"Catch Me Up and Hold Me":
The War on Adolescence in All Quiet on the Western Front
and The Catcher in the Rye

By

Jeffry Kyle Weathers

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Abstract for "Catch Me Up and Hold Me": The War on Adolescence in *All Quiet on the Western Front* and *The Catcher in the Rye*

This thesis examines and compares similar passages between J.D. Salinger's seminal novel on Holden Caulfield's adolescent dissolution into "madness," *The Catcher in the Rye*, and Erich Maria Remarque's astounding World War I novel, *All Quiet on the Western Front*, which exposes the effects of trench warfare on its adolescent narrator, Paul Bäumer. Both books, likewise, are aligned with passages from William Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, revealing a shared lineage.

Although there is not any scholarship linking Salinger's novel to Remarque's, one of his own letters includes the statement that "I think his war books and postwar rubble books are better than anyone's. His are the only ones that move me anyway." Still, much evidence for this thesis rests on Andy Roger's Dissertation, *The Veteran Who Is, The Boy Who Is No More – The Casualty of Identity in War Fiction*, which argues that *The Catcher in the Rye* is Salinger's transmutation of his war experiences into the adolescent experiences of his protagonist, Holden Caulfield. Further evidence relies upon biographies and scholarship that help link both novels to Hamlet and to Salinger's war experiences, which influenced the writing of his only novel. The primary result of this study is the speculation of influence of Remarque's novel upon Salinger's through a close study of five key themes: the conflict between youth and age; the ways that education makes victims of the young; the inauthenticity of theater and movies; the disparagement of games; and (most extensively) the longing for voice and companionship that is at the heart of both novels, in very different ways. Additional study, via the Appendix,

compares a few of Salinger's early short stories about Holden Caulfield and Babe Gladwaller with passages in *All Quiet on the Western Front*, suggesting an influence that might have helped him evolve his own ideas within his short stories into his final version of *The Catcher in the Rye*; however, due to lack of definitive evidence, this thesis limits its argument to speculation. The ultimate claim argues that Salinger's novel breaks the metaphorical fourth wall and makes the reader a character in the book who will catch up Holden and hold him during a shared experience in telling one another what they are each doing in a sanitorium near Hollywood, though the book, obviously and necessarily, only reveals Holden's narrative.

Keywords: war, adolescents, soldiers, trauma, youth, age, education, victims, phoniness, inauthenticity, movies, theater, games, voice, camaraderie, companionship, catch, hold.

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For Joshua,

who pointed out that it was the biology teacher who interrupted Holden's game of catch,

his life skill of learning to catch in the dark with friends.

In Erich Maria Remarque's classic novel *All Quiet on the Western Front*, the protagonist, Paul Bäumer, on leave from the front, sits on a sofa in his childhood room, gazing upon and yet disconnected from his beloved books:

> I feel excited; but I do not want to be, for that is not right. I want that quiet rapture again. I want to feel the same powerful, nameless urge that I used to feel when I turned to my books. The breath of desire that then arose from the coloured backs of the books, shall fill me again, melt the heavy, dead lump of lead that lies somewhere in me and waken again the impatience of the future, the quick joy in the world of thought, it shall bring back again the lost eagerness of my youth. I sit and wait. (Remarque 106)

Paul begs the books themselves to rescue him:

> The backs of the books stand in rows. I know them all still, I remember arranging them in order. I implore them with my eyes: Speak to me—take me up—take me, Life of my Youth—you who are carefree, beautiful—receive me. (107)

Rising from the sofa, Paul flips through the books one-by-one, letting them fall in a pile at his feet. And then the realization that he is no longer in the adolescent world he once inhabited and that he cannot accept the wisdom the books once contained arrests his patience:

> I stand there dumb. As before a judge.
>
> Dejected.
>
> Words, Words, Words—they do not reach me.
>
> Slowly I place the books back in the shelves.
>
> Nevermore. (107)

Nearly two years later during a "fourteen days' rest" due to having "swallowed a bit of gas," Paul dies, collapsed in "a little garden" away from the Western front. He never returns to the books he had so earnestly hoped would revitalize him. He has rejected them as their words have been false to him with his own youth now sacrificed. The war has changed him forever since he and his classmates first enlisted, and its vocabulary has displaced the words in his books: "Bombardment, barrage, curtain-fire, mines, gas, tanks, machine-guns, hand-grenades—words, words, but they hold the horror of the world" (83).

Paul Bäumer's disappointment in the "Words, Words, Words" of his books alludes to the disillusionment of another great literary character, Shakespeare's Hamlet. Facetiously, and in response to Polonius's disingenuous question, "What do you read, my lord?" meant to uncover his presumed madness, Hamlet fends off the king's counsellor with a literal response: "Words, words, words" (Shakespeare 2.2.192). Like Paul, Hamlet experiences both the power of words and the "horror" that comes with their debasement.

Here, now, is another iconic literary character, Holden Caulfield in J. D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye*, reflecting on the power of books:

> The book I was reading was this book I took out of the library by mistake. They gave me the wrong book, and I didn't notice it till I got back to my room. They gave me *Out of Africa*, by Isak Dinesen. I thought it was going to stink, but it didn't. It was a very good book. I'm quite illiterate, but I read a lot.... What really knocks me out is a book that, when you're all done reading it, you wish the author that wrote it was a terrific friend of yours and you could call him up on the phone

> whenever you felt like it. That doesn't happen much, though. I wouldn't mind calling this Isak Dinesen up. (Salinger 24-25)

With Holden, the power of words in a book is linked to the authenticity of its voice, a voice that makes you want to know who engendered it (As we will see, voice is a central motif of *All Quiet on the Western Front*, as well.). But that authenticity is always in jeopardy in the phony world that Holden inhabits. As he sits in his chair to "read certain parts over again" in Dinesen's book, his suitemate, Ackley who stands blocking the light while Holden tries to read, interrupts him:

> "What the hellya reading?" he said.
>
> "Goddam book."
>
> He shoved the book back with his hand so he could see the name of it. "Any good? he said.
>
> "This *sen*tence that I'm reading is terrific." (Salinger 28)

The encounter, and especially the irate literalism of Holden's response, harkens back to the scene between Hamlet and Polonius, one of many allusions in the novel to Shakespeare's play—though Ackley and his dissimilar doppelgänger Stradlater play more the roles of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern than that of the pompous counsellor. Among the critics who have noticed the connection between *The Catcher in the Rye* and *Hamlet* is Louis Menand, who observes in his essay "Holden at Fifty: *The Catcher in the Rye* and What is Spawned":

> The world is sad, Oscar Wilde said, because a puppet was once melancholy. He was referring to Hamlet, a character he thought had taught the world a new kind of unhappiness—the unhappiness of eternal disappointment in life as it is,

> Weltschmerz. Whether Shakespeare invented it or not, it has also proved to be one of the most addictive of literary emotions…. For many Americans who grew up in the nineteen-fifties, *The Catcher in the Rye* is the purest extract of that mood. Holden Caulfield is their sorrow king. (Menand 235-6)

In Menand's reading of the novel within its time, the corrupt court of Denmark in Shakespeare's play becomes for Salinger's readers America in the 1950s.

In the passages that we have just examined from *All Quiet on the Western Front* and *The Catcher in the Rye* we observe a shared love of, and concern with, words and their potential for wisdom and debasement, respectfully, one mediated in both novels by an engagement with Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. For Paul Bäumer, access to the once-beloved words of his books has been blocked forever by the traumatic experiences of war, which have installed a new, horrifying vocabulary in their place**,** while for Holden Caulfield the threat to the authenticity and value of words comes from the phony culture of post-World War II America, represented above by the pimpled buttinsky, Ackley.

In this thesis I will argue that this shared concern with the power of words and books is only one of many thematic connections between these two novels. Each work depicts a war on adolescence. In *All Quiet on the Western Front*, this involves not just the trauma of combat that robs even survivors of access to their youth, but also the entanglement of the young in a corrupt educational system, where teachers conspire with political and military leaders to turn their students into cannon fodder. In *The Catcher in the Rye*, the war on adolescence is metaphorical, as an inauthentic culture places youthful idealism, and youth itself, in jeopardy, and the traumatic experiences of Holden within

that culture suggestively mirror those of Salinger himself, as a combatant in World War II.[1]

I am not the first to have noted this analogy between Holden's alienation and Salinger's own suffering from what today we would call post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). This is a major emphasis of Kenneth Slawenski's magisterial biography, *J. D. Salinger: A Life* (2012). As Slawenski observes, "the impact [on Salinger] of D-Day and the eleven months of continuous combat that followed is difficult to overstate.... The war, its horrors, agonies, and lessons, would brand itself upon every aspect of Salinger's personality and reverberate through his writings" (Slawenski 90). The critic/scholar Andy Rogers also draws a connection between Salinger's wartime experience and *The Catcher in the Rye*, noting that *Catcher* provides a means to process Salinger's own war trauma into a book that could "gain the approval of a mass audience" without risking his reputation as a soldier:

> Salinger's experience with human cruelty would render him more than capable of depicting it in its most extreme form, yet he chooses to have a teenager at prep school observe it and remark upon how unbearable it is, serving dual functions: it transmutes Salinger's unbearable experiences with cruelty into something pre-adult, and it shows the genesis of the cruelty Salinger witnessed at its apotheosis, thus linking prep school bullying to the war, even to the Holocaust. The petty injustices germinating in children are sanctioned and fomented by adults, thus the children become the politicians and officers and mindless civilians who instigate and cheer on war and all the tragedy and horror that it entails. (Rogers)

As Rogers succinctly states, “Holden Caulfield has more in common with a traumatized soldier than an alienated teenager,” and one vivid example is Holden’s explanation to Ackley who asks him about the red hunting cap that he had bought earlier in the day while in New York with the fencing team: when Ackley claims that “Up home we wear a hat like that to shoot deer in, for Chrissake” and “That’s a deer shooting hat,” Holden declares “Like hell it is” and takes it off to look at it, and “closed one eye, like I was taking aim at it,” matter-of-factly stating, “This is a people shooting hat… I shoot people in this hat” (Salinger 10).

These parallels between Holden’s alienation as a teenager and Salinger’s experience of war are central to my argument in this thesis, and as I have already acknowledged, I am not the first to have observed this connection. However, I am possibly the first to have recognized the network of thematic parallels between *All Quiet on the Western Front* and *The Catcher in the Rye* that I will be analyzing in the pages that follow. To me, these parallels strongly suggest that Salinger had Remarque’s novel consciously in mind as he wrote. In the absence of concrete evidence, such as a notebook entry by Salinger confirming his borrowings, the direct influence of one work upon the other cannot be proved beyond the shadow of a doubt; my readers must consider the parallels and make up their own minds for themselves. What is beyond dispute is that Salinger, as a writer and a veteran of combat, held Remarque’s works in very high regard. In a letter dated March 10, 1961 to his editor Lamed G. “Ned” Bradford at Little, Brown & Company regarding the final stretch of publishing *Franny and Zooey*, Salinger commented upon one of the publishing company’s other successful writers:

> I think Erich Maria Remarque is published by Little Brown-- I know he used to be at any rate. I took an old copy of *Three Comrades* out to my son's shelter in the snow […] I'd forgotten what a beautiful, touching book it is. *I think his war books and postwar rubble books are better than anyone's. His are the only ones that move me anyway*. (Max Rambod Rare Books, italics mine)[2]

Certainly, this letter's vivid testimony to Salinger's admiration for Remarque's writing about war, an admiration unrecognized by previous scholarship on Salinger, makes the possibility of a direct influence of one writer on the other seem at least plausible, and what adds to that plausibility is Slawenski's evidence that "While living in Europe during 1937-1938, Salinger came to embrace German culture, the German language, and the German people…." (Slawenski 23).

In an Appendix to this thesis I speculate about how Remarque's influence may have played a part in Salinger's development as a writer, particularly in the short stories leading up to *The Catcher in the Rye*, but here I will limit myself to analyzing a constellation of five central themes shared by the two novels: the **conflict between youth and age**; the ways that **education makes victims of the young**; the **inauthenticity of theater and movies**; the **disparagement of games**; and (most extensively) the **longing for voice and companionship** that is at the heart of both novels, in very different ways.

The first of these themes is that of the **conflict between youth and age.** In *All Quiet on the Western Front*, we see this especially during Paul's visit back home, where he encounters older men in his town who want to hear about his experiences in battle, with the most inquisitive being his father:

> He wants me to tell him about the front; he is curious in a way that I find stupid and distressing; I no longer have any real contact with him. There is nothing he likes more than just hearing about it. I realize he does not know that a man cannot talk of such things; I would do it willingly, but it is too dangerous for me to put these things into words. I am afraid they might then become gigantic and I be no longer able to master them. What would become of us if everything that happens out there were quite clear to us? (Remarque 102)

With other men, such as his German-master and, as in the following example, his head-master, Paul endures their arguments about "what we ought to annex" and arrogance about perspectives: "He dismisses the idea [of France having too many reinforcements for a break-through] loftily and informs me I know nothing about it. 'The details, yes,' says he, 'but this relates to the whole. And of that you are not able to judge. You see only your little sector and so cannot have any general survey….'" (103-4). Rather than engaging his elders in conversation, Paul "prefer[s] to be alone, so that no one troubles me. For they all come back to the same thing, how badly it goes and how well it goes; one thinks it is this way, another that; and yet they are always absorbed in the things that go to make up their own existence. Formerly I lived in just the same way myself, but now I feel no contact here any longer" (103-4). Ultimately, because of the vast gulf of experience that separates Paul and his comrades and the older men who claim to know more or better, Paul can no longer connect with any of them, concluding that "They are different men here, men I cannot properly understand, whom I envy and despise" (105). Their lack of understanding of Paul's reality makes them hubristic and haughty to him, much like Polonius with Hamlet.

Complicating this theme in *All Quiet* is a sense that the adolescent soldiers themselves are both young and old, as the experiences of warfare have robbed them of their youth. In the opening chapter of *All Quiet on the Western Front*, Paul and his friends discuss, just after visiting their comrade Kemmerich who is wounded and languishing in the dressing-station, and soon to die, what their schoolmaster, Kantorek, has written to them. It is Kropp who "rails" that Kantorek says they are "the Iron Youth," but it is Paul who agrees that "Yes, that's the way they think, these hundred thousand Kantoreks! Iron Youth. Youth! We are none of us more than twenty years old. But young? Youth? That is long ago. We are old folk" (Remarque 15). This paradox is what informs Paul of the insincerity in the older men who condescend to him back home, and it is a motif of war's effects on young soldiers that Paul routinely observes. Five passages follow to illustrate, respectively, beginning with Albert's realization of the uselessness of school lessons in stark contrast to the war, continuing with Paul's observations while they relax and play cards afterwards, then the effects of an intense bombardment of the young soldiers, and Paul's dire awareness of the soldiers' lives within the harshness of the trenches, plus his bleak descriptions of the "young recruits" who cannot comprehend the madness of the war around them:

- Albert expresses it: "The war has ruined us for everything."

  He is right. We are not youth any longer. We don't want to take the world by storm. We are fleeing. We fly from ourselves. From our life. We were eighteen and had begun to love life and the world; and we had to shoot it to pieces. The first bomb, the first explosion, burst in our hearts. We are cut off from activity,

from striving, from progress. We believe in such things no longer, we believe in war. (56)

- Then we change our possy and lie down again to play cards. We know how to do that: to play cards, to swear, and to fight. Not much for twenty years; —and yet too much for twenty years. (57)
- bombardment is too much for the poor devils, they have been sent straight from a recruiting-depot into a barrage that is enough to turn an old soldier's hair grey (69).
- We are forlorn like children, and experienced like old men, we are crude and sorrowful and superficial—I believe we are lost. (77)
- Their sharp, downy, dead faces have the awful expressionlessness of dead children.

    It brings a lump into the throat to see how they go over, and run and fall. A man would like to spank them, they are so stupid, and to take them by the arm and lead them away from here where they have no business to be. They wear grey coats and trousers and boots, but for most of them the uniform is far too big, it hangs on their limbs, their shoulders are too narrow, their bodies too slight; no uniform was ever made to these childish measurements. (81-82)

Perhaps the most horrifying example comes during a particularly gruesome bombardment in a cemetery where coffins are blown out of the ground, landing among or even on top of the soldiers. Paul's older and more experienced comrade Katczinsky, missing the chance to put a boy soldier, terribly wounded, out of his misery, "shakes his

head," commiserating, "Such a kid—" and "Young innocents—" (47). This is the same boy whom Paul, not much earlier, had sheltered when the bombardment had started:

> Beside us lies a fair-headed recruit in utter terror. He has buried his face in his hands, his helmet has fallen off. I fish hold of it and try to put it back on his head. He looks up, pushes the helmet off and like a child creeps under my arm, his head close to my breast. The little shoulders heave. Shoulders just like Kemmerich's. I let him be. (40)

Both Paul and Katczinsky recognize that the wounded soldier's current situation is hopeless: "What he has gone through so far is nothing to what he's in for till he dies. Now he is numb and feels nothing. In an hour he will become one screaming bundle of intolerable pain. Every day that he can live will be a howling torture. And to whom does it matter whether he has them [his days] or not—" (47). Given the evidence, it is clear that the older men who are back in their small towns, safe and unaware, will not care about this fallen young man, and it is also clear why Paul no longer has his own youth but has become old. Near the end of his own life, he ponders the future for the young men like himself who were sacrificed for their country's war:

> I am young, I am twenty years old; yet I know nothing of life but despair, death, fear, and fatuous superficiality cast over an abyss of sorrow. I see how peoples are set against one another, and in silence, unknowingly, foolishly, obediently, innocently slay one another. I see that the keenest brains of the world invent weapons and words to make it yet more refined and enduring. And all men of my age, here and over there, throughout the whole world, see these things; all my generation is experiencing these things with me. What would our fathers do if we

> suddenly stood up and came before them and proffered our account? What do they expect of us if a time ever comes when the war is over? Through the years our business has been killing; —it was our first calling in life. Our knowledge of life is limited to death. What will happen afterwards? And what shall come out of us? (160-1)

If death is all that can come of their lives, then their youth, quite dramaticly, has been supplanted by old age.

In *The Catcher in the Rye*, the combination of age and youth is epitomized most memorably in Holden's prematurely gray hair: "I'm six foot two and a half and I have gray hair. I really do. The one side of my head – the right side – is full of millions of gray hairs. I've had them ever since I was a kid" (Salinger 13). This bizarre juxtaposition of youth and age fits Paul's description of young soldier's hair shocked into a premature grey, but it may also recall Hamlet's encounter with Polonius in Act Two, scene two of the play, where the prince reads to the old man the words of a "satirical rogue" who mocks the aged, but then assures Polonius that "yourself, sir, shall grow old as I am, if like a crab, you could go backward" (Shakespeare 2.2, 202-204). And indeed, Polonian sententiousness is not hard to discern in the empty words of the many adults who seek to offer advice to Holden over the course of the novel, including several of his teachers.

Gray hair is not the only indication of the paradox of youth and age in *Catcher*. Characters like Sunny, who at the age of fourteen is prostituted out by "old Maurice," who likewise is engaged in deviant, adulthood behaviors, are metaphorical soldiers permanently altered by the uncaring and phony adult world. "Her green dress hanging in the closet and all" is suggestive of the death of her innocence and youth, the closet having

similar confines as a coffin (Salinger 125). And Jane Gallagher, Holden's friend whom he longs to defend from "old Stradlater," who had borrowed Holden's "*hound*'s-tooth jacket" [italics mine] for his date with Jane, is another youth made old too soon (33). Her tear dropping upon one of the red squares of the checker board after the "booze *hound*" [italics mine] of a stepfather asked her for cigarettes signifies the loss of her innocence, especially when combined with Holden's observation that her stepfather would "run around the goddam house, naked. With *Jane* around, and all" (42, 102).

A similar betrayal of the young by their elders comes when Holden seeks out his favorite teacher, Mr. Antolini, at home. Holden, desperate for a place of comfort, finally arrives at Mr. Antolini's house where he thinks he will find it, but fails to receive the necessary response: "He didn't say anything again for quite a while. I don't know if you've ever done it, but it's sort of hard to sit around waiting for somebody to say something when they're thinking and all. It really is. I kept trying not to yawn. It wasn't that I was bored or anything--I wasn't--but I was so damn sleepy all of a sudden" (Salinger 246-7). Instead of paying attention to Holden's needs, Antolini persists with his own advice until Holden cannot contain his exhaustion: "Then, all of a sudden, I yawned. What a *rude bastard*, but I couldn't help it" (247). Warren French explains the predicament by connecting *Catcher* to *Hamlet*:

> Holden has come for understanding and receives instead the kind of lecture that Polonius delivers to Laertes in *Hamlet* before the son leaves home. And we know exactly what
>
> Holden thinks about this advice, for earlier in the book he has referred to the speech specifically as "the bull his father was shooting." (French 113)

At the episode's end, Antolini's "sort of petting [Holden] or patting [him] on the goddam head" appears similar to Jane's loss of youth (Salinger 249). Holden needed not physical attention but emotional safety, and he did not "even like to *talk* about it," which implies the damage done (249).

Another example from *Catcher* of the conflict between old and young, one that especially resonates with *All Quiet*, comes when Holden encounters a Pencey Prep alumnus returned to campus, a veteran of World War I. "You should've seen this one old guy that was about fifty. What he did was, he came in our room and knocked on the door and asked us if we'd mind if he used the bathroom" (Salinger 218-9). Holden struggles to explain to Phoebe what he means, but her age and innocence make it difficult, and even Holden's age and lack of awareness of what actually serving in a war could do to someone limits his ability to connect. Although Holden is familiar with D.B. participating in D-Day and his peculiar, uncharacteristic behavior at home, D.B., like most soldiers as with Salinger, was naturally reticent about its horrors; yet, it is not hard for Holden to spot the phoniness with the old soldier looking for his initials in the bathroom stall who, like Polonius, dispenses unwanted advice:

> All you have to do to depress somebody is give them a lot of phony advice while you're looking for your initials in some can door—that's all you have to do. I don't know. Maybe it wouldn't have been so bad if he hadn't been all out of breath. He was all out of breath from just climbing up the stairs, and the whole time he was looking for his initials he kept breathing hard, with his nostrils all funny and sad, while he kept telling Stradlater and I to get all we could out of

> Pencey. God, Phoebe! I can't explain. I just didn't like anything that was *hap*pening at Pencey. I can't explain. (219)

Holden cannot explain but his intuition seems to tell him that there is a deep denial within the soldier of what he experienced in the war, that his eagerness to find his carved initials while simultaneously giving trite advice to Holden and Stradlater bespeaks blind obedience to the prep school, the military, and the political machines that drive the war effort. A soldier of his experience and age, Holden seems to say, should be more concerned with preparing the boys for the reality of life, and even military service, than finding his initials in a bathroom stall.

The second set of thematic parallels, closely related to the first, is an emphasis in both novels on how **education makes victims of the young**. In *All Quiet*, the chief aim of education seems to be to prepare unsuspecting young men to embrace the opportunity of being slaughtered on the front. Paul conveys more about Kantorek, who "had been our schoolmaster," and whose propaganda and patriotism has been previously discussed, revealing here how influential educators were in World War I Germany with enticing youth to sign up for service:

> During drill-time Kantorek gave us long lectures until the whole of our class went under his shepherding to the District Commandant and volunteered. I can see him now, as he used to glare at us through his spectacles and say in a moving voice: "Won't you join up, Comrades?" These teachers always carry their feelings ready in their waistcoat pockets, and fetch them out at any hour of the day. But we didn't think of that then. (Remarque 11)

Paul notes that the one boy who did not want to sign up, Josef Behm, "was one of the first to fall" (11). He then explains that "Naturally we couldn't blame Kantorek for this. Where would the world be if one brought every man to book? There were thousands of Kantoreks, all of whom were convinced that there was only one way of doing well, and that way theirs" (11-2). But Paul, regardless, bemoans the effects of education upon the young of his generation: "For us lads of eighteen [our teachers] ought to have been mediators and guides to the world of maturity, the world of work, of duty, of culture, of progress—to the future" and "The idea of authority, which they represented, was associated in our minds with a greater insight and a manlier wisdom," and "We loved our country as much as they; we went courageously into every action; but also we distinguished the false from the true, we had suddenly learned to see. And we saw that there was nothing of their world left. We were all at once terribly alone; and alone we must see it through" (12).

There is a bit of sweet, ironic justice that Paul shares about his encounter with Kantorek while home from the Front. He sees Mittelstaedt who informs him that "Kantorek has been called up as a territorial," a civilian trained to help relieve troops, and Paul enjoys watching Mittlestaed exact revenge on Kantorek, on behalf of Joseph Behm, by humiliating him on the parade-ground with reprimands and commands, even shaming him by comparisons to "Boettcher, our school porter" who "is a model for [Kantorek] to learn from" (109). Paul cannot help but be amused, realizing about Kantorek that:

> Nothing could look more ludicrous than his foragecap and his uniform. And this is the object before whom we used to stand in anguish, as he sat up there enthroned at his desk, spearing at us with his pencil for our mistakes in those

> irregular French verbs with which afterwards we made so little headway in France. That is barely two years ago—and now here stands Territorial Kantorek, the spell quite broken, with bent knees, arms like pothooks, unpolished buttons and that ludicrous rig-out—an impossible soldier. I cannot reconcile this with the menacing figure at the schoolmaster's desk. I wonder what I, the old soldier, would do if this skin full of woe ever dared to say to me again: Bäumer, give the imperfect of 'aller.' (109)

Earlier in the novel, Paul had mused on the failure of schools to teach anything useful, complaining that "We remember mighty little of all that rubbish. Anyway, it has never been the slightest use to us. At school nobody ever taught us how to light a cigarette in a storm of rain, nor how a fire could be made with wet wood—nor that it is best to stick a bayonet in the belly because there it doesn't get jammed, as it does in the ribs" (55). Müller, one of Paul's comrades, adds that they will have to go back to school or get a job, to which Paul retorts "It's rot all the same, everything they teach you" (55).

Continuing the conversation with his comrades about what they will do after the war, and based upon his disillusionment with his society, Paul offers "We'll want a private income, and then we'll be able to live by ourselves in a wood" (a sentiment that Holden conveys to Sally), but immediately feels "ashamed of this absurd idea" (55). Paul is also disenchanted with the roles that education has prepared for him and his comrades, commiserating with them about their dire circumstances and how, as Kropp said, they were ruined for everything:

> "When I think about it, Albert," I say after a while, rolling over on my back, "when I hear the word 'peace time,' it goes to my head; and if it really came, I

> think I would do some unimaginable thing—something, you know, that it's worth having lain here in the muck for. But I can't even imagine anything. All I do know is that this business about professions and studies and salaries and so on—it makes me sick, it is and always was disgusting. I don't see anything—I don't see anything at all, Albert." (56)

In that moment, as a result of expressing his deepest disdain for what his teachers and country have done to him, he confesses that "All at once everything seems to me confused and hopeless" (56).

These issues of misguidance in education are exacerbated in the military, a form of continued education, and turn from propaganda into outright fraud. Paul argues:

> There may be good doctors, and there are, lots of them; all the same, every soldier some time during his hundreds of inspections falls into the clutches of one of these countless hero-grabbers who pride themselves on changing as many C3's and B3's as possible into A1's.
>
> There are many such stories, they are mostly far more bitter. All the same, they have nothing to do with mutiny or lead-swinging. They are merely honest and call a thing by its name; for there is a very great deal of fraud, injustice, and baseness in the army. —Is it nothing that regiment after regiment returns again and again to the ever more hopeless struggle, that attack follows attack along the weakening, retreating, crumbling line? (Remarque 168)

Paul's question leads him to express the worsening horrors of the war, from the armoured tanks "rolling on in long lines" to his awareness that he and his comrades "shrivel up in our thin skin before them, against their colossal weight our arms are sticks of straw, and

our hand-grenades matches" (168). And this, sadly, he seems to say, is what his education has brought him:

> Shells, gas clouds, and flotillas of tanks—shattering, starvation, death.
>
> Dysentery, influenza, typhus—murder, burning, death.
>
> Trenches, hospitals, the common grave—there are no other possibilities.

And this horror stems from the new words he learned since Kantorek led him and his peers to enlist.

By extension, Paul makes it clear that enemy soldiers are less harmful than the military leaders and schoolmasters. In seeing prisoners up close, he cannot help but realize the depravity of their situation, as well as his own (below italics are mine):

> A word of command has made these silent figures our enemies; a word of command might transform them into our friends. At some table a document is signed by some persons whom none of us knows, and then for years together that very crime on which formerly the world's condemnation and severest penalty fell, become our highest aim. But who can draw such a distinction when he looks at these quiet men with their childlike faces and apostles' beards. *Any non-commissioned officer is more of an enemy to a recruit, any schoolmaster to a pupil than they are to us.* And yet we would shoot at them again and they at us if they were free.
>
> I am frightened: I dare think this way no more. This way lies the abyss. It is not now the time; but I will not lose these thoughts, I will keep them, shut them away until the war is ended. My heart beats fast: this is the aim, the great, the sole aim, that I have thought of in the trenches; that I have looked for as the only

> possibility of existence after this annihilation of all human feeling; this is a task that will make life afterward worthy of these hideous years. (Remarque 119)

Paul's desire to regain life after his schooling and military trainings that have led him to this point of despair is in vain.

In *The Catcher in the Rye*, the task of education seems to be that of perpetuating the norms of an inauthentic culture in which the teachers themselves scarcely seem to believe, and yet participate in. Pencey Prep, to Holden's annoyance, models that inauthenticity with its phony ads:

> They advertise in about a thousand magazines, always showing some hot-shot 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 *mold*ing 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. (Salinger 4)

Holden later provides examples to Phoebe about how "Even the couple of *nice* teachers on the faculty, they were phonies, too," explaining that "Mr. Spencer'd practically kill himself chuckling and smiling and all [at Mr. Thurmer's interrupting jokes], like as if Thurmer was a goddam prince or something," and this account includes his frustration with the garrulous World War I veteran (discussed in regards to youth and age) who was

more concerned with finding his initials on the wall of the bathroom stall than modeling authentic education to Holden and Stradlater (218).

A specific example that connects with *All Quiet* is the teaching technique of Mr. Vinson, which seems akin to the harassment and hazing of basic training. When a student makes a presentation in class, Mr. Vinson, who demands conformity, rallies the other students to yell "digression" if the student veers off topic. Holden is at variance with this approach:

> I like it when somebody gets excited about something. It's nice. You just didn't know this teacher, Mr. Vinson. He could drive you crazy sometimes, him and the goddam class. I mean he'd keep telling you to *unify* and *simplify* all the time. Some things you just can't *do* that to. I mean you can't hardly ever simplify and unify something just because somebody *wants* you to. You didn't know this guy, Mr. Vinson. I mean he was very intelligent and all, but you could tell he didn't have too much brains. (240)

One boy, Richard Kinsella, giving a speech about a farm, digresses from the topic to reveal that his uncle at forty-two had gotten polio and "wouldn't let anybody come to see him in the hospital because he didn't want anybody to see him with a brace on" (239). All of the other students keep yelling "digression" at him even though Kinsella is addressing an authentic and personal topic. That all students were expected to stay on topic about a farm, which would probably be similar to every other farm a student might talk about, reveals the conformity, but Mr. Vinson's failure to recognize Kinsella's concern and fear over his uncle's health illustrates the indifference that the institution manufactures, and the teacher endorses.

Richard Kinsella, who simply needs a comrade to share his concerns for his uncle's ill-health, is akin to a fallen soldier. The derogatory and insensitive yelling of "digression" by all his classmates, egged on by their teacher is metaphorically like a battle, and the young people whom Holden talks about, who are traumatized during their adolescence instead of nurtured into adulthood, are potential metaphorical soldiers. The point seems to be that the adolescent experience is traumatic like war, that the schools, especially the private, wealthy prep schools, are like the military. Holden even shares that his brother D.B. "hated the Army worse than the war" and that "He once told Allie and I that if he'd had to shoot anybody, he wouldn't've known which direction to shoot in," that "the Army was practically as full of bastards as the Nazis were" (181-2). About this, Rogers argues that "Holden can only guess at what D.B. must have meant and comes to the innocuous conclusion that his brother must have been referring to the marching and companions who resembled Holden's acquaintances at school" (Rogers).

Mr. Spencer, Holden's history teacher whom he stops to visit before leaving Pencey Prep, provides another example, but one that actually reveals Mr. Spencer's own inauthenticity. His utter lack of understanding history's root causes, his own subject, and the way that he holds Holden's failures up for ridicule, is what makes Holden begin to hate him. Mr. Spencer fails to find out why Holden repeatedly drops out of school and seems oblivious that Holden's own history is affected by the death of his younger brother, Allie. Though Holden does not express this, Salinger provides enough evidence about Mr. Spencer's shortcomings, including his failure to grasp the irony inherent in his beloved "old beat-up Navajo blanket that he and Mrs. Spencer'd bought off some Indian in Yellowstone Park," originally a physical necessity with cultural designs here sold as a

souvenir to help an individual Navajo person survive (Salinger 10). And Mr. Spencer fails to see the humorous commentary of Caucasians being able to mummify their dead, revealed in Holden's essay, the joke being that Old Spencer himself is a mummy wrapped in his bathrobe and smelling of Vicks Nose Drops with his bed "like a rock." Mr. Spencer also fails miserably in the moment to teach anything useful for Holden, instead only presenting Holden's failure to him by having him read his essay. This episode of teaching through shame would have done the Kantorek of *All Quiet* proud.

Holden states that Mr. Spencer's attempt to help him is pointless because they are "too much on opposite sides of the pole" (20). He also is explicit about the awfulness of Mr. Spencer yelling "Good luck" at him, saying "It sounds terrible, when you think about it," especially since good luck is devoid of cause and effect, meaning that Holden's efforts to adjust to adulthood will be useless (21). Andy Rogers compares Mr. Spencer's parting words to the implicit cruelty of the same remark when hypothetically spoken to a departing soldier:

> Veterans would naturally find the well-wishing civilian who uttered the platitude distasteful and not want to consider the true implications of the statement, but it seems to be a rather odd comment for a seventeen year old prep school dropout. Soldiers who heard the cheerful send off would find it terrible to hear from a civilian because of several subtexts implicit in the statement: "You're going to war and I'm not," "I hope you don't die or see anything that drives you crazy," "Hope that your comrades are killed or wounded instead of you," "It's only a roll of the dice out there, no matter what you tell yourself," "May you see your enemy's body ripped open and putrefying, may you hear his screams of agony,"

> "He is the enemy only by chance, you would fight on his side had fate placed you there; you are right only by chance, if you are right," "Good luck living with those experiences; if you can't, only luck will help you because no one else will," "Good luck to you Holocaust survivors; you may regain 100 pounds and your health only to discover that you are still unwanted and despised," "Good luck to anyone Jewish that this will not happen again." (Rogers)

All of these potential circumstances reflect *Catcher* as a war novel, and they certainly are comparable to themes and circumstances that Paul witnesses and endures in *All Quiet on the Western Front*; yet, though he does not mention anything about "good luck," Paul does discuss the randomness of chance, which one might need "good luck" in, providing the example that "In a bomb-proof dug-out I may be smashed to atoms and in the open may survive ten hours' bombardment unscathed. No soldier outlives a thousand chances. But every soldier believes in Chance and trusts his luck" (Remarque 63). He argues, "It is this Chance that makes us indifferent" (63).

Salinger, via Holden's narrative about the inauthenticity of his education and some teachers, suggests that youth, too, in this educational environment, as with Stradlater, are just as likely as some adults to bully and harm other youth. Holden's narrative of how Ernest Morrow's mother "looked like she might have a pretty damn good idea what a bastard she was the mother of" and how "Her son was doubtless the biggest bastard that ever went to Pencey, in the whole crumby history of the school," for example, reveals that Stradlater is not an exception (Salinger 72). That Ernest "was always going down the corridor, after he'd had a shower, snapping his soggy old wet towel at people's asses" illustrates the peer abuse that Pencey Prep appears to foster via

indifference (71). Phil Stabile's violence towards James Castle is another, in which case Castle was wearing Holden's (symbolic) turtleneck sweater (that could not protect him) when he called Phil Stabile conceited:

> So Stabile, with about six other dirty bastards, went down to James Castle's room and went in and locked the goddam door and tried to make him take back what he said, but he wouldn't do it. So they started in on him. I won't even tell you what they did to him – it's too repulsive – but he *still* wouldn't take it back, old James Castle…. Finally, what he did, instead of taking back what he said, he jumped out the window. I was in the *shower* and all, and even *I* could hear him land outside. (221)

Holden informed Phoebe of this horrific event to help explain how Pencey "was one of the worst schools" he ever went to, that "It was full of phonies. And mean guys," adding that "You never saw so many mean guys in your life" (217).

And this trauma by Holden's peers to his classmates and himself has its own effect. Regarding James Castle's awful death, Andy Rogers observes that Holden's own comments about his desire to commit suicide were it not for the concern that people would stare at his dead body, and that "he didn't want a bunch of stupid rubberneckers looking at [him] when [he] was all gory," reveal Holden, again, to be more akin to a soldier than a student (136):

> If Holden is serious, or more accurately, if Salinger is serious about Holden being serious about his feelings, then Holden's observation [about people rubbernecking] is indeed curious. Holden is reduced to not caring about his life continuing; he merely doesn't want to give the phonies the satisfaction of seeing

> his body ruined. Witnessing James Castle's body may have affected him this profoundly, but Holden's comment seems to reflect that of a person who has a profound experience with witnessing dead bodies and coming to an understanding of them that others simply don't understand. (Rogers)

For Paul and Holden, to varying degrees, then, the "annihilation of all human feeling" seems to be at the core of their respective educations and experiences (Remarque 119). With Holden, this is perhaps at the heart of what leads him to express that "I'm sort of glad they've got the atomic bomb invented. If there's ever another war, I'm going to sit right the hell on top of it. I'll volunteer for it, I swear to God I will" (Salinger 182).

The next set of thematic parallels in both *All Quiet on the Western Front* and *The Catcher in the Rye* emphasizes the **inauthenticity of theater and** (in the case of *Catcher*) **movies**. This theme comes explicitly into play just once in *All Quiet*, in a memorable passage where Paul and his fellow soldiers muse upon a poster advertising a theatrical performance for the troops, and it happens to be right at the middle of the novel just as Hamlet's play within a play, *The Mousetrap*, is performed exactly at the center of *Hamlet*:

> Some time ago there was an army theatre in these parts. Coloured posters of the performances are still sticking on a hoarding. With wide eyes Kropp and I stand in front of it. We can hardly credit that such things still exist. A girl in a light summer dress, with a red patent-leather belt about her hips! She is standing with one hand on a railing and with the other she holds a straw hat. She wears white stockings and white shoes, fine buckle shoes with high heels. Behind her smiles a blue lake with white-horses, at the side is a bright bay. She is a lovely girl with a

> delicate nose, red lips, and slender legs, wonderfully clean and well cared for, she certainly bathes twice a day and never has any dirt under her nails. At most perhaps a bit of sand from the beach.
>
> Beside her stands a man in white trousers, a blue jacket, and sailor's cap; but he interests us much less.
>
> The girl on the poster is a wonder to us. We have quite forgotten that there are such things, and even now we hardly believe our eyes. We have seen nothing like it for years, nothing like it for happiness, beauty, and joy. That is peace time, that is as it should be; we feel excited. (Remarque 87-8)

Their excitement escalates when Leer and Tjaden "stroll up" and "immediately [make] the conversation… smutty," the two of them soon masturbating over the image of the girl in the poster. Paul downplays their lewdness, claiming "It does not distress us exactly. Who isn't smutty is no soldier; it merely does not suit us at the moment, so we edge away and march off to the delousing station with the same feeling as if it were a swell gentleman's outfitters" (89).

Here the theatrical images offer the men a way out of the war for a moment, though they never cease to be aware of their own condition, and the images of the poster are implicitly contrasted with the images a few pages earlier of the soldiers' vividly real memories of home, as well with the more down-to-earth satisfactions celebrated in the recounting, right after the description of the poster, of an escapade with three town girls. The prelude of sharing "lying tales of our experiences" for the three men is a form of theater that allows them to distance themselves from the horrors of battle while building

their comradery (90). It also allows them to discern what is real, like Hamlet, and thus they are able to enjoy their own theatrical moment.

With Paul, however, there is discomfort and insecurity in the transition from soldier to lover when with one of the three women, evinced with the removal of his war boots for "slippers" that the girls provide him and his two comrades, but "now nothing remains to recall for me the assurance and self-confidence of the solder: no rifle, no belt, no tunic, no cap. I let myself drop into the unknown, come what may—yet, in spite of all, I feel somewhat afraid (92). It is the "little brunette" who speaks to him in French, easing him into comfort: "The words of this foreign tongue, that I hardly understand, they caress me to a quietness, in which the room grows dim, and dissolves in the half light, and only the face above me lives and is clear" (Remarque 93). And once he accepts her kindness and allows her charms to guide him beyond his fears, as well as past the sullied memories of the brothels allowed for soldiers, he is transported into pleasure and allowed to dream, the poster of the girl supplanting the warm embrace of the brunette, creating a purposeful kind of theatre for Paul:

> But then I feel the lips of the little brunette and press myself against them, my eyes close and I let it all fall from me, war and terror and grossness, in order to awaken young and happy; I think of the picture of the girl on the poster and, for a moment, believe that my life depends on winning her. And if I press ever deeper into the arms that embrace me, perhaps a miracle may happen…. (Remarque 93)

But this escape from such sorrow of the reality of the war, via the power of theater and imagination, cannot last and Paul ultimately concludes that "I cannot trust myself to speak, I am not in the least happy" (93). His would-be miracle merely an effect of theater.

Despite this, at least for that shared moment with the three French women, Paul, Kropp, and Leer found a bit of metaphorical heaven in their escapade.

By contrast, in *The Catcher in the Rye*, Holden's efforts as an adolescent to dance and have conversation with three young adult women in his hotel's bar, The Lavender Room, plays upon theater and movies, and actors as well as fans, and the inherent phoniness in all.

Unlike Paul who had his comrades with him on their adventure with the three French women, Holden is alone and desperate for an authentic connection, and his own theatrics with the three tourists only frustrate him more. But what makes their separate experiences, Paul's and Holden's, more parallel is the emotional outcome for each (Paul's stated above). Holden's frustration with phony people informs his efforts to bond with the women, thus making himself phony while teasing them over their eagerness to see a movie star during their brief vacation, and he is later disappointed in himself:

> I danced with them all – the whole three of them – one at a time. The one ugly one, Laverne, wasn't too bad a dancer, but the other one, old Marty, was murder. Old Marty was like dragging the Statue of Liberty around the floor. The only way I could even half enjoy myself dragging her around was if I amused myself a little. So I told her I just saw Gary Cooper, the movie star, on the other side of the floor. (Salinger 96)

Comedy ensues but Holden quickly realizes that "I'd just about broken her heart – I really had. I was sorry as hell I'd kidded her. Some people you shouldn't kid, even if they deserve it," and this sympathy is what sharpens his understanding of them, seeing that they hardly talked with one another, each of them too eager to glimpse a movie star.

Their informing him abruptly that they had to leave and get up early to catch the first performance at Radio City Music Hall leaves him flustered and more depressed: "…it makes me so depressed I can't stand it. I'd've bought the whole three of them a *hundred* drinks if only they hadn't told me that" (98). Their failure to connect with him and be authentic speaks to the vacuous side of entertainment that Holden cannot stand, and his youth belies his insight and the weight it bears upon him.

For Salinger though, in *The Catcher in the Rye*, movies and theater are always associated with inauthenticity or phoniness. An especially poignant episode, in contrast to the three girls above, with ramifications for the novel as a whole comes when Holden observes a child walking on Broadway with his parents:

> The kid was swell. He was walking in the street, instead of on the sidewalk, but right next to the curb. He was making out like he was walking a very straight line, the way kids do, and the whole time he kept singing and humming. I got up closer so I could hear what he was singing. He was singing that song, 'If a body catch a body coming through the rye.' He had a pretty little voice, too. He was just singing for the hell of it, you could tell. The cars zoomed by, brakes screeched all over the place, his parents paid no attention to him, and he kept on walking next to the curb and singing, 'If a body catch a body coming through the rye.' It made me feel better. It made me feel not so depressed any more. (150)

Later on, in the section on voice and companionship, I will pursue the relevance of the boy's song to the novel as a whole. For now, it is sufficient to observe that the boy possesses an innocent truth that touches Holden deeply. But this passage is immediately

followed by a description of the moviegoers on Broadway hurrying to a show that is akin to his experiences with the three women tourists:

> Everybody was all dressed up, because it was Sunday, and that made it worse. But the worst part was that you could tell they all *wanted* to go to the movies. I couldn't stand looking at them. I can understand somebody going to the movies because there's nothing else to do, but when somebody really *wants* to go, and even walks fast so as to get there quicker, then it depresses hell out of me. Especially if I see millions of people standing in one of those long, terrible lines, all the way down the block, waiting with this terrific patience for seats and all. Boy, I couldn't get off that goddam Broadway fast enough. (150-1)

In contrast to the recognition of beauty with the young boy singing, Holden is sickened by his perception of what seems phony with the adults and their mindless obsession with the movies they are rushing to see. Andy Rogers comments that "Hollywood and the phonies who work for it and those who watch its pictures are the apogee of phoniness and produce Holden's most acerbic diatribes," providing an example with Holden's disdain for a woman sitting near him in the movie theater, who was weeping at the romantic war movie while ignoring her child's desperate need to use the bathroom: "She was about as kindhearted as a goddam wolf. You take somebody that cries their goddam eyes out over phony stuff in movies, and nine times out of ten they're mean bastards at heart" (Rogers; Salinger 181). "Salinger's preoccupation with cruelty in its subtle forms away from the atrocities of war," Rogers argues, "is again displayed, particularly cruelty as manifested by the people who pretend to abhor injustice and cherish all that is kind and gentle…" (Rogers). He adds that the summary of the movie's absurd and phony plot by Holden

"(probably "Random Harvest"—a popular pre WWII movie) reveals the full extent of the phoniness she embodies and Holden abhors" (Rogers).

This theme in *Catcher* has a clear antecedent in *Hamlet*, where the protagonist deprecates the artificiality of a performance of grief in comparison with the actual experience of it, disparaging the mourning garments that he wears and his sighs of sorrow: "These indeed seem, / For they are actions that a man might play. / But I have that within which passes show, / These but the trappings and the suits of woe" (Shakespeare 1.2.83-6). Yet at the same time Hamlet himself is obsessed with theater and performance, and he employs a play, *The Mousetrap*, to discover the truth of Claudius' guilt: "The play's the thing / Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the king" (Shakespeare 2.2.604-5). It is as if true grief is a state of being that needs no show and the "trappings and the suits of woe" are tools by which one takes action.

Holden's attitude toward theater and movies is much less ambivalent. Throughout the novel, Holden repeatedly confesses his dislike for the movies even though he often feigns being an actor during some of his loneliest moments, "I hate the movies like poison, but I get a bang imitating them," his overindulgence likely enough to make Hamlet cringe (Salinger 38).

And indeed, the novel's one direct mention of Shakespeare's play brings this contrast between movies and authenticity into play, and it too is near the middle of *Catcher*, like the theater poster in *All Quiet* and *The Mousetrap* in *Hamlet*. Holden has just purchased tickets for Sally and him to see the Lunts, a famous acting couple, perform in *I Know My Love*, an ambiguous and ironic title for Holden's taking Sally, a girl he finds phony too:

> She liked shows that are supposed to be very sophisticated and dry and all, with the Lunts and all. I don't. I don't like any shows very much, if you want to know the truth. They're not as bad as movies, but they're certainly nothing to rave about. In the first place, I hate actors. They never act like people. They just think they do. Some of the good ones do, in a very slight way, but not in a way that's fun to watch. And if any actor's really good, you can always tell he *knows* he's good, and that spoils it. You take Sir Laurence Olivier, for example. I saw him in *Hamlet*. D.B. took Phoebe and I to see it last year. He treated us to lunch first, and then he took us. He'd already seen it, and the way he talked about it at lunch, I was anxious as hell to see it, too. But I didn't enjoy it much. I just don't see what's so marvelous about Sir Laurence Olivier, that's all. He has a terrific voice, and he's a helluva handsome guy, and he's very nice to watch when he's walking or dueling or something, but he wasn't at all the way D.B. said Hamlet was. He was too much like a goddam general, instead of a sad, screwed-up type guy. (152) [3]

Holden proceeds to sum up what he liked best about the movie, that Ophelia and Laertes horse around pretending to "look interested in the bull his father was shooting," as well as Phoebe's favorite part where Hamlet pats a dog on its head, but Holden continues with his acknowledgement that he needs to read the play: "The trouble with me is, I always have to read that stuff by myself. If an actor acts it out, I hardly listen. I keep worrying about whether he's going to do something phony every minute" (153).

The inauthenticity of theater comes into play once Holden reveals to Sally that they will be seeing the Lunts, to which Sally exclaims, "The Lunts! Oh, marvelous"

(162). Holden's response to the reader confirms his hunch, "I told you she'd go mad when she heard it was for the Lunts," with madness another parallel to Hamlet, but the key connection is Holden's comment about the Lunts as actors, which fits Hamlet's "Speak the speech" monologue to the players: "They didn't act like people and they didn't act like actors…. They acted more like they knew they were celebrities and all. I mean they were good, but they were too good" (164). Hamlet, in his monologue to the players, is firm about how to act, "suit the action to the word," but Holden's frustration with the Lunts is slightly different (Shakespeare 3.2.17):

> When one of them got finished making a speech, the other one said something very fast right after it. It was supposed to be like people really talking and interrupting each other and all. The trouble was, it was *too* much like people talking and interrupting each other…. If you do something *too* good, then, after a while, if you don't watch it, you start showing off. And then you're not as good any more. (Salinger 164)

Though Holden admits that "they were the only ones in the show… that looked like they had any real brains," his patience for inauthenticity has already worn thin (164).

Holden's time during intermission, when he and Sally "went out with all the other jerks for a cigarette," illustrates his exasperation with theater and its patrons, and yet he gets "a big bang out of" seeing a movie actor and his girl feign disinterest:

> You never saw so many phonies in all your life, everybody smoking their ears off and talking about the play so that everybody could hear and know how sharp they were. Some dopey movie actor was standing near us, having a cigarette. I don't know his name, but he always plays the part of a guy in a war movie that gets

> yellow before it's time to go over the top. He was with some gorgeous blonde, and the two of them were trying to be very blasé and all, like as if he didn't even know people were looking at him. Modest as hell. (164-5)

These are the extreme pretensions to the showiness of theater and shallowness of its people and patrons, and it is important that the actor's roles are about being cowardly in battle, as the actor could possibly be also, but the most heartbreaking of seeming phoniness, that of Holden's brother D.B. and his seeming allegiance to Hollywood, is actually something more than it appears.

Holden's claim that his older brother, D.B., is "being a prostitute" by selling his writings to Hollywood instead of remaining true to his talents, as with his short story, "The Secret Goldfish," Holden's favorite, is beyond his understanding (Salinger 4). For one, the short story, important to note, is about authenticity represented by the metaphorical "goldfish" that is protected by the boy who bought it with his own money, his caution and reluctance to share it implying the importance of protecting it. Holden, however, not fully cognizant of D.B.'s circumstances and emotional states, post World War II, thus resorts to crude sarcasm about D.B.'s subsequent switch to writing phony scripts for Hollywood. What he is really aching for is his brother's return to his former self, his pre-PTSD self, his writing self who seemed to cherish authenticity, but now is no more, the pun of D.B.'s name evoking Hamlet's most famous soliloquy, as well as Holden's worries, on whether D.B. is actually D.B. or not D.B..

There are echoes of this in Phoebe's two responses to Holden about D.B., the first matter-of-factly, in imitation of her mother and with news of D.B.'s latest Hollywood endeavor, and the second in a moment of anger towards Holden for not treating her as an

ally, respectively: “He may and he may not, Mother said. It all depends. He may have to stay in Hollywood and write a picture about Annapolis” and “‘I may and I may not,’ she said. Then she ran right the hell across the street, without even looking to see if any cars were coming. She’s a madman sometimes” (Salinger 212, 270).

The first of Phoebe’s words that echo Hamlet’s reveal D.B.’s continued work in Hollywood away from his authentic self as a writer, as Holden might see it. Also, Holden’s reaction to Phoebe’s announcement, which follows, illustrates Holden’s heartbreak about D.B. but through misunderstanding his trauma, as well as his own selfishness due to his own anguish: “‘I’m not interested. An*na*polis, for God’s sake. What’s D.B. know about An*na*polis, for God’s sake? What’s that got to do with the kind of stories he writes?’ I said. Boy, that stuff drives me crazy. That goddam Hollywood” (212). It is important to note that the Naval Academy is in Annapolis, and thus D.B.’s writing a script implies support for the military, despite his disliking it, and irony if the script were to contain propaganda.

Holden’s ire is quite palpable in this scene, and it correlates with his confusion over D.B. who “hated the war so much” and yet endorsed Ernest Hemingway’s novel, *A Farewell to Arms*: “He said it was so terrific. That’s what I can’t understand. It had this guy in it named Lieutenant Henry that was supposed to be a nice guy and all. I don’t see how D.B. could hate the Army and war and all so much and still like a phony like that” (182).

The second time Phoebe’s words echo Hamlet’s marks the very moment that Phoebe breaks from Holden after he, from her perspective, brutally rejects her, very nearly to the point of violence, an action that parallels D.B.’s break from himself:

> "You can't take anything. Because you're not going. I'm going alone. So shut up."
>
> "*Please*, Holden. *Please* let me go. I'll be very, very, very – You won't even –"
>
> "You're not *going*. Now, shut up! Gimme that bag," I said. I took the bag off her. I was almost all set to hit her. I thought I was going to smack her for a second. I really did."
>
> She started to cry. (267)

This is an immensely important scene in Holden's narrative, and there are multiple important aspects in its dialogue. To start, Phoebe's extended "very, very, very" is parallel in structure to Hamlet's "words, words, words," and her broken sentence, "You won't even," suggests many possibilities of what she was about to say, all relevant thematically, i.e.: you won't even hear me; you won't even notice me; you won't even realize I'm here. That Holden, moments later, will encourage Phoebe to stay and play her part in the school play, "*to be* Benedict Arnold" (italics mine), evokes a deep irony, bordering hypocrisy, with his own actions of a traitor to himself and to her, as she might, in that moment, perceive him.

Additional important parts of this dialogue concern Holden and are a set up for his wanting Phoebe to stay and play Benedict Arnold. Starting with his telling her, "Now, shut up!" which is a direct rejection of her voice, her authentic self, Holden demands for and grabs her bag, which contains her clothes, her "suits of woe" for his plan to leave her. Then, Holden was "*almost* all set to hit her" (italics mine), his realization and confirmation of this fact his confession about his own mental break in character, a

regretful moment difficult to express, especially since it reveals his own adolescent theatrics and actual state of mind at the time. He is no longer his ideal, true adolescent self. Like a broken old soldier looking for his own youthful initials, Holden wants to reconnect to his former self, but with integrity and without telling others how to be.

In tandem with these two novels' shared sense of the inauthenticity of theater and movies is a similarly skeptical **disparagement of the value of games**, especially games particularly used for fomenting patriotism and fervor. In *All Quiet on the Western Front*, the analogy of war to a game is presented to ridicule its absurdity, while in *The Catcher in the Rye* games are an element of how an inauthentic culture lures the young to endorse its norms.

The language of games is slight in *All Quiet on the Western Front*; however, each use or suggestion of a game either overtly reveals a soldier's skepticism of leadership or, in contrast, a corporal's use of a game for educating soldiers, as with "Change at Löhne!" which Kropp called out, and suddenly laughed about, while Paul and his comrades "indulge[d] in reminiscences" (Remarque 29). Paul explains:

> That was our corporal's favourite game. Löhne is a railway junction. In order that our fellows going on leave shouldn't get lost there, Himmelstoss used to practise the change in the barrack-room. We had to learn that at Löhne, to reach the branch-line, we must pass through a subway. The beds represented the subway and each man stood at attention on the left side of his bed. Then came the command: "Change at Löhne!" and like lightning everyone scrambled under the bed to the opposite side. We practised this for a whole hour— (29)

This reminiscence is bookended by Kropp and Katczinsky arguing about the inequity of soldiers fighting a war for leaders, as Kat "as an old front-hog, rhymes: Give 'em all the same grub and all the same pay / And the war would be over and done in a day" (28). They were also laying "a bottle of beer on the result of an air-fight that's going on above us," with Paul later revealing that "Kropp has lost the bottle of beer. Disgruntled he counts money from his wallet" (29). However, it is Kropp's initial satirical proposition to Kat's rhyme that evokes Paul's deep skepticism:

> …a declaration of war should be a kind of popular festival with entrance-tickets and bands, like in a bull fight. Then in the arena the ministers and generals of the two countries, dressed in bathing-drawers and armed with clubs, can have it out among themselves. Whoever survives, his country wins. That would be much simpler and more just than this arrangement, where the wrong people do the fighting. (28)

This solution for the inherent inequity in war ends the argument, "The subject is dropped," and triggers the reminiscences, but its truth lingers and colors what they reminiscence about, as with Corporal Himmelstoss's "Change at Löhne!" game (29).

The other use of games is by implication only, and seems to allude to the common use of sports during World War I to keep up morale and physical conditioning; yet, Paul's reference to "yards" in his assessment of a particularly gruesome battle is matter-of-fact and devoid of celebration, especially as it follows a long horror show of their reality:

> We see men living with their skulls blown open; we see soldiers run with their two feet cut off, they stagger on their splintered stumps into the next shell-

> hole; a lance-corporal crawls a mile and half on his hands dragging his smashed knee after him; another goes to the dressing-station and over his clasped hands bulge his intestines; we see men without mouths; without jaws, without faces; we find one man who has held the artery of his arm in his teeth for two hours in order not to bleed to death. The sun goes down, night comes, the shells whine, life is at an end.
>
> Still the *little piece of convulsed earth* in which we lie is held. We have *yielded* no more than *a few hundred yards of it as a prize* to the enemy. But *on every yard* there lies a dead man. (Remarque 84, italics mine)

These are the experiences that make soldiers wary of the use of games.

Paul's description, here, of the "prize to the enemy" filled with corpses of dead youth has its parallel in *Hamlet*. In Act IV, scene 4, Young Fortinbras has sent his Captain to explain to Hamlet about the small plot of land that Fortinbras intends to take from Poland:

> Captain. Truly to speak, and with no addition,
>
> We go to gain a little patch of ground
>
> That hath in it no profit but the name.
>
> To pay five ducats, five, I would not farm it;
>
> Nor will it yield to Norway or the Pole
>
> A ranker rate, should it be sold in fee."
>
> Hamlet. Why then the Polack never will defend it.
>
> Captain. Yes, it is already garrison'd.
>
> Hamlet. Two thousand souls and twenty thousand ducats

> Will not debate the question of this straw.
>
> This is th' imposthume of much wealth and peace,
>
> That inward breaks, and shows no cause without
>
> Why the man dies. I humbly thank you, sir. (Shakespeare 4.4.17-29)

Hamlet's metaphorical response of much infection and puss as a result of "much wealth and peace," akin to Marcellus's comment about corruption, "something's rotten in the state of Denmark," easily relates to the sentiment of a young soldier such as Paul who has questioned why he has been sent to fight in a war where he will likely die instead of the people who cause the war and yet refuse to fight in it (1.4.89).

By contrast, Salinger's use of games in *The Catcher in the Rye* is quite overt and purposeful in contrast to *All Quiet on the Western Front*. Consider that Salinger has Holden watching a football game at the beginning of his tale, which is quite like "the little patch of ground" that Hamlet comments on. But Holden is also standing next to the Revolutionary War cannon on Thomsen Hill, a possible allusion to Thompson's War in the early stages of the Revolutionary War. This happens after Holden has returned from New York where he struggled as a team manager to read the map of the city and lost the fencing team's foils (symbolic offenses and defenses) for which they ostracized him. Below where Holden stands is the Pencey Prep football game against Saxon Hall that, according to Holden, "you were supposed to commit suicide or something if old Pencey didn't win" (Salinger 5).

In this sense, the football game is a war metaphor, and Holden's sarcastic remark implies the expectations of Pencey Prep and other schools to rally for one's team, that it is expected, or one might, like Holden, be ostracized. But Salinger is possibly also

playing with the names of the schools, particularly with their combined initials, PPSH, which evokes the World War II, Russian sub-machine gun, the PPSh-41. That Holden is standing by the Revolutionary War cannon on Thomsen Hill likewise questions whether the revolution was successful or not at freeing America from the ruling aristocracy, and at what cost; however, that young people, especially boys, are sacrificed for the benefit of adults in power is most immediate.

Later in Holden's narrative, while he is in Greenwich Village at Ernie's listening to Ernie play piano, he overhears a "funny-looking guy" with a "funny-looking girl" sitting next to him "telling her about some pro football game he's seen that afternoon. He gave her every single goddam play in the whole game – I'm not kidding" (Salinger 111). Here, the game of football, retold play by play, suggests the upholding of the patriarchy, given that men historically have dominated in culture and that women have long been treated as subservient to them. Holden observes and commiserates that despite the boy being "the most boring guy I ever listened to," and that "you could tell his date wasn't even interested in the goddam game," "Real ugly girls have it tough. I feel so sorry for them sometimes. Sometimes I can't even look at them, especially if they're with some dopey guy that's telling them all about a goddam football game" (111). Part of his assessment and judgement is based on his perspective that "she was even funnier-looking than *he* was, so I guess she *had* to listen," which suggests the inequality inherent to a male dominated society with this "funny-looking girl" on the losing side (111).

As previously stated, America has its share of Kantoreks, and Mr. Spencer is another one, and Holden's telling us that Mr. Spencer's first question to him upon his visit before he finally leaves Pencey, "Why aren't you down at the game? I thought this

was the day of the big game" is the departure point for Mr. Spencer to get "serious as hell" and inform Holden of his failures, implied with his knowing question, "So you're leaving us, eh?" (Salinger 12). Spencer's vocalization of "eh?" is the tell, here, indicating that he already knows that Holden has failed out of school again and will be leaving, but he prompts Holden with condescension, "What did Mr. Thurmer say to you, boy? I understand you had quite a little chat" (12). Holden's response, however, reveals his dismissal of Mr. Thurmer's warning: "Oh… well, about Life being a game and all. And how you should play it according to the rules. He was pretty nice about it. I mean he didn't hit the ceiling or anything. He just kept talking about Life being a game and all. You know" (12).

It is unfortunate for Holden that Mr. Spencer agrees with Old Thurmer, but worse is his insistence on this metaphor that "Life *is* a game that one plays according to the rules," which reveals his ineptness at understanding history and how the narratives of the victors can perpetuate aggressive and destructive behavior, as already evinced. Holden points out one of the problems with this metaphor to the reader but not to Mr. Spencer, essentially exposing the hypocrisy that Pencey Prep and its teachers seem to endorse: "Game, my ass. Some game. If you get on the side where all the hot-shots are, then it's a game, all right—I'll admit that. But if you get on the *other*' side, where there aren't any hot-shots, then what's a game about it? Nothing. No game" (12-3).

Holden does not feel comfortable speaking his truth to Mr. Spencer, but he does feel comfortable enough to tell his reader who holds a special position in the book; and, though there is one game in *Catcher* that counters the negative use of games in both

books, it belongs in the final section, as does the reader's special position, because of its nature and purpose.

Both novels extensively contain and place emphasis on the theme of **longing for voice and companionship**. In *All Quiet on the Western Front*, even amidst the horror of warfare, Paul finds something of greater value than the words of the books that he once cared for. He says of his fellow soldiers that "We did not break down, but endured; our twenty years, which made many another thing so grievous, helped us in this. But by far the most important was that it awakened in us a strong, practical sense of *esprit de corps*, which in the field developed into the finest thing that arose out of the war—comradeship" (Remarque 20). And the comradeship that he experiences in battle comes to Paul through the voices of his comrades:

> At once a new warmth flows through me. These voices, these few quiet words, these footsteps in the trench behind me recall me at a bound from the terrible loneliness and fear of death by which I had been almost destroyed. They are more to me than life, these voices, they are more than motherliness and more than fear; they are the strongest, most comforting thing there is anywhere: they are the voices of my comrades.
>
> I am no longer a shuddering speck of existence, alone in the darkness; —I belong to them and they to me, we all share the same fear and the same life, we are nearer than lovers, in a simpler, a harder way; I could bury my face in them, in these voices, these words that have saved me and will stand by me. (130).

Unfortunately, one by one these voices will disappear over the course of the novel, as his comrades are killed in varying battles throughout his narrative.

Remarkably, the connection of voice is not limited to Paul's comrades in arms; it also extends to the French soldier fatally wounded by Paul, the printer Gérard Duval to whom Paul offers his own, brief twenty years of life as recompense for the taking of his, as the two men spend a harrowing night together in a bombed-out crater:

> The silence spreads. I talk and must talk. So I speak to him and say to him: 'Comrade, I did not want to kill you. If you jumped in here again, I would not do it, if you would be sensible too. But you were only an idea to me before, an abstraction that lived in my mind and called forth its appropriate response. It was that abstraction I stabbed. But now, for the first time, I see you are a man like me. I thought of your hand-grenades, of your bayonet, of your rifle; now I see your wife and your face and our fellowship. Forgive me, comrade. We always see it too late. Why do they never tell us that you are just poor devils like us, that your mothers are just as anxious as ours, and that we have the same fear of death, and the same dying and the same agony—Forgive me, comrade; how could you be my enemy? If we threw away these rifles and this uniform you could be my brother just like Kat and Albert. Take twenty years of my life, comrade, and stand up—take more, for I do not know what I can even attempt to do with it now. (136-7)

Paul's deep human longing to connect with his enemy is profound, and yet the irony of it is that in just a few moments he will quiet the voice of Gérard Duval by killing him, so as not to be killed by him but also to end Gérard's suffering. The immense divide forced upon them by the greater circumstances of the war creates this irony and leads Paul to offer Gérard his words as consolation, his own voice an offering of peace and comfort in Gérard's last, pain-filled moments; yet, they are mere words, but still, words that give

power to voice, and voice is essentially what Paul becomes in that waning moment for Gérard.

Holden, by contrast, lacks the male companionship that sustains Paul. The most important voice in *The Catcher in the Rye* is that of Holden himself, seeking companionship from the reader; yet, his “madman stuff that happened… around last Christmas” is fraught with failed attempts to find that *esprit de corps*, which Paul found with his comrades (Salinger 3).

There is a long list of people with whom Holden could not find connection: Ackley and Stradlater, Mr. Spencer and Mr. Antolini, Sally, his parents, and even his sister Phoebe to some degree, as well as myriad encounters in New York with past friends and strangers such as Faith Cavendish, Carl Luce, and Sunny, a fourteen-year-old prostitute, and her pimp, Maurice, the bellman at Holden’s hotel. Over and over, Holden recounts the stories of failed connections at his schools and with his own family, unable to find anything meaningful and lasting: though he does find plenty of living bodies, he cannot find with them any common spirit.

Before attempting to address this issue within *Catcher*, it is important to establish a few arguments about both *All Quiet on the Western Front* and *The Catcher in the Rye* beginning, again, with Paul’s desire for his childhood room, about which he waits and waits for it to “speak, it must *catch* me up and *hold* me” (Remarque 106, italics mine). He explains his longing:

> …I want to feel that I belong here, I want to hearken and know when I go back to the front that the war will sink down, be drowned utterly in the great home-

> coming tide, know that it will then be past for ever, and not gnaw us continually, that it will have none but an outward power over us. (106-7)

But a room cannot do this: a childhood room untouched for years that speaks to a time and a child forever changed cannot catch and hold an adolescent who is himself holding trench-warfare trauma at bay. The room is only a kind of diorama:

> I want to think myself back into that time. It is still in the room, I feel it at once, the walls have preserved it. My hands rest on the arms of the sofa; now I make myself at home and draw up my legs so that I sit comfortably in the corner, in the arms of the sofa. The little window is open, through it I see the familiar picture of the street with the rising spire of the church at the end. There are a couple of flowers on the table. Pen-holders, a shell as a paper-weight, the ink-well—here nothing is changed.
>
> It will be like this too, if I am lucky, when the war is over and I come back here for good. I will sit here just like this and look at my room and wait. (106)

Holden also speaks plenty about dioramas at the Museum of Natural history:

> The birds nearest you were all stuffed and hung up on wires, and the ones in back were just painted on the wall, but they all looked like they were really flying south, and if you bent your head down and sort of looked at them upside down, they looked in an even bigger hurry to fly south. The best thing, though, in that museum was that everything always stayed right where it was. Nobody'd move. You could go there a hundred thousand times, and that Eskimo would still be just finished catching those two fish, the birds would still be on their way south, the deers would still be drinking out of that water hole, with their pretty

> antlers and their pretty, skinny legs, and that squaw with the naked bosom would still be weaving that same blanket. Nobody'd be different. The only thing that would be different would be *you*. Not that you'd be so much older or anything. It wouldn't be that, exactly. You'd just be different, that's all. (Salinger 157-8)

This lesson about being different in slight ways, while the diorama remains the same, speaks directly to Paul's circumstance with his room, but with Paul the changes are extreme. He has seen the horrors of trench warfare up close. Holden, by comparison, has yet to experience such extreme change, though his suffering through the changes in D.B. and his loss of Allie, plus his failing out of "about the fourth school," as well as his desperation and failure to connect with people during his three days in New York are traumatic enough for an adolescent (13).

Though there are several passages about rooms, including Mr. Spencer's room like a tomb and Stradlater's essay about a room, Salinger is purposefully working towards something different than what *All Quiet on the Western Front* offers, a real connection between Holden and his reader. And this direct connection to the reader is certainly traceable to Huckleberry Finn's introductory claim, "You don't know about me…" as plenty of scholarship argues (Twain 1). For example, James Lundquist, in *J.D. Salinger*, explains: "A substantial amount has been written showing his relationship to Huckleberry Finn—a connection that seems obvious enough given the first-person narration, the colloquial language, the emphasis on the problems of adolescence, and the motif of the journey" (Lundquist 40-1). Biographer Kenneth Slawenski likewise adds:

> For all of its unconventionality, *The Catcher in the Rye* carries on a literary tradition begun by Charles Dickens and welded to American culture by Mark

> Twain. As a successor to *David Copperfield* and *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, *The Catcher in the Rye* continues an observation of mankind as seen through the lens of an adolescent and rendered in a language true to the narrator's location and age. (Slawenski 205)

But there is a sharp distinction in Holden's initial response that shifts Huck's claim, "about me," which keeps the reader distant, to "about it," welcoming Holden's readers to fully know his voice as he talks about "it," "this madman stuff that happened to me around last Christmas…" (Salinger 3). Another difference between Huck and Holden's opening words is Holden's focus upon that shared experience rather than Huck's individual experience, given that each of Holden's readers also have their own stories to tell.

The distinction between Huck and Holden's first words likewise provide insight to biographer Thomas Beller's questions: "What does Salinger's writing provoke in us? How does it achieve this effect, and why" (Beller 146). The answer to the former question is empathy. The second answer is human nature, the longing to be known and loved, to be caught and held. But Slawenski also argues that "Salinger's ability to transmit self-image to the reader in this way is what gives his writing life" (Slawenski 65).

What also serves to provoke empathy within the reader is established in chapter one, the primary symbol for Holden's tale, his "trying to feel some kind of a good-by" from Pencey Prep: "I don't care if it's a sad good-by or a bad good-by, but when I leave a place I like to *know* I'm leaving it. If you don't, you feel even worse" (Salinger 7). This memory is of him and two friends, Robert Tichener and Paul Campbell, "chucking the

ball around anyway," despite the darkness that encroaches and eventually envelopes them, and it is in direct contrast with the opening war metaphor of the football game: "It kept getting darker and darker, and we could hardly *see* the ball any more, but we didn't stop doing what we were doing" (7).

What they are doing is learning to catch each other in metaphorical darkness, the essential skill that friends and allies need when they are in the darkest moments of their lives, especially if they perceive the world around them as phony or threatening as Holden does. At the heart of this good-bye memory is what Paul realized when he heard the voices of his comrades while alone in the dark, and it is of a game of catch and hold that is played without rules, a positive game that anyone can play, and it has one important core tenet: being there for one another through the darkest of times.

This scene is also analogous to what the whole book, itself a collection of words as diorama, serves as: a voice in the dark to every reader, a symbolic ball chucked into the darkness that each reader presumably catches. This helps explain, too, why Salinger refused to have *Catcher* made into a movie (and more so than his disappointment with his short story, "Uncle Wiggily in Connecticut," being adapted into Hollywood's *My Foolish Heart*): to film Holden's story would obliterate the voice in the dark metaphor that *Catcher* is.

Also key to this is the contrasting disruption by the biology teacher, Mr. Zambesi, the supposed teacher of life, who leans out of the academic building, interrupting their metaphorical skill building, demanding that they return to the dorm and get ready for dinner. It serves to contrast those who actually help Holden with those who merely

believe they do, a similar frustration to Paul's based upon his experiences in *All Quiet on the Western Front*.

And, thus, there is a particular reason that Holden's narrative begins the way it does. The famous opening sentence, "If you really want to hear about it…," is structured as a response to an implied question that we do not hear asked, such as "What are you doing here?" The implication is that the reader of the book is Holden's roommate, and the question allows Holden to share his story to 'You'! And he repeatedly checks whether 'You,' his roommate in the dark at the Sanitorium, really do want to know about it. More so, do 'You' really care; or, are 'You' just another phony?

Primary evidence for this is Holden's repeated refrain throughout the novel, "if you want to know the truth," that questions the reader's intent, but also with his comment about "this madman stuff… just before [he] got pretty run-down and had to come out *here* (italics mine) and take it easy" (Salinger 3). The "here" that Holden mentions has a special significance. It puts his readers there with him, making each reader a character in the book, an extraordinary literary move by Salinger.

And there are many examples indicating that Holden is talking with someone his own age, most likely a male [4], with whom he knows nothing about. For example, "I'd tell you the rest of the story, but I might puke if I did. It isn't that I'd *spoil* it for you or anything. There isn't anything to *spoil*, for Chrissake," and "In case you don't live in New York, the Wicker Bar is in this sort of swanky hotel, the Seton Hotel" (180,184). These are not things Holden would say to a psychiatrist. He is hoping for a kindred voice in the dark to "catch [him] up and hold [him]," someone with whom he can share *esprit*

de corps, and he wants 'You' to care about his story and his friends and family, especially Phoebe about whom he says twice, "You'd like her" (88-9).

This is the reason that Holden's narrative is so moving. He is potentially evoking in his readers two distinct results beyond the fact that each reader is his roommate: one, each reader becomes his ally and, two, over time each reader turns into someone who ultimately, like Paul catching his comrade's voices, catches and holds Holden's.

Although *The Catcher in the Rye* has levity and is infused with optimism and hope, it is predicated on Holden's despair of lacking a close friend with whom he can commiserate and feel caught up and held, and Holden's direct narrative voice to the reader, mixed with both the hope for and lack of a close ally, is where it draws its power:

> In J.D. Salinger's strategic choice to give first-person voice to Holden Caulfield as the fictional narrator of the tale, he also (and perhaps unwittingly) gave him *fictional life*. From the earliest reviews by literary critics to the responses of more general readership to references in popular culture, Holden Caulfield is very often referred to as if he is a real person. (Steinle 14)

And that is what Salinger wants us to feel.

Holden's own story, then, his set of "words, words, words," quite literally represents a shared darkness with each individual reader who, by design, is Holden's roommate in the sanitorium outside of Hollywood. Every reader of *The Catcher in the Rye*, by way of metaphorical expression, becomes someone who, hypothetically, has had their own experience with disillusionment while living in America and, thus, shares the need for rest and recuperation from the metaphorical war on adolescence as expressed through Holden's narrative. In this sense, as Andy Rogers indicates, Salinger was able to

transform his World War II experiences into Holden's adolescent trauma, allowing readers to relate and understand what Salinger, as understood through Holden, experienced. The book, though it is really Salinger, makes 'You,' Holden's reader, his potential comrade who will possibly catch him.

Holden's narrative of his efforts to connect with someone who genuinely cares for him is truly an adolescent's story. He is a young man whose deep grief over the loss of his younger brother affects him to the point of stunting his ability to function in his world. As a result, he has his breakdown. Salinger knew his own adolescent difficulties, and he was most probably aware that each adolescent is likely to have some form of trouble through their changes, if not trauma, especially if they are as sensitive as Holden, and writing *The Catcher in the Rye* surely gave Salinger some catharsis he may have needed in dealing with his own trauma. Andy Rogers argues as much regarding Holden's following explanation about "that stupid business with the bullet in my guts":

> When I was *really* drunk, I started that stupid business with the bullet in my guts again. I was the only guy at the bar with a bullet in their guts. I kept putting my hand under my jacket, on my stomach and all, to keep the blood from dripping all over the place. I didn't want anybody to know I was even wounded. I was con*ceal*ing the fact that I was a wounded sonuvabitch. (Salinger 195)

Rogers calls this "A curious game that Holden plays," and that it "reveals his state of anguish yet seems unusual for a teenager to think of, but seems perfectly natural for a combat veteran plagued by persistent thoughts of trauma" (Rogers). About Holden's last line in the quote, Rogers adds that it is:

> Holden's quintessential statement: he is concealing his psychic wounds from everyone he knows, even himself. However, the true significance of the line is that Salinger is the one who conceals his wounds by writing *The Catcher in the Rye*. His undiluted disgust with American society is transmuted into teen angst, universalized into the pain of isolation, which makes the book more accessible, yet less honest. (Rogers)

Salinger could not write directly about his own war experiences without chancing repercussions (Rogers' argument previously mentioned), but he could gift generations with a beautiful metaphor, the catcher in the rye. That is what Holden wants to be for others, and it certainly is what Salinger wants his readers to be for his words, words, words that comprise what is arguably his greatest creation:

> I'm not too sure old Phoebe knew what the hell I was talking about. I mean she's only a little child and all. But she was listening, at least. If somebody at least listens, it's not too bad.
>
> "Daddy's going to kill you. He's going to *kill* you," she said.
>
> I wasn't listening, though. I was thinking about something else – something crazy. "You know what I'd like to be?" I said. "You know what I'd like to be? I mean if I had my goddam choice?"
>
> "What?" Stop *swear*ing."
>
> "You know that song 'If a body catch a body comin' through the rye'? I'd like – "
>
> "It's 'If a body *meet* a body coming through the rye'!" old Phoebe said. "It's a poem. By Robert *Burns*." (Salinger 224)

But despite Holden's misunderstanding, he continues sharing with Phoebe the only thing he can imagine worth being in life, even if he mistook "*meeting*" for "catching," which is a significant and meaningful difference, one that mirrors the difference between Paul's narrative and Holden's (addressed in the conclusion below):

> 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. (224-5)

Holden's wanting to catch others is directly implied with his full name, Holden Caulfield, in that he is holding a "caul" (a metaphorical glove or catcher) in the field, Salinger's reason in having Holden dismiss "all that David Copperfield kind of crap," a purposeful allusion in the first sentence – David Copperfield was born with a caul. But this longing to catch others also has a direct correlation to his wanting to save Allie when he was dying of leukemia. And Holden, when later drunk and crossing Manhattan streets alone in the dark, calls out, wanting the same from Allie, whose childhood baseball glove was covered in green-inked poems suggesting life, to be caught by him while falling at his lowest and loneliest moment: "Allie, don't let me disappear. Allie, don't let me disappear. Allie, don't let me disappear. Please, Allie" (257).

Holden also famously wants to know where the ducks go when their pond, their home, is frozen over. He asks two taxi drivers of bright yellow cabs, like gold fish swimming through the streets of New York. The first one harshly dismisses him, but the other one, Horwitz, listens, like quite a few people in Holden's world – Phoebe, Jane, the nun who spoke with him at length about *Romeo and Juliet* – and Horwitz not only listens, but thinks about Holden's question, "Do you happen to know where [the ducks] go in the wintertime, by any chance?" (107)

But it is Horwitz's response, though disappointing because it was not about ducks, that Holden actually needs to hear, a message that speaks to another catcher in the rye: "If you was a fish, Mother Nature'd take care of *you*, wouldn't she? Right? You don't think them fish just *die* when it gets to be winter, do ya?" (109) Horwitz, who "drove off like a bat out of hell," is a catcher too, despite that "Everything you said made him sore" (109). What Holden does not realize is that Horwitz has likely also had his own trauma. He certainly would have been of age to serve or have experienced a war, whether the first one or the second. Holden, however, because of his adolescent suffering and mindset, is not yet ready to listen and understand. He needs a comrade his own age, someone who is going through similar circumstances and parallel traumas, and who can better relate to his youthful outlook.

In concluding this thesis with final arguments, I turn now to the closing passages of both books. In *All Quiet on the Western Front*, as the last moments of Paul's life are passing, as he stands up for the last time in the garden and away from the Front, deprived of all his close friends – Stanislaus Katczinsky being the last one, having died as

Paul carried him on his back – World War I is drawing to a close. Paul is devasted and unbelieving of the full annihilation of his former self; yet, he still musters a bit of hope:

> But perhaps all this that I think is mere melancholy and dismay, which will fly away as the dust, when I stand once again beneath the poplars and listen to the rustling of their leaves. It cannot be that it has gone, the yearning that made our blood unquiet, the unknown, the perplexing, the oncoming things, the thousand faces of the future, the melodies from dreams and from books, the whispers and divinations of women, it cannot be that this has vanished in bombardment, in despair, in brothels. (Remarque 175)

Yet, despite this heaviness, Paul is still keenly observant of the beauty[5] of the garden and the roads that fan out into the countryside while the "canteens hum like beehives with rumours of peace" (175). He stands up and, despite the hope, understands that the months and years "can bring me nothing more. I am so alone, and so without hope that I can confront them without fear. The life that has borne me through these years is still in my hands and my eyes. Whether I have subdued it, I know not. But so long as it is there it will seek its own way out, heedless of the will that is within me" (175).

This is the end of Paul's life. He was not shot, and he was not killed by the "bit of gas" he swallowed that allowed for his "fourteen days' rest," as he is not, in the moment, expressing any present pain. Rather, he has been deprived of adult life by the war that his country, its leaders, his teachers, cheered him towards; yet, he now believes in none of it. Life will do its thing despite Paul's will. But the last of Paul's voice is not the closing of his story.

In the endings of both novels, the narrators' voices go silent. In *All Quiet*, since the novel is narrated in the first person and Paul suddenly dies, the novel's last two paragraphs are presented in the third person by an omniscient narrator, a transition that has a jarring and chilling effect, especially in light of Paul's last thoughts, above:

> He fell in October, 1918, on a day that was so quiet and still on the whole front, that the army report confined itself to the single sentence: All quiet on the Western Front.
>
> He had fallen forward and lay on the earth as though sleeping. Turning him over one saw that he could not have suffered long; his face had an expression of calm, as though almost glad the end had come. (175)

Such irony rings in the claim that "he could not have suffered long." He had suffered for years with the horrors of war he was just sharing, the sudden shift to an indifferent and distant reporter abruptly nullifying his narrative.

Salinger had other designs. Holden remains on hand to say farewell to the reader, but his concluding words raise at least as many questions as they do answers, and it is important what D.B. asks Holden:

> …D.B. asked me what I thought about all this stuff I just finished telling you about. I didn't know what the hell to say. 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, for instance. I think I even miss that goddam Maurice. It's funny. Don't ever tell anybody anything. If you do, you start missing everybody. (Salinger 277)

Here at the end of his tale Holden feels companionship with the people in his life, but only in their absence. Does this conclusion express hope or despair? Only the reader, listening to Holden's voice in the darkness, can decide and become in their own lives, if they choose, what Holden all along has been hoping they might be. One thing for certain, Salinger radically pushed first person narration, breaking that theatrical fourth wall, but with "words, words, words" instead of a stage or screen. In this way, his Holden, and perhaps a deeper form of himself than fully understood before, is not alone in the dark, and as long as people, especially comrades with *esprit de corps*, keep reading *The Catcher in the Rye*, Holden will be caught up and held.

Appendix: Additional Parallels, Especially Regarding Early Salinger Short Stories

The majority of arguments regarding parallels between Erich Maria Remarque and J.D. Salinger's books easily fit within the five central themes that comprise this thesis, and both books contain more passages that can bolster those arguments; however, there are additional parallels between the books that do not fit well but are nonetheless worthy of further exploration. For example, both books have similarities regarding animals:

1. During the cemetery bombardment scene with the coffins in *All Quiet*, Paul and his comrades witness horses being wounded and suffering. He conveys the horrors of having to end their lives, but one description seems specific enough to evoke the carousel scene in *Catcher* with Holden watching Phoebe as she rides her favorite horse. The "last" horse in *All Quiet*, as Paul observed, "props himself on his forelegs and drags himself round in a circle like a merry-go-round; squatting, it drags round in circles on its stiffened forelegs, apparently its back is broken. The soldier runs up and shoots it. Slowly, humbly, it sinks to the ground."
2. Just before the bombardment in the cemetery, Paul compares the smaller shells flying over their heads to geese, saying "It reminds me of flocks of wild geese when I hear them. Last autumn the wild geese flew day after day across the path of the shells" (Remarque 39). In *Catcher*, Holden wonders about the ducks in the lagoon of Central Park and where they go when the pond, their home, is iced over.

The primary purpose of this appendix, however, is to reveal parallels between *All Quiet on the Western* and several of J.D. Salinger's pre-*Catcher* short stories, which I address below; but I first want to briefly argue a case for Salinger's use of another

writer's work to demonstrate his penchant for adapting other literary texts into his own stories. One of Salinger's biographers, Kenneth Slawenski, for example, has noted that as early as 1938 at the prompting of his friend Elizabeth Murray, "Salinger began to read the writings of F. Scott Fitzgerald" and "found in Fitzgerald not only an author to emulate but also a kindred soul" (Slawenski 25). Also, "The Children's Echelon" is one story that "was inspired by Ring Lardner's 'I Can't Breathe,' which had been written as a series of diary entries. Salinger initially disliked the format. So, when he began his own version, he wrote it in the third person. Dissatisfied, he returned to the story and rewrote it, this time in a style dangerously similar to Lardner's" (81).

But my own argument is that Salinger reworked themes from Walter Bernstein's 1939 New Yorker story, "Houseparty," into two of his own stories written in 1940, "The Young Folks" and "Go See Eddie," before altering and incorporating it into *The Catcher in the Rye* when Holden first arrives in New York City and calls up Faith Cavendish, a stranger whom Holden had only heard salacious rumors about. In Bernstein's comic, short masterpiece, "Houseparty," a young college student at Darmouth has brought to the party a girl whom his sister had gossiped about to him:

> "Do you really dance in a chorus?" he said.
>
> "When I'm working," the girl said. "They call us chorus girls." She put her hand next to his. "Who squealed?"
>
> "Oh, no one." The boy was emphatic. "My sister told me. Remember? You know my sister. She introduced us in New York."
>
> The girl nodded. "I know your sister." She hiccuped [sic] gently. "Little bitch." (Bernstein)

The primary symbol in "Houseparty," a clock tower that the girl asks the boy about in regards to knowing the correct time when only one side can be seen, is about the girl who is anything but easy despite the boy's claim to a friend at the end of the story that she is a "cinch." In *Catcher*, Salinger has Holden call up a girl named Faith whom he had heard about from a boy at Princeton, rather than Dartmouth:

> Then, all of a sudden, I got this idea. I took out my wallet and started looking for this address a guy I met at a party last summer, that went to Princeton, game me. Finally I found it. It was all a funny color from my wallet, but you could still read it. It was the address of this girl that wasn't exactly a whore or anything but that didn't mind doing it once in a while, this Princeton guy told me. He brought her to a dance at Princeton once, and they nearly kicked him out for bringing her. She used to be a burlesque stripper or something. Anyway, I went over to the phone and gave her a buzz. Her name was Faith Cavendish. (Salinger 82-3)

The boy whom Holden got the information from is Eddie Birdsell, and his last name evokes his negative behavior ('bird' was common slang for a girl). With Holden, though, who really is only looking for someone with whom he can talk, the girl's refusal to meet him is more a commentary about Holden's own faith.

With the earlier short stories mentioned above Salinger reworks the theme of judging people. In "The Young Folks," it is Edna Phillips who sits alone at the college party until the host introduces her to William Jameson, a young man who is actually more interested in the blonde whom Edna disparages as she also makes gossipy comments about others at the party. In "Go See Eddie," Helen, herself a chorus girl not working at the moment, is accused by her own brother of having a similar kind of reputation as the

girl in “Houseparty” in that she is with a married man but also seeing another on the side (Salinger *Three Early Stories*).

Now, in regards to other Salinger stories that contain parallels to *All Quiet on the Western Front*, “Soft-Boiled Sergeant,” admittedly, is the least convincing, but its title character, Burke, is akin to Paul Bäumer’s friend Stanislaus Katczinsky, “the leader of our group, shrewd, cunning, and hard-bitten, forty years of age, with a face of the soil, blue eyes, bent shoulders, and a remarkable nose for dirty weather, good food, and soft jobs” (Remarque 8). Paul later explains about Kat’s character:

> Katczinsky never goes short; he has a sixth sense. There are such people everywhere but one does not appreciate it at first. Every company has one or two. Katczinsky is the smartest I know. By trade he is a cobbler, I believe, but that hasn’t anything to do with it; he understands all trades. It’s a good thing to be friends with him, as Kropp and I are, and Haie Westhus too, more or less. (Remarque 26)

Though Salinger’s Burke is younger, only twenty-six, he is of a similar character: “A guy like Burke could live a whole life being a great man, a really great man, and only about twenty or thirty guys, at most, probably knowed about it, and I bet there wasn’t one of us that ever kinda tipped him off about it. And never no women” (Salinger *Soft-Boiled*). The points that connect the two soldiers is their humility and care for the younger recruits.

Where the connections between *All Quiet* and “Soft-Boiled Sergeant” are tentative at best, by contrast “Last Day of the Last Furlough” is a short story with aspects very similar to passages in *All Quiet*. “*Technical Sergeant* John F. Gladwaller, Jr.,” fondly called Babe, is reading in the opening scene where his childhood “Books [are] all

over the floor: opened books, closed books, best sellers, worst sellers, classic books, dated books, Christmas-present books, library books, borrowed books" (Salinger *Last Day*). This is akin to Paul Bäumer's longing to reconnect to his own books in *All Quiet*. Paul explains:

> I used to live in this room before I was a soldier. The books I bought gradually with the money I earned by coaching. Many of them are secondhand, all the classics for example, one volume in blue cloth boards cost one mark twenty pfennig. I bought them complete because it was thoroughgoing, I did not trust the editors of selections to choose all the best. So I purchased only "collected works." I read most of them with laudible [sic] zeal, but few of them really appealed to me. I preferred the other books, the moderns, which were of course much dearer. A few I came by not quite honestly, I borrowed and did not return them because I did not want to part with them. (Remarque 105-6)

What matters here is not the specific list of books but rather that both soldiers are wanting to regain their youth through their love for books. Salinger even has Babe reread particular passages within his beloved books, and imagine himself taking them with him to the front: *"Too late,* he thought. *Time's up. Maybe I can take them with me. Sir, I've brought my books. I won't shoot anybody just yet. You fellas go ahead. I'll wait here with the books"* (Salinger *Last Day*). The difference is that Babe has not yet been ravished by the war but is anticipating leaving for it in the morning. By contrast, Paul is back from the front wanting to reconnect, "I want to feel the same powerful, nameless urge that I used to feel when I turned to my books" (Remarque 106).

Vincent Caulfield, Holden Caulfield's older brother and Babe's fellow comrade who is visiting from New York, expresses what Paul eventually comes to believe: "Book learning never did me no good" (Salinger *Last Day*). Here, Salinger seems (again, only speculative) to be playing with themes from *All Quiet* but reworking them with his own sensibilities. Vincent's comment is preceded by his observation of "No more horsecars" in New York, which indicates the changing times not just for Babe and him, but also for the shift from World War I into World War II; however, it is quickly followed by Vincent's announcement that his brother Holden, who was not yet twenty, has been declared missing in action—another indication of the horrors of war, and a parallel to Paul's experience of losing comrades.

As for comrades, as with those who were Paul's greatest comfort in the war, Salinger has the short story's protagonist, Babe, parallel this theme by stating that "I never really knew anything about friendship before I was in the Army" and asking Vincent, "Did you, Vince?" (Salinger *Last Day*).

Further similarities with *All Quiet* occur when Babe's father, a biology professor and WWI veteran, "held forth at the dinner table. He had been in the "last one" and he was acquainting Vincent with some of the trials the men in the "last one" had undergone" (Salinger *Last Day*). Doing so was taboo for Paul Bäumer, as noted in the thesis with his frustration about his own father and other men wanting to know about his experiences, which he was reluctant to share. In "The Last Day of the Last Furlough," Babe scolds his father for not being more reticent about his own war experiences:

> "Daddy, I don't mean to sound pontifical, but sometimes you talk about the last war—all you fellas do—as though it had been some kind of rugged, sordid game

> by which society of your day weeded out the men from the boys. I don't mean to be tiresome, but you men from the last war, you all agree that war is hell, but—I don't know—you all seem to think yourselves a little superior for having been participants in it. It seems to me that men in Germany who were in the last one probably talked the same way, or thought the same way, and when Hitler provoked this one, the younger generation in Germany were ready to prove themselves as good or better than their fathers." Babe paused, self-consciously. (Salinger *Last Day*)

Babe's assumption of all German WWI veterans, however, seems to be a purposeful avoidance to Paul Bäumer by Salinger, a difference that is understandable given this scene's generational divide on the eve of the furlough; yet, Babe, nonetheless, continues scolding his father with words that then become directly analogous to Paul's in *All Quiet*:

> "But I believe, as I've never believed in anything else before, that it's the moral duty of all the men who have fought and will fight in this war to keep our mouths shut, once it's over, never again to mention it in any way. It's time we let the dead die in vain. It's never worked the other way, God knows." Babe clenched his left hand under the table. "But if we come back, if German men come back, if British men come back, and Japs, and French, and all the other men, all of us talking, writing, painting, making movies of heroism and cockroaches and foxholes and blood, then future generations will always be doomed to future Hitlers. It's never occurred to boys to have contempt for wars, to point to soldier's pictures in history books, laughing at them. If German boys had learned to be contemptuous

> of violence, Hitler would have had to take up knitting to keep his ego warm." (Salinger *Last Day*)

This bold accusation gets to the heart of *All Quiet on the Western Front*, but it also reveals a possible later influence of the book upon Salinger in his efforts to have Holden Caulfield in *The Catcher in the Rye* expose so much similar phoniness. When Babe's father makes light of his passionate outburst, "I didn't mean to romanticize my cockroaches," everyone laughs but Babe "who resented slightly that what he felt so deeply could be reduced to a humor." As the conversation veers into whom Vincent's date would be, Babe finds himself "still thinking of what he had said," revealing Salinger's wisdom of human nature through his characters, "He felt immature and a complete fool. He had been windy and trite."

This unfolds further to show Babe challenging the limits of comradeship when he thinks to himself that Vincent does not know him, in regards to his loving Frances, as well as he thinks: *I've been this way for seven years, Vincent. There are things you don't know. There are things you don't know, brother* (Salinger *Last Day*). The emphasis on *brother* is directly in regards to comradeship and Vincent's earlier claim of knowing Babe, but their level of comradeship is not yet where Paul Bäumer is with his own comrades, and the difference is the contrast of inexperience and experience. The remainder of the story shifts, though, and reveals Babe's love for his kid sister, Mattie, and his desire to protect her from the phoniness apparently inherent in adulthood, a theme that Salinger more fully develops in *The Catcher in the Rye* with Holden towards his kid sister, Phoebe.

"The Last Day of the Last Furlough," published in 1944, is arguably not the first Salinger story to rework themes from *All Quiet*. "Slight Rebellion of Madison," written in 1940, also suggests *All Quiet*'s influence through the possible origin for Holden's name, though other influences are also likely. As argued in the fifth thematic discussion in the thesis, Holden Caulfield's name is strikingly similar to Paul's insistence that his room "must catch me up and hold me" (Remarque 106).

Salinger's original story of Holden Caulfield in first person narrative, "I'm Crazy," plays upon disappointment of a student, Holden, with his teacher, Mr. Spencer, similar to Paul's disappointment with his professors who urge patriotism and signing up for the war. Slawenski argues that "the voice of Holden in 'I'm Crazy' is not the same as it will be in *Catcher*: Though far more intimate than the self-conscious exchange of 'Madison,' it is still not completely spontaneous. The narration of 'I'm Crazy' is more deliberate and certain than it is in *Catcher*. In some instances, it is also more precise and poetic" (Slawenski 88). Salinger surely needed time, experience, and distance to develop his ideas, especially Holden's narrative voice.

"A Boy in France" is "the second of three stories that Salinger documented having written while on the front lines during the closing months of 1944" (116). It also concerns Babe Gladwaller who is now in France and in search of a German foxhole, too tired to dig his own. The heart of the story centers on Babe's attempt to find comfort. About it, Slawenski makes two points, that it:

> …represents an important stage in the development of Salinger's work. His previous story, 'The Magic Foxhole,' asked about the existence and nature of

> God. As in reply to those questions, 'A Boy in France' contains a declaration of conviction, and through this story, faith and authorship become intertwined. (116)

and it:

> …represents a major stage in Salinger's spiritual journey. In "The Magic Foxhole," the scene with the chaplain appears to question the existence of God or at least the participation of God in human lives. In "A Boy in France," the existence of God is affirmed, and it is here that Salinger acknowledges his spiritual quest. (119)

Where Babe can no longer find comfort in the "soggy lump of newspaper clippings," which he wads up and throws away, he turns to a letter composed by his kid sister, Mattie, and finds the solace that he spiritually needs; however, the link to *All Quiet* is not from the original, spiritual journey that Salinger was on, as evidenced with Babe's story, but in the story's starting point when Babe struggles to find a place to sleep:

> After he had eaten half a can of pork and egg yolks, the boy laid his head back on the rain-sogged ground, hurtfully wrenched his head out of his helmet, closed his eyes, let his mind empty out from a thousand bungholes, and fell almost instantly asleep. When he awoke, it was nearly ten o'clock—wartime, crazy time, nobody's time—and the cold, wet, French sky had begun to darken. He lay there, opening his eyes, till slowly but surely the little war thoughts, those that could not be disremembered, those that were not potentially and thankfully void, began to trickle back into his mind. When his mind was filled to its unhappy capacity, one cheerless, nightful trend rose to the top: Look for a place to sleep. Get on your feet. Get your blanket roll. You can't sleep here. (Salinger *A Boy*)

In *All Quiet*, sleep deprivation is what made the suffering of so many soldiers worse: "Last night we moved back and settled down to get a good sleep for once: Katczinsky is right when he says it would not be such a bad war if only one could get a little more sleep. In the line we have had next to none, and fourteen days is a long time at one stretch" (Remarque 8).

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Not all of Salinger's pre-*Catcher* stories have been carefully combed for parallels to *All Quiet*, but the stories included here have enough evidence, I believe, to warrant further research and study. Perhaps more evidence linking Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* to Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front* will surface with continued reading and research, and via his letters.

Endnotes

[1] P.4 – Scholar Pamela Hunt Steinle, in the introduction to her detailed account of *Catcher* and American censorship, *In Cold Fear*, speaks eloquently of how the novel responds to post-World War II American culture:

> The sheer pace of social change and relative ease of individual mobility (geographic if not social) have long challenged American parents as they prepare their children for an adulthood of unclear definition. The greater difficulty in the post-World War II period, however, lies in the ever-widening distance between traditionally held American ideals and values (democracy, freedom, individualism, equality, voluntary social responsibility) and the actual behaviors and expressions of Americans -- as individuals, as a people. In exactly this sense, the narrator of *The Catcher in the Rye* sees his own adolescence as a precipitous jump from the cherished ideals and beliefs of childhood to the inauthentic and cynical social reality of adulthood. Metaphorically, *Catcher* reads as a recognition of America's own process of maturity, from innocent and idealistic "childhood" to the "adult" pursuit of status and power in both our private lives and as a nation. Hence, *Catcher* and the surrounding debate can be said to point out a disjunctive gap of moral ambiguity in American culture -- for the adult as well as the child. (Steinle 4).

[2] P.6 – I am greatly indebted to Professor James Ross Macdonald of The University of the South for bringing this letter to my attention.

[3] P.31 – Kenneth Slawenski relates the awkward moment when Salinger, along with his British publisher Jamie Hamilton, had dinner with Sir Lawrence Olivier and his wife, Vivien Leigh:

> …there was Salinger, forced to sit through dinner and exchange niceties with the very brunt of his condemnation. As the night wore on, he felt more and more like a phony himself. The incident still resonated with Salinger after he had returned home, and he sent Hamilton (who, having read the book, should have known better in the first place) a long letter explaining that he did not share the same viewpoint as Holden Caulfield on the sincerity of Olivier's acting. He asked Hamilton to pass the sentiments and his apology on to Olivier. Hamilton did so, and Salinger received a gracious letter from the actor in reply. (Slawenski 201)

[4] P.47 – Though Salinger likely would not discourage or exclude any reader, his intended, hypothetical readers are arguably male, as with Paul's comrades, and the primary evidence comes in the last chapter just after Holden distinguishes the reader/roommate from the psychoanalyst that keeps asking "if I'm going to apply myself when I go back to school next September" (Salinger 276). Like his boarding school, Pencey Prep, and so many others institutions of the time, the "crumby place" is segregated by gender. Holden suggests as much when he mentions a visit from D.B. and his girlfriend: "one time when she went to the ladies' room way the hell down in the other wing," where the other wing suggests the girls' side of the hospital, and not the only available bathroom at the moment.

[5] P.52 – Paul and Holden, both writers – Paul writes poems and Holden writes compositions – are also keen observers of beauty. Paul observes the following: "I cast a

glance at the bed. It is covered with clean snow-white linen, that even has the marks of the iron still on it. And my shirt has gone six weeks without being washed and is terribly muddy" (Remarque 149). Holden observes something quite analogous:

> It took [Ackley] about five hours to get ready. While he was doing it, I went over to my window and opened it and packed a snowball with my bare hands. The snow was very good for packing. I didn't throw it at anything though. I *started* to throw it. At a car that was parked across the street. But I changed my mind. The car looked so nice and white. Then I started to throw it at a hydrant, but that looked too nice and white, too. Finally I didn't throw it at anything. All I did was close the window and walk around the room with the snowball, packing it harder. (Salinger 47-48)

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