times to me when I was a kid" (Salinger, 1951, p.208), suggesting previous sexual abuse experiences and hence an inclination to interpret such actions as sexual advancements. He even second-guessed himself, thinking maybe "he *was* just patting my head for the hell of it" (Salinger, 1951, p.210). Together, the above emphasises the complexity of matters like identity and Authenticity, and how they cannot be prescribed into neat boxes.

As for the former examples, they suggest that despite the presence of such constant ideological influences, only some of Mr Antolini's actions are overly influenced by them to the point where they become Inauthentic. Hence, it can be concluded that as long as such Ideology does not cross a certain threshold, it will not affect Mr Antolini's Authenticity.

4.2 Holden Caulfield

4.2.1 Analysis with Taylor's (1991) theories of Authenticity

Holden's iconic fantasy of being a catcher in the rye, is clearly a central image in the story. It is the name of the novel, derived from a line of poetry Holden hears: "If a body catch a body comin' through the rye" (Salinger, 1951, p.186). It represents Holden's aspirations and beliefs, which is that he hopes to stop children from losing their innocence. However, this belief is repeatedly yet subtly challenged throughout the book, as seen in Phoebe immediately pointing out that the line is "If a body *meet* a body coming through the rye", and Mr Antolini's saying

how he “can clearly see you [Holden] dying nobly... for a highly unworthy cause” (Salinger, 1951, p.202).

This central feature of the novel highlights Holden’s aspirations of “catching” children before entering adulthood to protect their innocence. Clearly, his identity revolves around this belief that only children can be Authentic (which Taylor’s theories do not agree with). However, Phoebe’s correction directly juxtaposes and breaks down Holden’s entire understanding of adulthood and Authenticity. Mr Antolini’s advice also seems to directly point out it’s insignificance. Hence, his mission is sadly misguided and hence not a significant horizon of meaning. He therefore cannot meaningfully differentiate himself from other individuals of society, and cannot justify his Authenticity.

However, as Holden’s recount winds down, he offers another image of a carousel, where children all reach for a gold ring, a fun but dangerous endeavour. He comments that “it’s bad if you say anything to them” (Salinger, 1951, p.228). This symbolises a change in his mindset, that Holden has accepted that one shouldn’t stop a child from entering adulthood, that life is less a line where one strays from Authenticity but around and around, to and from Authenticity. Holden’s understanding of innocence and adulthood has been enlightened, thereby suggesting that Holden has taken a step toward being more Authentic after engaging in dialogue (with Phoebe and Mr Antolini).

Holden’s relationships are also essential in revealing his Authenticity, and it is most evident with Phoebe, given that there is no other characters which shares a bond as strong as theirs. Holden made an abrupt decision to “hitchhik[e his] way out west” and fantasized about escaping society

and it's convention. But after informing Phoebe of his plans, she insisted on going with him, to which is violently objected, as she "wouldn't be in that play anymore if she went away with [him]" (Salinger, 1951, p.222).

In contrast to Stradlater's instrumental view of relationships, Holden clearly cherishes the intimate relationships with his sister, and cares greatly for her. However, it is the fact that he is willing to share his plans with her alone, and changes his mind about leaving and innocence (as shown above) that makes him Authentic. Holden engages in dialogue through his intimate relationship with Phoebe, allowing him to explore his identity and allowing it to evolve. With this newfound understanding of his identity, he then was able to become more Authentic.

4.2.2 Analysis with Althusser's (1970) theories of Ideology

Holden is likely to be very well off, since he has enrolled in (and been expelled from) multiple private high schools like Pencey Prep. Furthermore, his father is a corporate lawyer who "really haul[s] it in" (Salinger, 1951, p.116). Yet because of his failing grades he is the subject of worry and pity. Not only is his father terribly concerned about [him]" (Salinger, 1951, p.200), even his teachers want to "put some sense in that head of [his]" (Salinger, 1951, p.15).

Holden's privileged background only serves to juxtapose against his academic failure and discouraged mindset. The Ideological State Apparatuses of school and family have already interpellated the importance of education into his identity, which is to ensure the next generation of the ruling class remains in power. This interpellation causes him to internalise his academic failures, viewing himself as that of a lower class in this aspect, and hence is alienated by and disillusioned from the economic workings of Capitalism. This eventually explains his rejection

of social convention that disguises the upper class Ideology of the people around him, leading him to believe that he should protect children from adulthood and losing their innocence to such influences. Once again, a seemingly individual and personal belief is shown to have been at least in part caused by Capitalist Ideology.

However, Holden asks Phoebe if she “got any dough [because he’s] literally broke” (Salinger, 1951, p.192) before leaving. When she offers him her christmas money, Holden didn’t want to accept the “eight dollars and ... *sixty* five cents” and instead wanted “two bucks... [n]o kidding” (Salinger, 1951, p.193). When Phoebe insisted on giving him all her money, Holden began to weep, and “thought [he] was going to choke to death or something” (Salinger, 1951, p.194).

The above is a common example of being Authentic in the face of economic pressures. Holden clearly knows the importance of money for survival since institutions and Ideology all imbue subjects with such needs, but he is able to subordinate such necessities in order to ensure the wellbeing and happiness of his sister. The fact that Holden was so touched by the meagre sum of money once again emphasises Holden’s prioritises his relationship with his sister above material wealth.

From Holden alone, it does seem that an individual’s Authenticity is directly determined by whether one chooses to prioritise the necessities presented by Capitalist Ideology, or a higher, more meaningful and significant horizon.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

The dichotomy of the reasons that cause an action, as reflected in the various readings of *Catcher* as well as the extreme individualism many perceive as an ideal, is insufficient to understand the multifaceted identities of individuals. The analysis of the characters in *Catcher* suggests how both the objective, economic workings of society and the personal, individual choice both play roles in influencing the Authenticity of his actions.

After an analysis with the theories of Authenticity, the first two of 4 characters are quite distinctly Authentic/Inauthentic. However, as seen in Mr Antolini and Holden, actions are not necessarily uniformly Authentic/Inauthentic, as an individual's identity is multifaceted and nuanced, resulting in varying extents of Authenticity in different aspects and domains of one's life. Furthermore, it highlights the obscurity of the individual identity, as one can only infer and interpret another's complex characteristics, and can only determine his Authenticity through a limited perspective.

The application of Marxist theory allowed for a deeper look into how the economic workings of society is responsible for an individual's Authenticity/Inauthenticity. Inauthentic individuals who possess extreme individualism do not align themselves to "horizons of significance" (Taylor, 1991, p.39), and though this is largely seen as an individual choice, it could have originated and evolved from the interpellation of Capitalist Ideology, as it did with Stradlater. Yet, the element of choice is most definitely present, in that individuals can choose the subject to differentiate their identity with and whether it aligns with horizons.

Furthermore, Inauthenticity also stems from viewing and treating intimate relationships instrumentally. Such a perspective can be directly linked to the economic workings of society, where institutions such as Capitalism encourage individuals to think in terms of market imperatives in the domain of relationships. However, it is seen that while the influence of such institutions have already and continue to affect our actions, it is not unhealthy as long as an individual priorities the horizon that he self-defines against.

Hence, it can be concluded that the economic, objective workings of society provide the context to any action that an individual does by interpellating him with Capitalist Ideology, but it only partially determines one's Authenticity. The individual then has a choice to engage in dialogic exchange to explore his identity and base it upon a horizon of meaning and importance to be Authentic.

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