CHAPTER II
DIGRESSIONS IN ACADEME

Salinger’s The Catcher In the Rye is the story of Holden Caulfield, a sixteen year old boy who escapes to New York after flunking out of his third prep school. The novel is told from Holden’s point of view and we become aware of his sensitivity to the outside world. He not only weighs his own intentions and motives but also that of others and this makes it difficult for him to live in this world. The writer has captured the conflicts that arise in Holden’s mind because of his tendency to constantly compare his innermost feelings and his outward expressions. Thereby he is obsessed with his aim—not to be a phony. He always aspires to be true to the moment and this poses a lot of problems in his life.

One thing that is very obvious about Holden Caulfield is that he does not want to conform. This is evident in his statement that Holden does not want to tell his story as if it were a mere tape-recording of memories, rather he wants to digress. For instance he says “I like it when somebody digresses” (C.I.R: 183). The urge to digress is what is inherent in him and also the sense that life is in a state of flux is
fundamental to Holden’s thought and feeling. According to Holden, each experience is different and must be responded to uniquely. Hence phoniness which involves playing a role or acting in a habitual manner is a cardinal folly to him.

One cannot go to the novel expecting a series of events connected with academicians, it is a psychological novel dealing with a psychic personality who happens to be a student. Holden is sent out of three institutions because he does not want to be a “phony,” by habitually or constantly abiding by the rules and regulations. What he aspires for is being true to his own feelings at a particular point of time. Further his opinions and judgements are always in a state of flux. But because of this unsettling sense of the flux of things there has developed within Holden a compensatory desire for permanence. That is why he loves the museum where everything is what it was when he was a young boy. He says the museum is “the only nice dry, cozy place in the world” (C.I.R: 120).

His love for the museum reveals his aspiration for permanency in life. Each and every incident in the novel shows that every time he feels he has realized a degree of stability, later on he is frustrated that the stability is lost. He is not able to follow the codes he lays to himself. In other words, we can also term him as a “spent personality”. For instance, he tells us that he thinks Sally Hayes to be a phony girl, but
later we find that in his fantasy he wants to marry her. He says he wants to be a dumb boy pouring petrol into vehicles. This shows his urge to digress. Holden Caulfield is a replica of the present day students whose urge is to transgress the rules and regulations of any institution.

He is unable to fulfill his aspirations. He wants to be a catcher in the rye (ie) a preserver of innocence but he himself engages a prostitute to satisfy his physical lust. Though his ambitions are high, they do not materialize because of the inherent desire in him to transgress the rule he lays to himself. This makes him inconsistent in his attitude. Inspite of his declared hatred for schools and colleges, he is proud of the academic achievements of Allie and Phoebe. Though he wants to be a catcher in the rye, he himself is in dire need of someone to warn him or someone to shelter him.

Holden himself is not mature enough to be a Catcher. He does not want to conform as an adult does. As Warren French points out, Holden makes a cult of childism because “he sees no role for himself in the adult world” (Salinger: 199) but his refusal to grow up is the negation of the very organistic principle, the basis of all his attacks on the mechanistic and the institutional. The irony is that Holden has no role in the child’s world either. Whatever role he takes up, he wants to digress from that and he says “It’s more interesting and all” (C.I.R: 183).
After all, Holden has a point especially if his story about Richard Kinsella, the boy who made a speech about a farm his father bought in Vermont but who got side tracked along the way, is even half true.

They kept yelling “Digression!” at him, the whole time he was making it, and this teacher Mr. Vinson gave him an ‘F’ on it because he hadn’t told what kind of animals and vegetables and stuff grew on the farm and all. What he did was, Richard Kinsella, he’d start telling you about this letter his mother got from his uncle, and how his Uncle got polio and all when he was forty two years old, and how he wouldn’t let anybody to see him with a brace on. It didn’t have much to do with the farm - I admit it - but it was nice. It’s nice when somebody tells you about their father’s farm and then all of sudden got more interested in their Uncle. I mean it’s dirty yelling “Digression!” at him when he’s all nice and excited (C.I.R: 184).

The Catcher in the Rye is packed with indictments against prep school education - its small-minded students, its boring classes and conformist atmosphere. The unwillingness of Holden to participate in the destructive games that the Oral Expression crowds play is a sure sign of courage. He even refutes Antolini saying that “lots of time you don’t know what interests you most till you start talking about
something that doesn’t interest you most” (C.I.R: 184). Holden wants teachers to be liberal in their evaluation of students. He feels that an added piece of information regarding any particular topic will do no harm. In other words, Holden favors digression in any topic and he feels it is not a crime to do so.

But Antolini again argues with Holden telling him that Kinsella should have thought of the topic in his room itself rather than in the class. Further Antolini tells him that a student learns from his mistakes. “Once you get past all the Mr. Vinsons”; what looms ahead isn’t education so much as history, poetry:

You’ll find that you’re not the first person who was even confused and frightened and even sickened by human behaviour, you’re by no means alone on that score. you’ll all be excited and stimulated to know. Many many, men have been just as troubled morally and spiritually as you are right now. Happily, some of them kept record of their troubles. You’ll learn from them - if you want to, just as somebody, if you have something to offer, someone will learn something from you. It’s a beautiful reciprocal arrangement (C.I.R: 189).
Sansford Pinsker agrees with Antolini's statement that, Education is an offer. An opportunity but one that requires that imagination first be tempered by voices of the past and then be disciplined by the writer who wishes to add his or her installment to the larger saga of how a self wrestles with the claims of society. As Mr. Antolini puts it "I don't want to scare you but I can very clearly see you dying nobly one way or another for some highly unworthy, cause" (C.I.R: 188).

What is to be noted here is that Holden is too angry to see beyond the Mr. Vinsons and their obsessions about sticking to a thesis. Moreover, what Holden observed earlier about Mr. Spencer - "you can't stop a teacher when they want to do something" (C.I.R: 11). equally applies to Mr. Antolini. Although Holden feels that, "Mr. Antolini is about the best teacher I ever had" (C.I.R: 174).

Yet he is still a teacher and once he is launched into a stumped speech, all Holden can do is sit there.

Something else, an academic education will do for you. If you go along with it any considerable distance, it'll begin to give you an idea what size mind you have. What it'll fit and may be, what it won't. After a while, you'll have an idea what kind of thoughts your particular size mind should be
wearing. For one thing, it may save you an extraordinary amount of time trying on ideas that don’t suit you, aren’t becoming to you. You’ll begin to know your true measurements and dress your mind accordingly (C.I.R: 192).

This statement is highly atrocious with regard to Mr. Antolini’s behavior towards Holden later. Mr. Antolini is a sexual pervert and the very fact that he had made a homosexual “pass” at Holden shows that his own education has not been capable of dressing his own mind. Then how can he instruct Holden? This shows that his late night sermon to Holden was only for preaching and not for practice.

The episode with Mr. Antolini leaves Holden a sadder, perhaps, wiser and certainly a confused young man. Holden even begins to wonder if his instinctive judgement that Mr. Antoloni should be numbered among the world’s perverts or opposed to its great teachers might possibly, just possibly be wrong. Antolini only further confuses Holden instead of showing him a path to follow.

But life and its experiences by their own nature have taught Holden that life cannot be neatly divided into “black and white packages”, what he is more bothered about is that Mr. Antolini in spite of his position does not fail to act according to his instincts. In a way, he
feels Antolini is not a phony because at that particular point of time, he acted the way he wanted to.

I started thinking that even if he was a flit he’d certainly been very nice to me. I thought how he hadn’t minded it when I’d called him up so late, and how he’d told me to come right over if I felt like it. And how he went to all that trouble giving me advice about finding out the size of your mind and all (C.I.R: 194).

He learns that nothing is sacred and nothing safe. He understands that in the course of time, innocence always has to give way to the world’s pressure. He utters, “That’s the whole trouble you can’t even find a place that’s nice and peaceful because there isn’t any.” His own experiences have taught him the above stated fact. He knows that to “cling to a vision of a prelapsarian world, one without “falls” and without the complexities of sin, is to pitch one’s tent in such lands as never were and can never be.” An adolescent must grow up into an adult by gaining knowledge of the world’s events. Realization dawns on him when he sees that people have written, “Fuck you” in the same room where the Egyptian mummies are kept. Because of this he allows Phoebe to reach out for the gold rings on the carousel.
His behavior towards Sally also illustrates that he is honest to the core and also that he doesn’t fail to express it. For instance, Holden at one point admires Sally and he can describe her as looking so good.

“I felt that I was in love with her and wanted to marry her” (C.I.R: 124).

Later he states,

“I didn’t even like her much” (C.I.R: 124).

He can even go to the extent of telling her that he loves her.

“It was a lie, of course, but the thing is, I meant it when I said it, I’m crazy, I swear to god I am” (C.I.R: 125).

These three statements of Holden can either reveal his utter honesty or his inherent urge to digress. He does not mind going back on his own statements but only that he wants to be true to the moment. For instance, he reveals his feelings regarding school and New York in general:

Well, I hate it (school), Boy do I hate it, ‘I said’, ‘But it isn’t just that. It’s everything. I hate living in New York and all
Taxi cabs, and Madison Avenue buses, with the drivers and all always yelling at you to get out at the rear door and being introduced to phony guys that call the Lunts, angels, and going up and down in elevators when you just want to go outside, and guys fitting your pants all the time at Brooks, and people always (C.I.R: 131).

Thus Holden does not like anything which is in a state of change or movement. He likes only the museum where everything remained the same forever. Also he liked Jane because she always kept her kings in the back row in a game of chess. That Holden prefers the static nature of life against movement is clearly revealed in the above instances. But later, towards the end of the novel, he learns that human life is subject to change. This is clearly illustrated in the powerful image of Phoebe on the carousel.

The image is destined to change. Though she is moving in a circular way yet she will reach out for the brass ring, thereby risking "a fall", but also that Holden is now prepared to allow for the possibility. He cannot "Save" her, from all the risks and joys, that, taken together, constitute life - nor is he any longer willing to try. Part of the sheer joy in the moment is a newly quiet acceptance, partly born
of exhaustion, partly of relief of the human condition as it is, and must be (Pinsker: 94).

The urge to digress is revealed in the first part of the novel. Towards the end there is the stoic acceptance of life as it comes. There arises the question - why does Holden want to digress, earlier? The answer is inbuilt in the novel itself. Holden digresses because he felt that an alternative world could be constructed in one’s fantasy as against the real world. For example, he fantasies as if he is moving west. He has a vision of an idyllic life.

How would you like to get the hell out of here? I know this guy down in Greenwich Village that we can borrow his car for a couple of weeks. He used to go to the same school as I did and he still owes me a couple of bucks. What we could do is, tomorrow morning we could drive up to Massachusetts and Vermont, and all around there, see it’s as beautiful as hell up there. It really is... I have about a hundred and eighty bucks in the bank. I can take it out when it opens in the morning and then I could go down and get this guy’s car. No kidding, we’ll stay in these cabin camps and stuff like that till the dough runs out. Then, when the dough runs out, I could get a job somewhere and we could live somewhere with a brook and all and, later on
we could get married or something. I could chop all our own wood in the winter and all. Honest, to god we could have a terrific time (C.I.R: 132).

That Holden is a king of digressors is revealed later when he replaces his ideal destination of Massachusetts and Vermont, with that of the west, where he plans to lead a simple life, pumping gas and pretending he is a deaf mute.

I’d build me a little cabin somewhere with the dough I made and live there for the rest of my life. I’d build it right near the woods, but not right in them, because I’d want it to be sunny as hell all the time. I’d cook all my own food and later on if I wanted to get married or something, I’d meet this beautiful girl that was also a deaf mute and we’d get married. She’d come and live in my cabin with me, and if she wanted to say anything to me she’d have to write it on a goddamn piece of paper, like everybody else. If we had any children, we’d hide them somewhere, we could buy them a lot of books and teach them how to read and write by ourselves (C.I.R: 199).

Holden does not think of what the listener or the reader would think of him because he says only what he feels in his heart of hearts.
In other words, he feels he is a genuine person. But he is not so, because he is suffering from schizophrenia where there is a marked separation of a person’s mind and feelings, causing at last a drawing away from other people into a life of the imagination. That is why, for a short duration, he lives in the world of the imagination and forces Sally to run away with him.

But to dismiss the whole story as the ramblings of a neurotic would be doing injustice to Holden’s story. He only suffers from bouts of insanity. At other times he issues forth statements which reveal his shrewd nature and also his non-conformist tendency. For instance, he says:

In the first place I’m sort of an atheist. I like Jesus and all, but I don’t care too much for most of the other stuff in the Bible. Take the disciples for instance, they annoy the hell out of me. If you want to know the truth the guy I like best in the Bible, next to Jesus was that lunatic and all that lived in tombs and kept cutting himself with stones (C.I.R: 99).

That Holden does not like Jesus’ disciples is something which can be accepted, but his preferring the lunatic to others reveals that Holden is against the norm where people fall as a mass for their heroes. Here he falls not only for a minor character but a lunatic. This reveals that he
has a fatal attraction for minor characters not hot shots, but those who follow their bents without compromise or apology. "That the larger world misunderstands them is proof if any were needed, that they are authentic rather than phony, innocent as opposed to corrupted" (Pinsker: 68).

Hence we find that Holden is not for anything that is conventional. He does not agree with the mass that Jesus' disciples must be revered rather he is against them for he feels that when Jesus "was alive, they were about as much use to him as a hole in the head" (C.I.R: 99).

Holden is not for hero worship, rather he develops a choice based on his own feelings at that particular instant. This is seen in his dislike for the word "grand". On the other hand, we find that "Sally Hayes is for all that is conventional and socially "correct" which Holden is not" (Pinsker: 105).

This is evident in his conversation with the nuns, who talk about Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet, far more candidly, far more generously than Holden had thought possible. He had thought that the nuns would not speak so openly but they had no inhibitions on the subject and this comes as a shock to Holden and also for an "instant liking" towards them.
Later also he prefers the kid who sings an incorrect version of “comin through the Rye” that begins “If a body catch a body coming through the rye”. Again he opts for a vocation, which is also a digression from the norm. For instance, he does not want to be a doctor or an engineer but a “Catcher”. This is “digression” to the utmost. Never has anyone thought of such a vocation (i.e.) catching innocent kids from falling off a cliff. “This is the novel’s central image” (Pinsker: 74).

He says:

“What I have to do, I have to catch everybody if they start to go over the cliff - I mean if they are running and they don’t look where they are going, I have to come out from somewhere and catch them” (C.I.R: 173).

Holden had harbored such designs in his mind but later he learns that innocence has always to give way to the pressures of the world. For instance all through the novel we find that the “phony” is petted against the “authentic.”

Holden demands in everything “the highest standards of purity,” In this way again he digresses from the norm. It is only slowly that he comes to the realization that life cannot be categorized as “pure” or
“impure”. That he is for absolute purity is revealed in the following line wherein he states that:

even if he were to become a better lawyer than his father - one who would go around saving innocent guys lives all the time. Even if you did go around saving guys lives and all, how would you know if you did it because what you really wanted to be, was to be a terrific lawyer, with everybody slapping you on the back and congratulating you in court when the goddamn trial was over, the reporters and everybody, the way it is in dirty movies? How would you know you weren’t being a phony? the trouble is you wouldn’t (C.I.R: 172).

If the motive behind every task is found then one would know if a task is phony or true. But Sansford Pinsker is against such “rigid applications of the test of altruism” (Pinker: 59).

He insists that there must be a distinction between what one does and whatever a “psychiatrist might offer up as its motive. Otherwise all great people even Mother Theresa would land up being a phony” (Pinsker: 59).
But Holden does not stick to one particular idea or way of thinking, always he proves to be a digressor. Holden feels that if one does not involve oneself in the “rat race for money then one could save one’s soul” (Pinsker: 60).

But it is he who is all the time spending lots of money going in cabs, spending for the nuns and so on. Also at the same time he is worried about spending it because he had to go to a date with Sally Hayes. On seeing the nuns, he says that he hates it “if I’m eating bacon and eggs and somebody is only eating toast and coffee.”

After (the nuns left), I started getting sorry that I’d only given them ten bucks for their collection. But the thing was, I’d made that date to go to the matinee with old Sally Hayes and I needed to keep some dough for the tickets and stuff. I was sorry anyway, though goddamn money. It always ends up making you blue as hell (C.I.R: 113).

Thus though he is cautious of spending the money, yet he admits that he is being a “phony” at times like the others. This acceptance on his part is to be appreciated. But it could also be stated that Holden is:
“Split between wanting to ape the adult world and an equally strong desire to give it a raspberry. He is as divided as his hair color - half the gray of maturity, half the colour of boyhood” (Pinsker: 51).

Moreover, Holden has rapidly altering mood swings. At one point he is a maniac Holden of high spirits and at another point he sinks into what can only be called a depression. But if we trace the cause we would find that this neurosis is due to unsatisfying personal relationships with people. He moves from one person to another, unable to get along with anybody. He meets the Ackleys, the Stradlaters, the Carl Luce’s, all only frustrate him. He does not enjoy a healthy sexual relationship because his “attitude to sex has the same ambivalence as his attitude to movies, the night clubs and manyother things” (Pinsker: 52).

Though Holden has the urge to communicate, there is an equally strong urge in him to discriminate. That is why, he fails in his relationships with other people but with Phoebe he is able to achieve a satisfying relationship because with her, his mind is “entirely free from the two obsessions of his mind sex and society” (Amur: 49).

G.S. Amur offers an explanation for Holden’s behavior, by citing a line from Keats’ Preface to Endymion. This, he says, is of great help to us in our efforts to understand Holden.
The imagination of a boy is healthy and the mature imagination of a man is healthy, but there is a space of life between-in which the soul is in ferment, the character undecided, the way of life uncertain, the ambition thick sighted, thence proceed mawkishness, and all the thousand bitters (Amur: 41).

Holden’s immaturity is the direct result of the illusion of maturity from which he suffers. Holden rejects knowledge because he believes that it can only buy him cadilloes and he dismisses the boy’s school thus:

You, ought to go to a boy’s school sometime...It’s full of phonies, and all you do is study so that you can learn enough to be smart enough to be able to buy a goddamn cadillac some day, and you have to keep making believe you give a damn if the football team loses, and all you do is talk about girls and liquor and sex all day, and everybody sticks together in these dirty little goddamn cliques (C.I.R: 170).

G.S. Amur states that it can be considered “a predictable social reaction of an adolescent belonging to the privileged classes who takes material security for granted and indulges in a romantic form of social discontent” (Amur: 42).
Erich Fromm argues that those critics who resort to Holden’s urge for universal ethics give an optimistic ending to the novel. For instance, a critic, by name Strauch, in his *Kings in the Backrow: Meaning through structure* reads the ending of the novel as follows:

Strauch therefore optimistically concludes that Holden’s final speech of his “missing everybody” (C.I.R: 277).

Is the “large, whitmanesque acceptance of evil” and “affirmation of the life process” (Strauch: 62).

Thus critics like Miller and Galloway read the novel as being an optimistic one, by quoting the following remark of Holden’s in the hospital in the last chapter, “About all I know is, I sort of miss everybody I told about” (C.I.R: 277).

According to Miller this knowledge though it is casually presented in the closing lines of the book is a difficult, profound and mature knowledge that lies at the novel’s center of gravity.
Galloway observes,

In the epilogue of the novel Holden suggests the possibility of re-entering society when he says, “I sort of miss everybody I told about...”

“Holden misses even the phonies of the world because his experience has taught him some thing about the necessity of loving” (Galloway: 145).

Miller cites Bowden’s remark, regarding the ending of the novel as follows,

The novel ends with Holden watching her (Phoebe) go around on the carrousel; “I felt so damn happy all of a sudden, the way old Phoebe kept going around and around. I was so damn near bawling, I felt so damn happy, if you want to know the truth. I don’t know why.” But the reader knows why. Holden has begun to break out of the shell of his isolation, or perhaps better the shell has been cracked by Phoebe (Miller: 13).

The above given opinion is the opinion of an optimistic critic but critics who read the novel pessimistically mention Holden’s hospitalization as the basis of their argument.
R.D. Charques, for example, argues that Holden “discovers how mean the world is and falls straight on the psychiatrist’s sofa” (Laser and Fruman: 16).

Here, Holden apparently giber at the psychoanalyst who believes that Holden should “apply himself.” This means nothing but that Holden still cannot accept the impure norms of society and still maintains the defiant attitude with which he had first appeared in the novel” (Laser and Fruman: 17).

Thus the two conflicting opinions appear like two parallel bars which cannot be resolved. But Prof. Takuya Handa resolves this by bringing in Erich Fromm’s psychology—that is describing Holden’s suffering in terms of the conflict between “universal ethics and socially immanent ethics.” For more concrete argument, Fromm explains:

An example of the concept of Universal ethics may be found in such norms as “Love thy neighbor as thyself” or “thou shall not kill…” By “socially immanent ethics I refer to these norms in any culture which contains prohibitions and commands that are necessary only for the functioning and survival of that particular society…This, for instance,
courage and initiative become imperatives, virtues for a warrior society (Fromm: 241–242).

Prof. Takuya points out that in the present society, one of the generally accepted values is that of material success. It is such an attitude towards life that Holden detests so much. This means that Holden can hardly accept what Fromm calls socially immanent ethics. For example, Holden’s criticism of a boy’s school:

“It’s full of phonies, and all you do is study... to buy a goddamn cadillac some day, and you have to help making believe you give a damn if the football team loses” (C.I.R: 170).

Prof. Takuya questions us at this point, “To what end are we studying? It should not be merely to buy an expensive car” the words “make believe” suggest “lying”. Holden’s phonies are born with such an attitude and he detests them. What Holden wants is that whatever a person does, he must do it out of his heart and not for mere pretense.

Holden rejects socially immanent ethics because of his longing for universal ethics, which is very much evident from his desire to be a catcher in the Rye. Thus Holden’s conflict is the conflict between his socially immanent ethics and universal ethics. In other words, he always digresses from one slot to the other. That is why all through the novel
we find that his statements and his actions do not concur. Fromm says that this has been the conflict of man from time immemorial, because for his survival, man must resort to societal norms whereas for the full development of the body and soul, man must resort to universal ethics. Fromm again stresses that:

While the conflict between the socially immanent and universal ethics has decreased in the process of human evolution, there still remains a conflict between the two types of ethics as long as humanity has not succeeded in building a society in which the interest of society has become identical with that of all its members. As long as this point has not been reached in human evolution, the historically conditioned social necessities clash with the universal existential necessities of the individual (Fromm: 242 ~ 243).

Holden appears in the novel with his conflict already within him and disappears from the novel with his conflict unresolved; the reason lies in the very nature of the conflict.

Prof. Takuya Handa feels that both the optimistic and pessimistic interpretations have to be thus corrected because both the critics are
harping on the carrousel scene in which Holden feels “so damn happy” yet these critics miss the fact that

1) The relief is only momentary.

2) They also ignore his ambivalent feelings and also his experience of love, which he has been experiencing from the beginning of the novel.

3) Holden’s Experience of love.

1) The Momentariness of relief

Critics who argue that Holden has gone back to his childhood because he feels so damn happy in the “carrousel scene “ ignore the fact that in the world, salvation is only momentary not eternal. They take the ending for granted as though it were a fairy - tale ending which states “And they lived happily ever after.”

Likewise the view that Holden is not saved at all must be corrected, because he feels relieved, though it is only momentary. Holden’s condition is not very hopeful; nor is it too hopeless.
2) Holden’s ambivalent feelings

The optimistic critics harp on to Holden’s last remark “I sort of miss everybody I told about” as a proof of his growth or rebirth. The fact is that right from the beginning of the novel, Holden does miss people. Although he hates phony people he misses them. This indirectly implies that to a certain extent he loves them. Thus Holden throughout the novel is dominated by his complex ambivalent feelings between hate and affection. This can be inferred from his own words:

But you are wrong about that hating business... you really are. I don’t hate too many guys. What I may do, I may hate them for a little while, like this Guy Stradlater I knew at Pencey, and this other boy, Robert Ackley. I hated them once in a while; I admit it, but it doesn’t last too long is what I mean. After a while, if I did not see them...I mean I sort of missed them (C.I.R: 243).

3) Holden’s Experience of love

The third fact is that Holden has known what it is to love from the beginning. He has been happy even before the carrousel scene because he has known what true communication is. One of its strongest proofs is the scene in chapter XI, when Holden talks about Jane’s love. He defends
her by saying that she allowed him to kiss her whole face except her mouth.

"We'd get into a goddamn movie of something and right away we'd start holding hands and we wouldn't quit till the movie was over... All you knew was you were happy" (C.I.R: 103).

Because Holden is here professing that he felt "happy," he has known the joy of communication long before the carrousel scene. His love for his dead brother Allie is revealed when he from time to time keeps talking to his imaginative Allie (his dead brother).

"Okay, go home and get your bike" (C.I.R: 129).

Thus Holden has already known the feelings of love and he only experiences it again beside the carrousel.

Hence a lot of confusion has prevailed, because as Prof. Takuya says, many critics have ignored the ethical implications of the novel by taking two extreme stances-either by overlooking or underestimating Holden’s ambivalent feelings, his experiences of love and the momentariness of his relief. It is because of Holden’s not resorting to one particular ethics that he digresses. He keeps digressing from the socially immanent ethics to the universal ethics and thereby reveals his
ambivalent feelings towards sex, money and love. Hence there arises the resultant confusion in the very interpretation of his nature. Holden must be seen with all the “vividness and the liveliness of a three dimensional character and not the flatness of a two dimensional character” (Fromm: 245).