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EN40SL1

Ms. Smith

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The Significance of Literary References in J.D. Salinger's The Catcher in the Rye ✓

Writers are purveyors of an art form they adore, and as such they love to make references to work that inspired and influenced them. J.D. Salinger is no exception. His novel The Catcher in the Rye is brimming with mentions of novels that invite comparison to his lead character Holden Caulfield, and his actions throughout the story. Through the use of these literary references, Salinger is able to carefully illustrate the many facets of Holden's personality and behavior. ✓

In discussing William Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet and Hamlet, Salinger shows the reader Holden's truest feelings towards his sister Phoebe and deceased brother Allie. This is first seen in his conversation with the nuns, where he laments Mercutio's death at the hands of Tybalt. *side* Holden describes Mercutio's character as "smart and entertaining" (pg. 111) and says that "it drives me crazy when somebody gets killed...and it's somebody else's fault" (pg. 111). This shows that Holden is made upset when people he perceives as funny and intelligent die unjustly, which mirrors his feelings over Allie's departure. explain before moving on We also learn more about Holden's relationship with his sister Phoebe from his thoughts on the Laurence Olivier adaptation of Hamlet. He tells the psychiatrist that the only part of the film he enjoyed was the horseplay

between Laertes and Ophelia, which highlights the fact that all he seems to care about is Phoebe and his brother's memory. His explanation of the scene - "While the father kept giving him a lot of advice, old Ophelia was sort of horsing around with her brother" (pg. 117) - enforces the idea that the adults in Holden's life come secondary to his love for young, blameless children. In addition to these Shakespeare comparisons, Salinger uses parallels with The Great Gatsby to help the reader better understand Holden as a character. ✓

There are several similarities between Holden Caulfield and Jay Gatsby which elaborate greatly on the characteristics of Salinger's lead. Both are obsessed with modifying time in a way that would affect the people they love; Gatsby wants to rewind and continue his relationship with Daisy, while Holden desires to freeze time, preventing his beloved sister and all other children from losing their admirable innocence. This is shown most prominently during his visit to the museum, where he thinks, "The best thing, though, in that museum was that everything always stayed right where it was" (pg. 121). Holden and Gatsby are also both idealists who cannot find anything in their lives that can live up to their respective obsessions. While Jay ends up dying due to his unbridled commitment to Daisy, Holden's affinity for adolescence stops him from truly being able to grow up. This is shown in his conversation with Phoebe, where he tells her that the only thing he'd ever like to be is a protector of children, a "catcher in the rye" (pg. 173). Another novel that Salinger draws similarities between is Karen Blixen's Out of Africa.

The author of Out of Africa, Karen Blixen, is comparable to Holden in a variety of ways. Firstly, Blixen runs an evening school for the African people who live on her farm, thereby making both her and Holden protectors (or aspiring protectors) of young children. Most prominent, however, is the fact that they are both on quests to define themselves. While Blixen's

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(Salinger 121)

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Comment on this quote

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African paradise is a much more straightforward method of self-discovery in comparison to Holden's New York-based floundering, they are still in similar situations that result in the development of their personalities. This struggle to find himself is reflected by Phoebe's weighty line to him during their conversation in the bedroom, "You don't like anything that's happening" (pg. 169). *Comment on quote* Is it through these references to the preceding works that Salinger is able to explore Holden's character so deeply.

Authors find inspiration from many sources, so it's only natural that they want to pay tribute to these works by referencing them in their own. In his novel The Catcher in the Rye, J.D. Salinger does this abundantly. By comparing Holden Caulfield to characters from Romeo and Juliet, Hamlet, The Great Gatsby, and Out of Africa, Salinger helps the reader better understand his character. *leave us w/ a thoughtful statement*

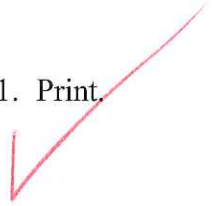
Works Cited

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Outside Elements. n.p., n.d. Web. 2 December 2015.

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Salinger, J.D.. *The Catcher in the Rye.* New York: Little, Brown and Company, 1991. Print.



Explaining Your Writing Variables

Identify the five writing variables you have chosen for your writing task ~~_____~~

Central Idea: To outline the literary references in *The Catcher in the Rye*
Form: Expository essay
Purpose: To explain the intent behind Salinger's references to other
Public Audience: ~~_____~~ Literary enthusiasts, essay readers ^{works}
Context: Essay collections, analysis websites, ^{too} literary magazines _{general}

Explain how your chosen writing variables work together to make your text effective.

5 marks

110

An expository essay is the best way to convey my text, as it allows me to accurately analyze the parallels between the works.

By illustrating the similarities between Holden and the other characters, I am able to easily theorize about Salinger's intentions. The essay itself would be of interest to ~~_____~~ literary enthusiasts because it offers an in-depth analysis of *The Catcher in the Rye*. They would be able to access it in ~~_____~~ essay collections and websites on the topic of literary analysis.

The expository essay form works best for my content, as it allows for the simple dissection of references and allusions. ✓