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Grief and Loss in Jerome David Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* (1951)

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Master Degree in “**Literature and Civilisation**”

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Dedication

In memory of my father, uncle and grandmother

To my Mother and the few people who are dear to me

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Abstract

Grief is known to be the emotion experienced after a loss due to the intense private feelings of attachment that a human being holds towards someone or something. The topic of grief emerged as an early 20th century invention in the psychology field. An essay introduced by Sigmund Freud in 1917 influenced upcoming contemporary models of grief, such as Elizabeth Kübler-Ross and David Kessler's model, which divided the emotion of grief into five stages. They published a book entitled *On Grief and Grieving*, year 2005. The model of grief was previously discussed by Elizabeth Kübler Ross in her previous work *On death and Dying*, year 1969, revealing the five stages of death, namely: denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. This study aims to identify the stages of grief in J.D. Salinger's novel *The Catcher in the Rye* (1951), for it investigates the grieving process of a young adolescent named Holden Caulfield by applying Kübler Ross model of grief. Based on a review of the literature on Kübler Ross model and other theories on the grieving process, a qualitative thorough analysis was executed in the designated work entitled *The Catcher in the Rye* (1951), in order to indicate the grieving stages of its protagonist. The analysis of J.D. Salinger's novel identified the grief experienced by its protagonist, which evoked the five stages of grief. The results were that the chosen material illustrates the stages of grief over three different types of losses, namely: feeling of loss over leaving a place, loss of a child's innocence, and loss over a loved member.

Keywords: Grief, loss, Kübler-Ross model, *The Catcher in the Rye*.

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General Introduction

General Introduction

Grief is undoubtedly a source of great distress and sorrow. Grief is about loss and every single individual will sooner or later experience loss, major or minor. It is an unavoidable set of intense and private emotions. So why is it such a taboo subject to discuss? Ignored and avoided in day-to-day conversations? The grief that lies deep within one's soul and mind, such feelings of sadness and sorrow, cannot go untreated for the damages that it might cause to someone's mental health, but grief goes beyond just psychology, it has a history, as its effects have been witnessed by previous societies. We felt it since the very first day of existence when we had left our mother's womb.

The *Catcher in the Rye*, a novel written by an American author named Jerome David Salinger, took place in New York City, during the post war era. Introducing a young 16 years old teenager named, "Holden Caulfield" who struggled to conform himself to the adult world, facing all kinds of problems that sent him into a state of cynicism, mostly due to the losses he had accumulated, especially the death of his little brother. Although it is not discussed thoroughly in the novel but Holden Caulfield was grieving the loss of his brother along with the loss of his childhood innocence.

Since the Austrian neurologist Sigmund Freud wrote about grief in his papers and essays around 1900's, many contemporary researchers followed and studied this psychological condition. Freud defined mourning as a normal emotional reaction when experiencing a detachment or loss of an object of love. Melancholia was explained as a more severe depression and sense of despair after losing someone. Elizabeth Kübler-Ross was second to introduce a model of grief in her book entitled *On death and Dying* (1969), displaying five stages of grief, which one can experience after a loss, namely, denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. Her book co-written with David Kessler while she

was terminally ill is entitled *On Grief and Grieving*, published in year 2005 after her death, it served to showcase the five stages and process of grieving that an individual go through, in the hope to provide a certain emotional comfort and healing. She responded to her critics and explained that her model was never intended to be a textbook or a research study, it is a tool that provides the grieving process a structure to lean on into, helping the individual to recognize what he or she is going through and perceive it as a natural reaction, which is meant to be experienced.

The subject of loss and grief has always been intriguing, especially because we experience losses quite often than we would expect. We do not primarily grieve over the death of someone, we also grieve the dreams and ambitions we did not fulfill or protect. It is easy to get trapped in those emotions of sorrow and we sometimes fail to move on as we fight those feelings rather than learn how to truly experience and cope with their ache through acceptance. Also there is the discomfort, misunderstanding and fear of the overwhelming emotions of grief, which I am guilty of, especially when it is someone else who is undergoing a loss, as I could not understand the burst of emotional reactions that I witnessed when I encountered individuals crying and screaming over the loss of a loved one. It had always alarmed me to see members going through that emotional state and found it unnatural as no one would actually explain it or talk about the subject, even asking questions seemed wrong to do. Now through Kübler Ross model, I came to realize that it is normal and natural to undergo grief with its reactions. Through my reading of *The Catcher in the Rye*, I could not help but empathize with Holden Caulfield and try to identify what had extinguished his passions and dreams at such young age, throwing him into a state of cynicism. Through his behaviors, I suspected that he is grieving multiple losses. As a result, I decided to investigate the concept of grief.

This thesis examines the grieving aspects of loss in J.D. Salinger's novel *The Catcher in the Rye* (1951) by implementing Kübler Ross model of grief provided in her work co-written with David Kessler and entitled *On grief and Grieving* (2005). The model serves as a framework to identify the stages of grief experienced by the main protagonist of the novel, namely, Holden Caulfield. I believe that this research will serve as a gateway to open the eyes of readers about the importance of the grieving process and familiarize the concept of grief and its discussion in situations of loss.

I have arrived at few questions that will help mold this research. How is grief portrayed in J.D. Salinger's novel *The Catcher in the Rye*? And to what extent it affects its main character, namely Holden Caulfield? Are Kübler Ross stages of grief credible and valid to illustrate the five stages of grief in my literary work? Three hypotheses are suggested to provide answers to the research questions. First, grief is indeed present in Salinger's novel *The Catcher in the Rye* since its main protagonist experiences failure and loss. Second, Holden Caulfield's mental health state is gravely affected and in constant decline. Third, Kübler Ross model of grief is worthy of application through works of fiction.

My dissertation is composed of three themed chapters. The first chapter will offer a background of the study of grief and its definition, along with a brief historical view from a Biblical perspective. This chapter will also discuss the criticism that Kübler Ross model received since its introduction in 1969, along with an overview of the five stages of grief presented in her work *On Grief and Grieving* (2005). The second chapter will introduce J.D. Salinger's novel along with its main characters and themes, in addition to how the novel has reflected the mentality of the American society during the post- world war era. Finally, the third chapter will make use of the theoretical, critical, and literary background of the previous chapters in order to examine the stages of grief witnessed through the emotional reactions portrayed by the protagonist of the novel. Finally, this chapter will provide an understanding

of the grieving process and its importance in providing healing along with lessons in order to learn more about how to cope with feelings of detachment and loss.

Chapter One

The study of Grief as a Theory

Introduction

We have been grieving since the moment we have left our mother's wombs. We could say that grief has been our companion throughout our existence; it surfaces at times of hardship signaling the occurrence of a loss, whether major or minor.

This chapter will review a brief historical view about grief based on a Biblical reference. In addition, a background study that includes scholars and theorists views on grief as a concept and a model in the fields of psychiatry and psychology. The chapter will mainly highlight Kübler Ross model of grief starting by its introduction in her first work *On Death and Dying* (1969), its criticism and transition from a model widely used to identify the stages of dying to a model that showcases the stages of grief in reliance to any type of loss. Finally, the chapter will attempt to familiarize Kübler Ross's model of grief to the audience, showcasing the significance of the grieving process and its role in providing healing after encountering a significant loss.

1. Brief Biblical History About Grief

Saint Paul, also known as Paul the Apostle, led the first generation of Christians in the 1st century (49CE). St. Paul addressed a letter to the Corinthians, inhabitants of the ancient Greek city Corinth, where he preache about his apostleship and an important aspect about grief. The verse mentions, “¹⁰ For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death.” (*English Standard Version*, 2Corinthians, 7:10) In this verse, Paul the Apostle explains that there are two kinds of grief; the first one is holy, paving the way for redemption and salvation in life. However, the second kind of grief guides its follower towards death and eternal suffering. The Corinthians grieved a godly grief and they were spared from death and earned deliverance. Death in this Bible

verse has a symbolic meaning, which refers to suffering and damnation. (Rock Valley Chapel 00:00-04:47)

2. Background Studies of Grief

The word “grief” was first used in the 15th century; it was derived from the Anglo-French “gref” and Latin “gravis”, which means “heavy” or “sad”. It is synonymous with affliction, anguish, dolefulness, dolor, heartbreak, soreness, sorrow, and woe. (Merriam-Webster)

In 1917, Sigmund Freud published an essay called *Mourning and Melancholia*. Mourning is regarded as a normal response to a loss while melancholia is considered a pathological condition. In the case of melancholia, treatment such as the use of antidepressants could be required to the patient along with psychological therapy. (Freud 243-244) According to George A. Bonanno, Sigmund Freud had compared grief and depression; he stressed that both grief and depression call for suffering. Bonanno argued that Freud did not consider the pathological aspect of bereavement but rather his colleagues and supporters did by publishing the essay *Mourning and Melancholia* with his name. Bonanno mentions that Freud considered depression as a natural emotion experienced by the individual who is grieving the loss of somebody or something and it is part of the mourning work. Freud did use the expression “object of love” to describe any type of loss. He argued that the death of an object of love brings suffering and loss of psychological energy that can be retrieved only if one does the necessary grief work. The attachment that human beings have for one another is the result of the libido, a term notoriously used by Freud; it is considered to be the motivation for every action and reaction we act upon. The way to break the psychological bond between the griever and the person he lost would be by recalling all the memories shared with the one

we lost, experiencing the feeling of longing entirely and fully. He admits that the process is painful and time consuming but necessary in order to move forward. (Bonanno 14-16)

Helene Deutsch, a psychoanalyst during the early 1900's, published a paper entitled *The Absence of Grief*, where she observed on her four patients symptoms of unfinished grief, though her observations were not credible enough due to lack of samples and absence of rigorous data. However, she highlighted the work of the unconscious and its impact on someone's mental health. Years after, a psychiatrist named Eric Lindemann published a paper in 1944, and it is considered the first study on bereavement. He argued that psychological problems related to grief can be hidden deep within the psyche. Thus, unresolved grief exists. However, according to Bonanno, Lindemann lacked evidence and objectivity in his study since he based his study on mere observation of a bereavement group. (Bonanno 19-20)

Elizabeth Kübler Ross model of grief came to life after the publication of her book *On Death and Dying*, in the year 1969; it featured the five stages of grief: denial, anger, bargaining, depression and finally acceptance. Her work described simple conversations between doctors and terminally ill patients who shared their thoughts, fears and personal experiences in their journey of anticipatory grief. According to the bioethicist Kuczewski (2004), the subtitle of the book provides a clear clue of what this book contains and aims to accomplish, as it mentions, "What the dying have to teach doctors, nurses, clergy and their own families?" (Kübler Ross vii)

Elizabeth Kübler Ross was a Swiss American psychiatrist, who was among the precursors in the field of psychiatry to study the psychological aspects of facing death. In her preface, the author describes her reaction to the idea of tackling the subject of death as she admits the difficulty of making such topic captivating and desirable to the readers. Kübler Ross watched over terminally ill patients for a period of two and a half years, where she observed and listened carefully to their thoughts. The psychiatrist explained that her work was

not intended to serve as a textbook to manage dying patients or present a complete study of the psychology of the dying but rather a description of the social and psychological world of the dying based on her observations. The aim was to provide the terminally ill with a voice in order to tutor the listeners and readers about the final stages of life, opening doors of learning the patterns of the thoughts of the human's psyche during its final stages, and what fears, anxieties and wishes it holds, in addition, to attaining an experience that will leave the individual able to assist and accept the faith of the dying in their final moments, Kübler Ross explains how the dying can teach the doctors, nurses and families about the final days of existing, asking everyone to simply listen. (Kübler Ross *Preface*)

Despite Kübler Ross emphasis on how her work must not be considered as a textbook, a research study or a guideline for managing people on the verge of death, her critics somehow targeted those same ideas. In addition, Dr. Parkes, a British psychiatrist whose foreword can be found in the same book *On Death and Dying*, affirms that the indifferences of the nature of human beings present a complexity for the application of a conceptual system that would manage the emotions of loss, he also acknowledges the credibility and validity of the descriptive work done by Kübler Ross. Furthermore, in his introduction to the newest edition of the Kübler Ross's book *On Death and Dying*, Kellehear, states that the Journal of American Medical Association examined the stages of grief in an empirical manner, suggesting data collection, findings and critical letters. The study was entitled *Empirical Examination of the Stage Theory of Grief*, according to literature reviews provided by theorists published in the same year 2007. The study established that despite the variation of patient's emotional response, individuals seemed to follow stages corresponding to those Kübler Ross and other theorists predicted in the past. (Kübler Ross ix)

Kellehear argues that the criticism over Kübler Ross's work were obvious reflections already mentioned in the book multiple times, precisely about the issues reflecting the

absence of data collection, sampling and empirical testing, mistakenly viewing Kübler Ross work as a research study where it is a work of description and observation done through dialogues with terminally ill people and were not considered as participants. The stages of anticipatory grief as it is portrayed and mentioned in the author's work were not meant to be chronologically respected or to be considered as a textbook, yet the critics somehow were determined to reflect otherwise on that matter. Furthermore, Kübler Ross was considered a radical figure during the 1960's for speaking about the dead and mentioning death, her ideas seemed scandalous even for her colleagues. Discussing the subject of death during that period was viewed as taboo in the 1960's. Kübler Ross managed to become a pioneer in the field of dying and its care, pointing at the importance of listening to the dying. (Kübler Ross x-xi)

Kübler Ross work with the dying has served as a gateway to enter the world of the terminally ill with the aim to understand their emotional responses, encouraging people to communicate with their dying. Kübler Ross's *On Death and Dying* (1969) has proved to be a timeless work, as it is still being recommended to those who seek to understand the human experience of facing death.

3. Elisabeth Kübler Ross & David Kessler Model *On Grief and Grieving* (2005)

Maria Shriver, an American journalist and author, expressed her gratitude and admiration for Kübler Ross and David Kessler work in their book *On Grief and Grieving* (2005). As she marked her presence by being part of this work, she wrote a foreword where she explained her experience with grief and loss. She makes claims on how our present and previous society have been illiterate when it comes to the subject grief. She states that we are "a grief-illiterate nation", she also considers Elizabeth Kübler Ross as the mother of the movement that familiarized grief in today's conversations and painted it as a culture. She discussed how Kübler Ross model of grief provides a framework and a structure that helps the

individual to grieve and find healing, which starts by recognizing the stages of the grief provided through the work of Kübler Ross and David Kessler, as reading, talking and releasing those emotions of loss with others, guides the individual to a better path forward in life. According to Shriver, our culture is thirsty to talk about loss, whatever loss it may be. Maria Shivers confessed the events of her tragic losses and how Kübler Ross guided her to find solace through her work. (Kübler Ross and Kessler 7-9)

David Kessler is an American author who co-wrote two books with Elisabeth Kübler Ross, the first one was entitled *Life Lessons* (2000) and the second one was *On Grief and Grieving* (2005), which marked the end of collaboration of these two authors, considering that Elisabeth Kübler Ross died shortly after concluding her work with David Kessler, and could not witness the publication of this latest. In The Preface of their book *On Grief and Grieving* (2005), David Kessler describes the final days of Kübler Ross and her inspiring dedication to the work while she was terminally ill. Naturally, *On Grief and Grieving* (2005) depicts the grieving experience of both authors, as they note the importance of the process of grief. To illustrate, they mention,

There is no correct way or time to grieve. We wrote this book hoping to familiarize the reader with the aspects of grief and grieving. No book should be used to replace professional help if that is needed. We hope this book will become a beacon by shedding light, hope, and comfort on the most difficult time we will all experience in our lives. (Kübler Ross and Kessler 10)

In addition, Kübler Ross told her associate, “You will have to go into grief yourself, if this book is to become all that it should be” (11). She mentioned also, “I have been in anticipatory grief for a long time now and I expect there is more to come” (11). The preface is entitled “I Am Done” because it reflected the acceptance of her faith as she struggled with illness for quite a long time, she told her companion David Kessler about the importance of listening to

the dying, “Listen to the dying. They will tell you everything you need to know when they are dying. And it is easy to miss” (12). Elisabeth Kübler-Ross had died on August 2004, leaving a legacy of brilliant works that had helped many through their experiences of loss. (Kübler-Ross and Kessler 11-14)

1.1. Anticipatory Grief

Anticipatory grief is considered to be a grief within the self; it is the fear of an eventual loss, which will occur sometime in the near or far future. To illustrate, Kübler-Ross and Kessler used the movie “The Lion King” in order to showcase the first loss that children may witness, as they realize that there is something called death, which sets the mind to think of it and what it could mean if it happens to a loved one.

One expects that only terminally ill people are prone to experience the five stages of death and grief while anticipating a near death. However, the closest people to the dying undergo through their own anticipatory grief, along with its different emotional reactions, with the knowledge that their loved one is on the verge of death and cannot be rescued. Moreover, there is more grief to come after the anticipation of loss, a different kind with its own stages and emotions. (Kübler-Ross and Kessler 15)

3.2. The Five Stages of Grief

The five stages of dying have evolved into the five stages of grief, namely denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance, as they are considered the five emotional reactions that an individual experiences when encountering a loss of any kind. In Kübler-Ross’s first book *On Death and Dying* (1969), these stages expressed the emotional reaction of dying patients. However in her third work *On Grief and Grieving* (2005), the stages are used to identify the emotional reactions of living people grieving the loss of a loved one. The

role of these stages is to serve as a framework that guides the griever through the process of living. They give a certain type of structure in order to identify the overwhelming feelings of loss, which differ from one individual to another. Nonetheless, they are not a set of chronological entities or rules that must be ordered and followed entirely. These stages of grief were provided to help individuals cope with life and loss situations. (Kübler Ross and Kessler 18)

3.2.1. Denial

Denial does not mean a complete unawareness and disbelief of someone's death, it manifests in a state of questioning, shock, and numbness. Kübler Ross and Kessler illustrate the stage of denial by telling the story of a married couple named Alicia and Matthew. Matthew died in an away trip from his country in a car accident; his wife received the news through a phone call. Her first reactions were questioning his death as she said, 'I can't believe he's dead.' She also says, "Did I just dream that? This must be a mistake." She had doubts until she saw his body and the wedding ring on his finger. Even after the funeral arrangement, Alicia would talk to her sister and tell her how she sometimes thought of her husband coming from the trip. Alicia's psyche was not ready to comprehend her husband's death at that present; this helped her survive the loss as her denial worked as a mechanism which helped her cope temporarily with her daily activities, it protected her from the overwhelming feelings that her psyche would not be able to handle all at once. The denial, numbness, and shock felt when one hears the news of the death of a loved one are the psyche's protective mechanisms, which help the individual pace the feelings of grief until he starts accepting the reality little by little. (Kübler Ross and Kessler 18-20)

3.2.2. Anger

Anger after loss can take many forms in the grieving process, it surfaces when you are feeling safe and have gathered enough strength to function in your daily life. One may become angry at his loved one for departing so soon, or for not taking good care of himself, at the doctors, at god...etc. Anger after grief can be illogical but necessary in the process of healing. To let out your anger and truly feel it. Lots of people take the approach to suppress anger but it is wrong, it is essential to unleash it fully without hurting yourself or others around you. Anger is a proof of the attachment you had for your significant and loved ones. (Kübler Ross 21-24)

3.2.3. Bargaining

The stage of bargaining in grief is characterized by statements that usually start with “if only...” and “what if ...” Kubler Ross and Kessler refers to them as the “if onlys”, it can appear as a form of negotiation and feeling of guilt, but it works rather as a distraction from the sad reality. One can find temporal relief from the pain, which opens a way to fill the gaps in our current life in the absence of a loved one. (Kübler Ross and Kessler 24-27)

3.2.4. Depression

Depression in a time of grief is not a sign of mental illness, it is perfectly normal to feel depressed after the loss of someone. It would be rather unheard of not to experience depression after the death of a loved one. Kübler Ross and David Kessler portraed depression as a visitor and a guest whether he is unwanted or not, once you allow yourself to explore the sadness and sorrow, the sooner those feelings will leave, as they serve a crucial purpose in the journey of one’s grief. Depression after a loss is meant to slow the individual down and enable him to explore new deeper places into his soul. It should be noted that depression

comes and goes, it is natural considering the tragic situation and people should be aware to respect one's feelings through these times of sorrow and not try to fix it with unnatural ways. People usually tend to cheer the mourner, which is a sign that indicates their discomfort or even insecurities when it comes to dealing with tragic situations. (Kübler Ross and Kessler 27-30)

3.2.5. Acceptance

Acceptance does not mean you are at a stage where you feel happy again or get back to your old self, because you cannot forget about the past and your loss. It is about recognizing the reality and learning how to adapt to the new norms. As the authors mentioned, "Finding acceptance may be just having more good days than bad." The loss encountered cannot be replaced but there is place and time for new connections and meaningful changes ahead as one begins to live again. (Kübler Ross and Kessler 30-32)

Conclusion

As a summary, Kübler Ross model of grief has been widely used but misunderstood since its introduction. Its critics desperately attempted to frame it as a research study and a guide through the process of grief, ignoring the author's notes and remarks that state how the stages of grief are not a textbook but rather a tool to help the griever recognize the patterns of grief and its overwhelming emotions, teaching the individual about the importance of recognizing those emotions and accepting that grief is a natural response to any kind of loss whether major or minor.

Chapter Two

General view on J.D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* (1951)

Introduction

The Catcher in the Rye (1951) is an American novel that marked a notable popularity with the 1950's American society. J.D. Salinger was a war veteran, deployed in Europe during World War II; he reflects his feelings and state through his novel. The present chapter will briefly discuss the characteristics of the American Society during the Post-World War era. It will provide a plot summary of the novel *The Catcher in the Rye*, along with some of the important characters, which impacted the development of the main protagonist "Holden Caulfield". Finally, this chapter will highlight themes such as, alienation, materialism, and the spirit of innocence.

1. Characteristics of the American Society During Post-world War II

The Catcher in the Rye is an American novel that portrays the journey of an American teenager during Post-World War II era. The Post World War period was an era of political and economic prosperity. It marked the end of World War II leaving America to become the strongest nation in the world, which impacted its society at the social and economic level positively. The government provided the utmost luxurious facilities, work place comfort and jobs. It encouraged education, ambition and business work plans with many investors interested, especially that the war benefited the Americans greatly, being outside the American soil. However, many still faced the side effects of the tragic memories and stories of the war. (Hadjabi 6) Although war veterans were honored significantly by their nation and provided with financial aid, their psychological condition was gravely marked by the atrocities faced during battles. It resulted in loss of spiritual and religious beliefs, deep feelings of alienation, sadness and mental problems related to post traumatic stress disorder. J.D. Salinger is an example of the youngsters deployed during World War II in Europe, after

his arrival he was diagnosed with post traumatic disorder and it changed him completely, his novel *The Catcher in the rye* and his other works of fiction reflected his feelings of alienation and mental condition, which illustrated the society's mental state after the war. The war was won but significant losses were sustained.

2. Summary of *The Catcher in the Rye*

The Catcher in the Rye tells the story of a troubled sixteen year old boy, named "Holden Caulfield" who is the main protagonist and narrator in this novel. He narrates his journey during the past three days after his expulsion from Pencey Prep School and being sent back home, which was not the first but rather the fourth time that he got himself expelled from a school. Before leaving, Holden decides to step by the football game held in his school but just watches from far as he stands on the top of a hill, where he mentions how he likes to have a certain moment of goodbye before leaving any place he has been to or spent time at. After announcing his goodbye, he decides to visit his teacher Mr. Spencer, who called him over after hearing the news of Holden's departure. Holden Caulfield expected to hear some words of comfort but ended up being lectured, although he understood that Mr. Spencer felt bad about his situation.

Holden lets the reader know how Pencey Prep School is viewed and advertised as an elite school that grooms youngsters into a future model generation, but the reality is very different. When Holden heads back to his dorm, he even exposes the fact that his school is full of crooks, its educational system fails to accommodate with certain student's needs; and it is fairly described as materialistic, mundane, and full of phonies. The word "phony" is Holden's favorite term to describe his entourage and the world around him.

At his dorm, Holden frequently exchanges conversations with his two dorm roommates, Ackley and Stradlater, whom he does not acknowledge as friends. In fact,

Holden fails to connect with people, leaving him lonely, depressed and alienated. At his dorm, an incident occurred, which forced Holden to leave that night out of impulse and burst of angry emotions after fighting with Stradlater. It was cold and snowy that night but Holden made the decision to take a train to New York City where he resides but chose to spend the night at a hotel to avoid the inevitable confrontation with his parents as they had not heard of the news of his expulsion yet. Holden's adventure begins in New York City, as he becomes a wanderer in the streets of the city, spending three days on his own trying to reach friends or past acquaintances to escape the constant feeling of loneliness and emptiness.

Holden fails to communicate with society and it depresses him immensely. The one positive idea or view that Holden addresses is his protective nature over children, as he seeks to protect their innocence and their purity from the corrupt adult world. Nevertheless, His thoughts are cynical as he talks about leaving the city and goes to find a cabin in the wood to live alone, thoughts he shared with his little Sister Phoebe and old friend Sally Hayes.

Holden's physical and mental state deteriorated over the days to the point where he found himself spending the night at a train station, barely able to walk and hallucinating about his deceased brother Allie, as he was talking to himself in public thinking he was speaking to his brother. These misfortunate events almost led him to flee the city and his home entirely. Phoebe, his little sister shows her brother feelings of attachment, deciding to accompany him. It was a touchy moment that brought awareness to Holden's mind on how his decisions can impact the ones he love.

By the end of the novel Holden is held at a medical institution to seek medical and psychological treatment, acknowledging and recognizing the importance of certain people in his life.

3. List of Characters

This list contains and describes the most noticeable characters within the novel but not entirely all of them. The list introduces characters mentioned more often than others.

Holden Caulfield

The main character and protagonist of the novel is named Holden Caulfield, he is a rebellious teenager of sixteen years old. He narrates his journey after his fourth expulsion from School. In fact, Holden sets himself in a solitary adventure in the city of New York. His failure at school, though expected, leaves him with a bitter taste, an additional disappointment to add to his collection of failures. One of the main characteristics of Holden Caulfield is his constant cynical views of society, resulting into his alienation and failure to conform to his community. One can admit that any society is built on some artificial and fake idealistic pillars that do not reflect a pure honest reality but abandoning his life without trying to adapt is certainly not the right answer. Holden Caulfield is the type of individual that looks at people with a negative lens, ignoring his own flaws. Thus, he displays the same characteristics of the same people he despises. The reader can view him either as an adolescent who is afraid and disoriented in the midst of the reality of growing up or as a protestor of a hypocrite system of living.

Phoebe Caulfield

Phoebe is Holden's little sister, who is ten years old, and very dear to her brother Holden. She is very attached to him and likes him a lot even willing to go along with him when he was about to leave his home. Unlike Holden, she is a bright student and quite insightful, she understands her brother and sees through his cynicism, which he puts as a front to cover his true self. She is the reason why he changed his mind about leaving, as she made

him realize the importance of his presence around. She is Holden's close friend and sister whom he seeks to protect and care about.

Allie Caulfield

Allie is Holden's diseased younger brother, who died three years ago of leukemia. Holden was thirteen when he lost his brother and his death affected him gravely. Allie used to have a baseball glove with texts of poetry written within. Holden recollects the memories of his brother and describes as the most smart and talented human being on the face of earth. Holden displays the feeling of longing for Allie through the novel, as he carries his little brother's baseball glove around with him. At one point in the novel, Holden talks to Allie, as he imagines Allie leading him through the streets of New York, keeping him awake after a hard troublesome time.

D.B. Caulfield

D.B is Holden's eldest brother, he resides in California, Hollywood. He writes screen plays for movies and he is a very talented writer but Holden despises the fact that he left New York to work in movies and became a slave for Hollywood. Nevertheless, Holden admits to his older brother's talent and wishes he focused more on writing for the sake of writing. Through D.B's work, the reader can view Holden's dislike for Hollywood movies and actors since they portray a fake exaggerated reality of life, which does not sit well in Holden's mind.

Robert Ackley

Ackley is Holden's dorm mate at Pencey Prep School. He is known to have no respect for hygiene or for personal space. Holden seems to find him unpleasant but still talks to him and even misses him as he mentions at the end of the novel.

Stradlater

Stradlater is Holden's roommate at Pencey's dorms. He is portrayed as a very handsome, popular, and self-centered boy. Unlike Ackley, he looks sophisticated from the outside but Holden exposes his bad hygiene when he is shaving with a rusty, dirty razor. Stradlater and Holden fought one another because of a girl named Jane Gallagher, who happened to be Holden's past neighbor and friend, for whom he had developed some sentiments. Stradlater went on a date with her, and Holden could not fathom the idea that they were together on a date.

Mr. Spencer

Mr. Spencer is Holden's teacher of History at Pencey. He is described by Holden to be very old and always sick. We are introduced to Mr. Spencer at the beginning of the novel when Holden is called over to his house. Mr. Spencer showed concerns for Holden's future, for failing and getting expelled but he manages only to annoy him by giving him a lecture about how he must apply himself.

Mr. Antolini

Mr. Antolini was Holden's past teacher of English. Holden appreciates him a lot and considers him a marvelous teacher with a neat personality. Holden has a talent for writing and has always done well in English courses. Mr. Antolini is a wise person with great insights about life, he seems to understand Holden's character and tries to comfort him when he came to his house late at night. Mr. Antolini was hospitable enough to invite Holden to stay the night, but things took another direction when Holden perceived Mr. Antolini's gesture of patting him in the head while he was asleep to be suspicious of homosexuality, which left Holden finding an excuse to leave as quickly as possible.

Jane Callagher

Jane is Holden's past neighbor and friend when they were younger, for whom he had feelings and found to be very attractive. Although he does not meet her during his journey, he tried to call her but then stopped. She was the reason behind Holden and Stradlater's fight.

Sally Hayes

Sally is Holden's past lover, she is described as attractive but superficial. They had a date together after Holden's arriving to New York where they disagreed upon the idea Holden had about taking her along with him far away from the city to live in the countryside.

4. Themes

4.1. Alienation and Loneliness

One of the significant themes found engraved deep within the novel is the feeling of alienation. Holden Caulfield portrays this theme through his inability to conform to society; in fact, he insults its people by calling out everyone to be phonies, materialistic and unsympathetic. To illustrate, Holden unveiled his desire to leave far away in the countryside and find a cabin in the woods where he will be on his own. Moreover, his little sister Phoebe accuses him of not liking or finding pleasure within his own circle. Holden's red hunting hat is considered to be a symbol of indifference as it portrays Holden's unique style. Finally, Holden blames society for not being authentic and honest for his failure to communicate, but the reality is that he uses his alienated figure as a protective armor, which is made out of cynical opinions about the world. As he demonstrates by saying, "He wouldn't have understood it anyway. It wasn't up his alley at all. One of the biggest reasons I left Elkton Hills was because I was surrounded by phonies." (Salinger 8)

4.2. A Phony, Superficial, and Materialistic World

Throughout his journey, Holden complains and exposes the reality of the materialistic American Society. Pencey Prep School is the ultimate example of a superficial school that puts a false front, which lures families to believe that it is the best choice for the future of their children. Holden shares his view about the school at the start of the novel by saying,

Pencey Prep is this school that's in Agerstown, Pennsylvania. You probably heard of it. You've probably seen the ads, anyway. They advertise in about a thousand magazines, always showing some hotshot guy on a horse jumping over a fence. Like as if all you ever did at Pencey was play polo all the time. I never even once saw a horse anywhere near the place. And underneath the guy on the horse's picture, it always says: "Since 1888 we have been molding boys into splendid, clear-thinking young men." Strictly for the birds. They don't do any damn more molding at Pencey than they do at any other school. And I didn't know anybody there that was splendid and clear-thinking and all. Maybe two guys. If that many. And they probably came to Pencey that way (Slinger 1).

Holden's use of the term "Phony" to describe the world around him, is one of the characteristics of his narration, and he uses it almost as a concept. It refers to the fake and dishonesty of people and the world around him. Holden's view of the world as phony is an excuse to remain isolated, because the truth is that the grown up world scares him, as a result of his failure to understand its standards. In the end, Holden's fears and failure to acknowledge his flaws impact him to borrow the concept of phoniness and to vocalize this term throughout the novel, which helped him cope and justify his failure to conform to society's norms.

4.3. The spirit of Innocence

The theme of innocence in *The Catcher in the Rye* is put to the fore to describe the purity of a child's soul and how it fades away as he grows and becomes an adult. Holden Caulfield's depression is a cause of the loss of his innocent self as he wishes that he had preserved because the reality of the adult world is cruel and deceptive. In Holden's eyes innocence must be protected from the dishonesty of the grown up world. Hence, the idea of the title of this novel arose, as *The Catcher in the Rye* refers to a poem by Robert Burns that reads, "If a body meets a Body through the rye." (Salinger 93), which Holden interprets as a fantasy, where he sees himself saving kids running through a field of rye from falling out of a cliff and it would make him become "The Catcher in the Rye". Holden also shows anger towards the adults for not protecting the innocence of childhood, especially when he finds out about the profanity written and engraved in some of the walls at Phoebe's school and the museum. He is concerned if kids would try to know what it means, so he tries to erase them and stop any child from getting exposed to such profane terms. Holden Caulfield is a teenager who has experienced his fair share of disappointments in his process of growing up. He discloses the loss of his own innocence and grieves over this loss.

Conclusion

This chapter is considered to be an overview of J.D. Salinger's novel *The Catcher in the Rye*. It introduces a general preview of its content and what it reflects about the American society during the Post-World War II era. It provides themes that pave the way to study the feeling of loss in its many aspects.

Chapter Three

The Five Stages of Grief in *The Catcher in the Rye*

(1951)

Introduction

Grief in J.D. Salinger's novel *The Catcher in the Rye* (1951) varies in its forms from grieving a place, the loss of a loved one, to the loss of past beliefs. Holden Caulfield, the main protagonist in Salinger's novel describes these sorrows throughout the journey he undertakes. Using Kübler Ross model of grief based on her work *On Grief and Grieving* (2005), this chapter will attempt to illustrate the stages of grief experienced by the protagonist, showcasing the common points between the model and Holden Caulfield's emotional reactions over loss as they mark the main focus of this study. Finally, this chapter will provide an understanding of the grieving stages that an individual experiences.

1. The Five Stages of Grief in *The Catcher in the Rye*

Holden Caulfield grieves the departure of his school, the loss of his innocence as he enters the world of adulthood, and the loss of his brother Allie. All three events provoked emotional responses, which highlighted the protagonist's grief throughout his journey.

1.1. Holden's Grief for leaving Pencey Prep School

1.1.1. Depression and Acceptance

Holden Caulfield appears to suffer a great deal of depression throughout the novel, he is unable to look at life from a positive perspective. Holden's first signs of grief can be viewed when he is departing his prep school, Pencey, situated in Angerstown, Pennsylvania. This was the fourth time that he was expelled from school due to his failure in most of his academic courses. Holden grieves his departure from Pencey where he studied and was resident at its dorm for a whole season. Holden Caulfield was watching the last game of the year, alone standing on a hill far from the stands where all the students of the school are present, "... I wasn't watching the game too much. What I was really hanging around for, I

was trying to feel some kind of a good-by. I mean I've left schools and places I didn't even know I was leaving them. I hate that. I don't care if it's a sad good-by or a bad goodbye, but when I leave a place I like to know I'm leaving it. If you don't, you feel even worse” (Salinger 2-3). In this quotation, Holden Caulfield portrays both the stages of acceptance and depression. Caulfield acknowledges his failure and he is ready to say his goodbyes, vocalizing his feelings of sadness, reflecting his sorrow as he is yet expelled once again, nevertheless, he acknowledges the harsh reality and accepts his faith. The stage of acceptance does not signify the necessity to like the current moments of life after sustaining a loss, for it is permanent. Thus the state of being depressed and sad is considered to be normal, in fact necessary to be able to move forward in life, moreover, it is rather considered unnatural not to experience depression after loss. In this scene, Holden showcases conscience and self-awareness of the emotions of grief he is experiencing towards a place where he had grown attached to, despite the inconveniences faced throughout his residency.

In another scene within the novel, Holden had to visit his history teacher Mr. Spencer who summoned him in order to discuss his future after hearing the news of his permanent departure. The talk revolved around Holden’s failure in history class as he even left a note at the end of his essay which reads,

DEAR MR. SPENCER [he read out loud]. That is all I know about the Egyptians. I can't seem to get very interested in them although your lectures are very interesting. It is all right with me if you flunk me though as I am flunking everything else except English anyway.

Respectfully yours, HOLDEN CAULFIELD. (Salinger 7)

In this note, Holden Caulfield expresses his inability to find interest in the lectures provided to him, which foreshadows a depressed and weak mindset, indicating his experience of grief,

going through a stage of depression. Nonetheless, Holden informs his teacher and the readers that he is alright with the outcome, reassuring his teacher that he has no resentment of any sort towards him or to any other teacher that contributed to his fair exit from school.

Other examples from their conversation illustrated how Mr. Spencer shows concerns for Holden with the intention of help but they are ineffective in the eyes of his former student, ““Do you blame me for flunking you, boy?” he said. ‘No, sir! I certainly don't,’ I said” (Salinger 7).

““How do you feel about all this, boy? I'd be very interested to know. Very Interested”” (Salinger 7).

Holden Caulfield experiences grief in an unconscious manner, unaware of the meaning of the profound emotions he feels , portraying the stages of depression and acceptance, He successfully and unintentionally welcomes the emotions of loss without addressing resistance, as it is important to do such, as these emotions are considered to be natural and ordinary after a loss. Mr. Spencer is an example of how people would try to console you, telling you to brighten up, degrading the feeling of loss but usually it is driven out of their own discomfort, not knowing what to do or what to say. Depression is a natural reaction in the grieving process as it serves a certain purpose.

1.1.2. Anger

It was a late Saturday night when Holden experienced a sudden burst of emotions, as he took the decision to leave Pencey School in a cold snowy day in the middle of the night after he had fought with his roommate. Holden was supposed to wait until Wednesday to leave to New York, but he had different plans in mind driven out of impulse and mixed emotions reflecting his state of anger, frustration and distress, as a result of his failure and expulsion of Pencey School. Holden left campus in his way to New York but not home,

“...But all of a sudden, I changed my mind. All of a sudden, I decided what I'd really do, I'd get the hell out of Pencey--right that same night and all. I mean not wait till Wednesday or anything. I just didn't want to hang around any more. It made me too sad and lonesome” (Salinger 28). He also mentions,“...When I was all set to go, when I had my bags and all, I stood for a while next to the stairs and took a last look down the goddam corridor. I was sort of crying. I don't know why. I put my red hunting hat on, and turned the peak around to the back, the way I liked it, and then I yelled at the top of my goddam voice, ‘Sleep tight, ya morons!’“ (Salinger 29).

The stage of anger in grief takes the form of an action as a response to the feeling of hurt and loneliness, which Holden portrays accurately in this scene after having decided to leave school suddenly. The anger usually felt as a result of a loss does not make sense to the griever, this anger can be projected at anyone or anything. It is a protective mechanism and a form of escapism from the deep feelings of hurt. In this case, Holden is angry at himself and his entire school. This anger surfaced as a result of the unrecovered pain and anguish that Holden unconsciously released rather than suppressed. Suppressing anger by containing it inside does no help the griever. Anger is meant to be shared and explored. It is a necessary projection of emotions that is rather considered to be liberating. However, it should not be released in a harmless manner.

1.2. Holden’s Grief for his Little Brother Allie

1.2.1. Anger stage

Holden Caulfield lost his brother Allie due to Leukemia. Holden was 13 years old while his brother was eleven. After three years, Holden was still processing his grief as it affected the way he looks at life despite his young age, being only 16 years old. In a passage Holden Caulfield states,

I was only thirteen, and they were going to have me psychoanalyzed and all, because I broke all the windows in the garage. I don't blame them. I really don't. I slept in the garage the night he died, and I broke all the goddam windows with my fist, just for the hell of it. I even tried to break all the windows on the station wagon we had that summer, but my hand was already broken and everything by that time, and I couldn't do it. It was a very stupid thing to do, I'll admit, but I hardly didn't even know I was doing it, and you didn't know Allie. My hand still hurts me once in a while when it rains and all, and I can't make a real fist any more-- not a tight one, I mean--but outside of that I don't care much. I mean I'm not going to be a goddam surgeon or a violinist or anything anyway. (Salinger, 21)

Holden's reaction illustrates a perfect example of an agitated emotional outbreak resulting in an aggressive behavior, influencing him to shatter the windows of the garage with his bear fists. Anger is one of the main stages of grief according to Kübler Ross model along with denial, bargaining, depression and acceptance. Anger is a natural and complete normal reaction to hearing the news of someone's death. Thus, Holden's angry behavior showcases the intensity of the attachment he had to his brother or more princely the intense love he held for him. However, Holden injured himself while grieving and experiencing this particular stage of grief. One should be wary of his health and safety, as grief is supposed to be a natural healing process that must not lead to self-destructive behaviors. Holden could have projected his anger in a way that would not have injured him or damaged anything of importance, avoiding any negative consequences. Holden excessive burst of anger left him miss the funeral of his brother, since he had to stay at the hospital. Thus, he missed the last opportunity to say goodbye to his brother, as he mentioned before Holden acknowledges the ritual of expressing farewell, no matter the reasons, "I don't care if it's a sad good-by or a bad goodbye..." (Salinger 2-3). With all that said, Holden Caulfield did experience the stage of

anger in his grieving process for his brother Allie, moving a step forward in his journey of recognizing and accepting his losses.

1.2.2. Anger and Denial

Holden Caulfield recounts the one and only time that he visited the grave of his brother Allie with his parents. He reveals his displeasure and frustration of visiting cemeteries and the ritual of putting flowers at the tombstones of somebody's grave, as he mentions, "People coming and putting a bunch of flowers on your stomach on Sunday, and all that crap. Who wants flowers when you're dead? Nobody" (Salinger 83). The frustration that Holden illustrates in this scene is evidence of the anger he feels towards the loss of Allie, not approving of the place where his brother resides after his death. In addition, Holden displays denial along with anger, as he did not tolerate the idea that it was raining on the grave of his brother while everyone else went to find shelter. He states, "It rained on his lousy tombstone, and it rained on the grass on his stomach. It rained all over the place. All the visitors that were visiting the cemetery started running like hell over to their cars" (Salinger 83). When Holden states that it was raining on his brother stomach, he denies his brother's death as if he was alive inside the grave, at the same time, he acknowledges his passing to the other world. He mentions, "I couldn't stand it. I know it's only his body and all that's in the cemetery, and his soul's in Heaven and all that crap, but I couldn't stand it anyway" (Salinger 83-84). In this particular scene Holden admits intentionally his denial and anger over the loss of his little brother Allie, portraying two stages of grief.

1.2.3. Bargaining

Holden Caulfield finds himself in the lowest point of his life when he had spent the night laying at the train station seats, just like a homeless man on the streets. After waking up

to the noise of people coming to the station in the early morning, he went to carry on about his day. He states, “Every time I'd get to the end of a block I'd make believe I was talking to my brother Allie. I'd say to him, ‘Allie, don't let me disappear. Allie, don't let me disappear. Allie, don't let me disappear. Please, Allie.’ And then when I'd reach the other side of the street without disappearing, I'd thank him” (Salinger 106). In this passage Holden experiences the stage of bargaining in his grieving journey for his brother Allie. Holden's state of bargaining over his loss takes form of a haunting episode, as he saw himself talking to the ghost of his brother. Holden had spent the night outside in New York City train station, because he faced an awkward encounter with Mr. Antolini, who was his teacher and an acquaintance of the family. Holden was supposed to stay at his teacher's house but ended up leaving, suspecting Mr. Antolini to be a homosexual with bad intentions, wanting to take advantage of him by using his hospitality. Otherwise said, Holden was having a hard time and in those moments he found solace talking to his brother Allie as a way to escape from the pain and the distress he was experiencing, which is exactly what the stage of bargaining provides the griever and mourner with. Bargaining in grief is a form of escapism from harsh, painful realities. It is a natural response that has its benefits to the psyche, protecting it from the overwhelming emotional distress.

1.3. Holden's Grief for the Loss of his Youthful Innocence

Throughout the novel, Holden Caulfield is portrayed as confused, depressed, isolated and cynical individual. He refers to adults as “phonies”, he uses this term intensively portraying his displeasure with the adult world. His transitioning from childhood to adulthood witnessed losses such as the loss of his brother Allie, changing schools, struggling to have friends and communicating with the world around him. Holden is lost, he does not know how to act in a world that has changed tremendously and has not yet recovered from his past

losses. However, Holden does care a great deal for children and finds pleasure communicating with them, especially with his little sister Phoebe or his diseased young brother Allie. He illustrates his desire to protect their childhood innocence.

1.3.1. Depression

Holden was able to sneak into his home at night to visit specifically his little sister Phoebe, who argued with her brother, accusing him of disliking everything there is about life. This is one of Holden's responses as he did struggle to answer,

Anyway, I keep picturing all these little kids playing some game in this big field of rye and all. Thousands of little kids, and nobody's around--nobody big, I mean--except me. And I'm standing on the edge of some crazy cliff. What I have to do, I have to catch everybody if they start to go over the cliff--I mean if they're running and they don't look where they're going I have to come out from somewhere and catch them. That's all I'd do all day. I'd just be the catcher in the rye and all. I know it's crazy, but that's the only thing I'd really like to be. I know it's crazy. (Salinger 93)

In this passage, Holden displays an unrealistic humanitarian ideal that emphasizes his deep care for children and seeks their safety but underneath this fantasy there is a cynical thinking and depressed mindset impacted by the indifference of the adult world, since he mainly desires to protect children, as they represent the symbol of innocence. His views are born out of the alienation and isolation due to his inability to fit in with the adult life and its style of living. As a result, Holden feels immense sadness and depression that are part of his grieving over the changes he is encountering in the adult world. To illustrate more of Holden's depressed views of the world, he mentions,

'Take cars,' I said. I said it in this very quiet voice. 'Take most people, they're crazy about cars. They worry if they get a little scratch on them, and they're always talking

about how many miles they get to a gallon, and if they get a brand-new car already they start thinking about trading it in for one that's even newer. I don't even like old cars. I mean they don't even interest me. I'd rather have a goddam horse. A horse is at least human, for God's sake. A horse you can at least—' (Salinger 70)

Holden Caulfield's views of the adult world are mostly negative, as he encounters different losses in his journey displaying the stage of depression.

1.3.2. Acceptance

After his wild adventure, Holden Caulfield reveals that he is receiving psychological treatment at a health facility, as he sought professional help; he started considering his future in a logical manner, questioning and looking for answers, as he mentions, "A lot of people, especially this one psychoanalyst guy they have here, keeps asking me if I'm going to apply myself when I go back to school next September. It's such a stupid question, in my opinion. I mean how do you know what you're going to do till you do it? The answer is, you don't. I think I am, but how do I know? I swear it's a stupid question" (Salinger 115). From this passage we find Holden recognizing and recollecting his inner self, showing signs of acceptance regarding the realities of the world and its people, as he states, "If you want to know the truth, I don't know what I think about it. I'm sorry I told so many people about it. About all I know is, I sort of miss everybody I told about. Even old Stradlater and Ackley..." (Salinger 115). Holden Caulfield has reached the stage of accepting the realities of life and embracing the changes that follow, it is considered a step forward in his grieving process that would enable him to progress in life and heal.

2. Discussion

Elizabeth Kübler Ross model of grief served to display the grieving process of a teenage boy named Holden Caulfield, who happens to be the main protagonist in this novel entitled *The Catcher in the Rye* by Jerome David Salinger, 1951. Elizabeth Kübler Ross model, which introduces the five stages of grief were true according to this novel. The model was able to capture the stages of grief of the protagonist of the story, named “Holden Caulfield”, who grieves three different losses at the same time. As he grieves his academic failure, which leaves him departing his school, he also grieves the loss of his diseased younger brother Allie. Furthermore, Holden Caulfield grieves his inability to integrate the adult world. However, not all the grieving stages were experienced and some were combined considering that the emotional responses of an individual vary from one to another, in addition to the type of loss sustained. The stages of grief are not meant to set emotions into order with the expectation to be followed in a linear or chronological manner, nor to experience every single one of them. The five stages of grief are a gateway to better understand grief as a natural human reaction to any kind of loss. Thus, Elizabeth Kübler Ross model of grief is valid to be used in the analysis of psychological behaviors of characters in different works of fiction where we find individuals experiencing overwhelming emotions of attachment related to the loss of an object, place, person, set of beliefs...etc.

Conclusion

Salinger's novel *The Catcher in the Rye* depicted the hidden sorrows of Holden Caulfield, introducing his grief over the losses he accumulated over time and throughout his journey. Kübler Ross model of grief helped identifying these sorrows, by providing a structure, which reflects the five stages of grief. Holden Caulfield was indeed grieving and appeared to be undergoing through the five stages of grief, based on his emotional state and

response to loss. In short, the grieving model, provided by Kübler Ross through her work *On Grief and Grieving* (2005), perfectly denotes the grief experienced by Holden Caulfield, which helps explain, identify, and understand his psychological state.

General Conclusion

General Conclusion

This research has aimed to identify the stages of grief reflected in J.D. Salinger's Novel *The Catcher in the Rye* (1951), through the model of grief provided by Kübler Ross and David Kessler work illustrated in their book, *On grief and Grieving* (2005). Moreover, it was meant to provide an understanding of the overwhelming emotions of grief by giving them structure through the five stages presented by Kübler Ross. Also, this research has aimed to prove the validity of this model of grief and its ability to correspond to any type of loss contained in literary works of fiction.

Kübler Ross's model succeeded in identifying the five stages of grief in J.D. Salinger's novel *The Catcher in the Rye*, precisely through analyzing the behavioural temperament and emotional reactions of its main protagonist Holden Caulfield, showcasing his grieving over multiple losses in the course of his adventurous journey. Thus, proving the validity and credibility of Kübler Ross's model in explaining the emotional responses generated from the feeling of loss in a literary fictional work. Although Kübler Ross's model was criticized for being a type of guideline rules, she had already addressed the issue in her work, which explains that the stages of grief are not to be followed in a chronological manner and prescribed in a specified order.

In addition, Holden Caulfield is a perfect example of an individual who allows himself to fully live the emotional distress of his losses, which is necessary in order to progress and move forward in life. Some fail to understand that grief with its overwhelming emotions is a normal and natural reaction to loss. Kübler Ross's five stages of grief are meant to help identify these responses in order to reach a state of acceptance and cope with the unavoidable harsh realities, which allows the individual to conform gradually to his new normal. Holden Caulfield unintentionally and unconsciously undergoes the stages of grief by simply avoiding

the repression or suppression his feelings, which is the key to ease the pain of loss, as the denial , anger, depression, and bargaining work as the psyche's protective mechanisms, paving the way to a state of acceptance and relief.

The central strand in this research explores the concept of grief provided by Kübler Ross and its applicability on works of literary fiction along with its ability to uncover the feeling of sorrow for different losses other than human. This research calls to embrace the feelings of sorrow and recognizes grief and its emotions as normal reactions when undergoing a loss.

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Appendices

Short Biography About J.D. Salinger

It is fair to point out that J.D. Salinger was immensely private about his personal life. Salinger went to sue a publishing house for the attempt to publish a biography entitled *J.D. Salinger: A Writing Life*, it was written by Ian Hamilton, who proceeded to publish another piece after the denial of his first, as his work was prevented from being published. Afterward Ian Hamilton and other authors succeeded to produce biographies about J.D. Salinger but their works were considered to be lacking in information, along with some doubtful facts about the American Author of the famous novel *The Catcher in the Rye*. Salinger's daughter went to publish a biography of her father entitled *Dream Catcher* (2000). Her work contained new information of much more relevance and accuracy compared to the previous biographies. (Guðjónsson 2)

At the age of twenty one, Salinger was able to publish his first short story named *The Young Folks*. His writing class teacher, Whit Brunett, who had grown fond of his student's literary talents, took the liberty to have it published in his magazine *The Story*. Following the publishing of his first short story, Salinger's works in the early 1940's were based on the genre of relationships. However, after the beginning of the World War II, Salinger's work shifted towards the theme of war as he published *The Hang of it* (1941), and *Personal Notes of an Infantryman* (1942). In the spring of 1942, Salinger embarked in the U.S army as he got drafted along with many young men in order to fight in the war. (Guðjónsson 2-3)

Salinger was a member of the Counter Intelligence Corps before getting assigned into the 12th infantry regiment of the 7th Army, where he had to enter the battle grounds in Europe. During that time Salinger was still able to write and publish stories by sending them to magazines. (Guðjónsson 3) During his journey in battle, Salinger witnessed the liberation of the prisoners in Bavaria, where the SS guards had burned prisoners alive and according to

Margaret Salinger's biography, her father could not forget the smell of burning human flesh for years due to his experience in south Germany. Although, Salinger never addressed his experience of witnessing dead burned soldiers, his mental health took a major blow, resulting in a nervous breakdown later in May 1945. (Guðjónsson 8)

In 1944, Paris, Salinger managed to meet Ernest Hemingway briefly and presented to him a short story named *Last Day of the Last Furlough*. Hemingway acknowledged Salinger's talent by saying, "Jesus, he has a helluva talent". Salinger's stories during the war and after reflected his poor mental states as the main protagonist of those tails all suffered a war post traumatic effect. (Guðjónsson 8)

In 1953, after publishing his most popular work, namely *The Catcher in the Rye* and *A Perfect Day for Bananafish*, Salinger took the decision to retire outside the city of New York not far from the Canadian borders. The retirement brought Salinger's mental state to further decline as he embarked in a life style of isolation, which resulted in a preoccupation about his religious and spiritual life. It was reported that Salinger adopted the act of drinking his own urine and sitting in an orgone box, supposedly as a form of therapy he had adopted by himself, in addition to his adoption to practices related to Vedanta Hinduism, Taoism, and Zen Buddhism, which he came to illustrate in his literary works, namely in his Glass family novellas, *Zooey* (1957), *Seymour- An Introduction* (1959), and *Hapsworth* (1965). (Guðjónsson 18)

Salinger did not seek psychological therapy or treatment after his retirement despite showing signs of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, his death on January 2010 was the result of natural causes, he was 91 years old. (Guðjónsson 19)