Allie, Phoebe, Robert Emmet, and Daisy Mae: Love, Loss, and Grief in J.D. Salinger’s *The Catcher in the Rye* and Alice McDermott’s *Child of My Heart*

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**Abstract:** Adolescents in literature often leave their significant losses understated, especially the death of one's sibling or a surrogate type of sibling, or suicide of a peer. Each causes certain behaviors that seem to express inconsolable grief, and when left unaddressed, aberrant behavior, and resistance to cultural norms. The surviving adolescent may rebel against family and societal norms that he/she observes, norms that seem unjust or phony. Each adolescent, too, may seem ambivalent about their sexuality and unaware of their vulnerabilities. While Holden and Theresa share some of these features, they differ with regard to the presence of love in their lives. In each story, *The Catcher in the Rye* by J.D. Salinger, and *Child of My Heart* by Alice McDermott, parents of the narrator-protagonist seem to repress their own feelings about the loss, or they neglect to communicate openly about the loss with the surviving adolescent sibling. The structure and breaks in the narrative which are evident in each character's story return to pivotal moments—often a minimally-described traumatic event in the narrative which seems silenced by parents in each adolescent's family. In this comparison of character's responses to loss, interpersonal relationships are examined, as are results of psychological research about how adolescents respond to a sibling death. Like the flâneur, observing others in the cityscape and dreamscape by the sea, each persona/narrator travels through his community freely, pursues art and fantasy as a form of escape/survival, and distances themselves from those whom one might assume are their loving mentor parents.

Keywords: trauma, loss, love, adolescents, sibling death, psychology, Alice McDermott, *Child of My Heart*, J.D. Salinger, *The Catcher in the Rye*

Characters in literature often cause the reader to consider what is left understated—how losing one's sibling or a surrogate type of sibling causes inconsolable but unspoken grief for the surviving adolescent. Sometimes this loss combines with trauma to complicate the survivor’s healing process; aside from the grief from loss of a sibling, trauma which also occurs may range from having witnessed or experienced forms of violence or abuse, or
from having been overlooked through a benign kind of neglect by the parents.\textsuperscript{1} It seems assumed that after death of a sibling, surviving children can bounce back into trust in everyday experiences; however, research by psychologists and family therapists suggests that this commonplace belief neglects to recognize and respond to unresolved sibling grief.

In *The Catcher in the Rye* (1951) by J.D. Salinger, Holden Caulfield, spends Saturday through Monday toward the end of December 1949 journeying through his storyscape of Manhattan after he has withdrawn from the fictional Pencey Prep in fictional Agerstown, Pennsylvania. Rather than returning to his home in the upscale Lenox Hill community on E. 71\textsuperscript{st} St. in Manhattan several days earlier than his targeted arrival on Wednesday for Christmas Break, Holden forestalls the inevitable; he delays admitting to his parents his most current departure from yet another private boarding school. This repeated pattern of Holden's not quite fitting into boarding school environments might warrant some much needed personal attention from his parents.

The narrative perspective is that of Holden, seventeen, from his hospital bed in a sanitarium in California, telling of incidents and his thoughts and feelings from those three days and what preceded them in his sixteenth year. Occasionally in this narrative that appears rather chronological, Holden flashes back even further to events that occurred on July 8, 1946, the day that his younger brother, Allie, then 11 years old, died of leukemia. Holden at that time was thirteen. In his narrative, too, Holden refers to a boy whom he liked at his previous school, Elkton Hills. This boy, James Castle, as a seeming result of his having been bullied by peers, jumped to his death. At the time of this tragic incident, James was wearing a turtle-neck sweater that Holden had loaned to him (170). In such a digression in the narrative, Holden shows how webbed memories of people and incidents seem to be in his unfolding lead-up to his mental breakdown. Sara Beardsworth in "Overcoming the Confusion of Loss and Trauma: The Need of Thinking Historically" (2009)

\textsuperscript{1} Sara Beardsworth in “Overcoming the Confusion of Loss and Trauma” identifies how trauma and loss often are perceived as the same. She defines the Freudian definition of trauma as “the breaking of experience” (45). But she also adds that “constitutive loss is the loss of a primary object-paradigmatically the mother’s body- that is necessary for individuation” (45). Beardsworth identifies how Julia Kristeva adds to Freud’s elaborate theory about the evolution of the individual aspects of ego formation which situate the “gift of love” as “the nucleus of the ego” (59). It is important to consider different theories about trauma for psychoanalysts to identify appropriate healing processes for those experiencing loss and/or trauma.
describes such traumatic suffering through Freudian theory as the analysand who seems stuck in time:

caught in a present that is nonfutural because the sufferer cannot take up a relation to what has occurred. Traumatic suffering is structured by the persistence and dominion of a past within the present, turning it into an endless present. (53)

Such seems to be the case with Holden who relates critical incidents out of linear sequence in the story, causing breaks in the chronological flow of his narrative, yet allowing the reader to interpret each incident, such as his connection to characters, such as James Castle, as a peak moment critical to understanding the emotional and psychological distress of the narrator. Holden in his chronology of events during this three-day odyssey of Manhattan returns to James's death, as well as to a response by his former teacher, Mr. Antolini, to James Castle's death, Mr. Antolini's body language and tenderness toward Holden, his younger sister Phoebe's obstinacy, love and generosity to him, and finally, Holden's admission of his ever-present, perhaps obsessive-compulsive behaviors of talking with Allie at significant moments and every time he crosses from one city block across a street to another city block.

In a similar memoir-type narrative, in *Child of My Heart* (2002) by Alice McDermott, Theresa narrates her story of her 15th summer in the 1960s in East Hampton, Long Island, her home community, where she lived with her elderly Irish-American parents. Told from a more mature voice of this narrator, Theresa probably in her midlife, recounts events during the summer of her fifteenth year, when she cared for children in her community, especially her eight-year-old cousin, Daisy Mae, who is on vacation from her family in urban middle-class Queens, and through a less significant allusion, when Theresa lost her virginity to an elderly, famous abstract expressionist artist who lived nearby. By the end of the novel, we learn that Daisy Mae for whom Theresa is most responsible that summer dies in the fall of that year, to an unspecified disease, probably leukemia. Theresa's daily activities, as she describes them, shows how she interacted exclusively with children in need of adult care. She leads them on fantasies in this beach town landscape, and engages them in magical tales. While her moral development in terms of her care and concern for others seems
evident, her proper attention to Daisy Mae's worsening condition breaks into the narrative throughout. Daisy's bruises become almost metonymic of Theresa's festering spiritual and emotional wounds that are punctuated by her admission that she now is isolated and alone, telling her story of pivotal moments from that summer of her coming of age.

In her telling of events that occurred in the first weeks of her fifteenth summer, Theresa alludes to what had occurred before this timeframe, specifically the death of her brother Robert Emmet upon his birth several years before her birth, and what happened afterward. In other words, she was born in the shadow of another child. What is even more significant, like Holden in *The Catcher in the Rye*, Theresa, from her bed, presumably a hospital bed, recalls her critical thoughts and feelings from that timeframe, her fifteenth summer, when her consciousness about what she valued surfaces in conflict with values of her parents, and her own growing consciousness of pain caused by grief from the loss of a loved one:

I don't know that I understood what the bruises [Daisy's bruised feet] might mean, or forebode, although I think Daisy and I both had a sense of something menacing about them, something making its way into her life, and mine. Something that had broken. Something you sort of expected to break. But still hope it won't. (McDermott, *Child of My Heart*, 92)

Earlier in the novel, Daisy Mae through her innocent description of the Artist's abstract painting of the beautiful adolescent Theresa perceives the image as "broken." Her vision foreshadows Theresa's growing awareness of her growing breaks from family ties and traditions of propriety.

It seems that brokenness underscores the narrative. Suzanne Mayer in "Celibate Bride, Shrewish Sage and Fey Cousins: Intergenerational Trauma among Women of McDermott's Novels" (unpublished) identifies the intergenerational trauma experienced by many of Irish heritage as that of Theresa's experience. McDermott, too, describes Theresa as a product of what she terms metaphorically a "shadow that hangs over all of us (Reilly 562), or a product of intergenerational trauma. The result of this trauma is constriction, as known to trauma researchers, which Mayer explains as Theresa's failure to secure appropriate help for Daisy Mae due to both her denial of adult advice and her inability to see
the consequences of her having delayed an intervention. Theresa's silence, Mayer explains, is passed down in Irish-American families as a kind of denial. Monica McGoldrick explains, too, how intergenerational memories, dreams, and reflections among McDermott's Irish-American characters relate to an underlying trauma with echoes of pain and shame that have been silenced over time. In McDermott's narratives allusions to these Irish ancestors or incidents in Irish or Irish-American history are present. Robert Emmet, for example, Theresa's older brother who died at birth, and who was named by her grandfather, is historically an Irish Protestant romantic hero of what now is understood as a lost cause, who, as a nobleman, rebelled in the early 19th century against the British rule of Ireland, and for it, was executed in 1803. While Theresa neglects to elaborate on the significance of this naming, it serves as one of many allusions to her ethnic identity, but in her unfolding of events, she minimizes reference to her parents, and she outright dislikes her Irish kinship group in the boroughs of New York, especially Daisy Mae's working class family.

In both novels, the protagonists-narrators tell their story on their terms, all phoniness excluded, with significant digressions included to explain their ethic of caring in a world that they perceive as broken in another kind of silence—silence to the needs for social justice and service to the underserved. In each of these coming-of-age novels, both Theresa and Holden show care and concern for children. Each loses a sibling which seems to project both sets of parents into a silence about their grief; each adolescent loses another person: for Theresa, a close younger relative, Daisy Mae, and for Holden, a peer in his former school, James Castle. Both protagonists also enjoy losing themselves in the world of literature and fantasies, of sorts. Each chronicles how they seem subject to the gaze of others, as they themselves become objects of male attention. While Theresa describes uncritically how men in her community touch her as they talk to her, Holden actually reflects in his narrative, "That kind of stuff's happened to me about twenty times since I was a kid. I can't stand it" (193). Shortly after his comment about Mr. Antolini's having gotten too close to him while Holden was sleeping on the couch, Holden later considers the possibility that perhaps Mr. Antolini was just caring for him: "I wondered if just maybe I was wrong about thinking he [Mr. Antolini] was making a flitty pass at me" (194-195). While each appears emotionally and physically distanced from their parents, estranged from peers, and critical of many societal norms, they both reveal an ethic of care and concern for children, a love
for storytelling, and a growing rebellion against codes for sexual propriety, but Holden seems more defensive than Theresa about being an object of sexual desire in society.

Parents in each story repress their feelings about the loss of a child which contribute to the intensity of the surviving child's sorrow, and unwittingly sets each adolescent on an autogenetic course of studying at a private high school. An ensuing loneliness surfaces—Theresa commutes long distances to the high school and is physically isolated from any peer friendships; Holden attends private boarding schools, the second of which he leaves. While Theresa has no peers her age, Holden in this three-day sojourn, reaches out to associates, male and female, but he seems critical of most of them, and desires ultimately to run away from civilization to a cabin in the woods, a dreamscape out west. There he envisions himself as a deaf mute; the only visitors he plans to allow would be his siblings, but D.B. would not be allowed to write any phony scripts, only stories and books (Salinger, *The Catcher in the Rye*, 205). It is evident that Holden's parents are excluded from his safe space, just as Theresa shuts out her parents in her narrative.

These characters share another similarity. Both Theresa and Holden like literature, and enjoy art and fantasy escapades, as a mechanism for coping with their emotional pain, and each rebels against societal norms that seem unjust. In their search for love and beauty, both characters encounter what they perceive as sordidness and pretention, which they retreat from by communicating with innocent younger children—Daisy Mae for Theresa, and Phoebe for Holden. Curiously, they each like Eustacia Vye, a mysterious misfit from Hardy's setting of the heath in *The Return of the Native*. As each teenager, a misfit to a certain extent in each story, attempts to take control of their lives to discover their own identity, and their values and beliefs, they fall under the influence of questionable adults whose motives seem less altruistic than theirs. Their need to be understood is very evident in each novel.

Several scholars have written about the psychological condition of each protagonist. Robert Coles (2000) in his interview with Anna Freud about Salinger's character, Holden Caulfield, quotes her as saying that many of her adolescent clients in England and in the United States understand him as a youth "trying to figure out what is important, who's important (to him) and why; [like these young analysands,] he's also trying to figure out himself, and learn what causes his moodiness, and his loneliness" (220). Anna Freud in
another comment points to Holden's self-referential nature, what is understood as a narcissistic personality disorder, as "Everything turns back on himself" (222). She explains how we need to be "sympathetic to our Holdens" (219), those who appear to be "doubtful," "scornful" and "mistrustful" (220). Coles refers to The Culture of Narcissism (1979) by Christopher Lasch to begin to understand Holden and other members of his social class, otherwise perceived as class privileged, yearning to, as Coles describes it, "inch ... away a bit from this life's seemingly ever-present, sometimes shady ambiguities" (224).

In "The Psychological Structure of The Catcher in the Rye," James Bryan explains how an event that brought on trauma for Holden underscores his problems with "patterns of aggression and regression, largely sexual" (1066). Bryan interprets Holden's experiences as a quest narrative. The "central rhythm of the narrative has Holden confronting adult callousness and retreating reflexively into thoughts and fantasies about children, child-like Jane Gallaghers, and especially his ten-year-old sister, Phoebe" (1065). Bryan in his psychoanalytical reading of the novel traces Holden's sickness through his various interactions with others to show how his problems are "essentially sexual and moral" (1068). The carrousel scene at the end, however, Bryan sees as "represent[ing] everyone's sacred, inviolable human destiny" (1073). Holden promises Phoebe that he will not run away, her pure love for him wins, and he lets her ride the merry-go-round in Central Park, with her trying to grasp the brass ring to win a free ride, without his being over protective of her, without his cautioning her about possible dangers. He gives her his red hunting hat that he has worn throughout this three-day odyssey. Bryan sees this hat as symbolizing Holden's "basic human resources- his birthright, that lucky caul of protective courage, humor, compassion, honesty, and love- all of which are the real subject matter of the novel" (1074). Storytelling by the analysand, Holden, is identified by Bryan as evidence of Holden's "far healthier" psyche, by the end of the novel which has given "shape to, and thus achieved control of, his troubled past" (1074), all part of a needed healing process.

Holden, the digresser and the nonconformist, experiences what Parvin Ghaseme and Masoud Ghafoori in "Holden in Search of Identity: Recreating the Picture of the Flâneur" (2010) characterizes as heroic, a "crucial power to negotiate, re-read and re-evaluate the modern social life" (80). As the flâneur, who has experienced significant changes in the loss of his sibling, and the death of a peer, Holden journeys to familiar
places within a mile or so of his home in Manhattan, some sordid and odd for him to navigate as an adolescent, and others that become familiar destinations to those who grew up in the neighborhood—the Egyptian collection, including tombs in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Grand Central Station, the pond in Central Park, Broadway theatres, movies and the Rockettes' performance at Radio City, the ice skating rink at Radio City, now known as Rockefeller Center, the carrousel in Central Park that plays the same tapes of music like "Smoke Gets in Your Eyes." These locations for Holden represent to him what he knows in his cosmopolitan identity of sophistication, his status as a highly-literate resident of Lenox Hill, not just a visitor, to the metropolis. He is jolted from his autonomy and self-independence though when he experiences feelings of disappearing into the road once he steps off the curb. These terrors occur at the beginning and the end of the novel, which show his fears of things again changing, disrupting his reality, just as his younger brother, Allie, had disappeared from his existence, and his older brother, D.B. had moved west to Hollywood, for his career as a scriptwriter. Holden, in an urban environment with some ever-changing structures and in his family dynamic with relationships that have altered significantly in the loss of a male sibling almost his age, seeks out stability in those landmarks of Manhattan that for many generations have remained intact. "Where do the ducks go in winter?" he wonders about (13), and asks of strangers (82-83), which shows his vulnerability to any change in Central Park's pond, and his own thoughts about the nature of life.

Megan Paris, et al. overviews results of research on how children respond to the death of a sibling. In "Grief and Trauma in Children after the Death of a Sibling" (2009), Paris, et al. reports that from this small sample study "trauma and grief were highly correlated" and each may "overlap to create a more complex response to bereavement…" (77). In this small study, females show a higher response to questions on the surveys for grief and trauma. On the Hogan Inventory of Bereavement, with eight statements for the grief factor analyzed, one statement seems to apply very much to Holden—"I thought about it when I didn't mean to" (75). Allie is ever present in Holden's thoughts and words, compulsively, even as he crosses streets in his daily doings. Even at his boarding schools, Allie is present in Holden's thoughts. When he questions about the duck's disappearance from the pond, he leaves unstated that possibly they had frozen in the water, and had died.
The Egyptian exhibit, a permanent fixture at the Metropolitan Museum of Art showcases mummies in the tomb—attempts by the Egyptians to preserve how ancients looked—to defy natural processes of death. James Castle jumped to his death. Holden is consumed by thoughts of Allie almost as compulsively as a child not stepping on a sidewalk crack for fear of breaking one's mother's back.

Jason Fletcher, et al. in "A Sibling Death in the Family: Common and Consequential" (2012) overviews the results of researchers Fanos and Nickerson (1991), McCown (1984) and Rosen (1984) about the effects of sibling death from cancer on surviving siblings. Results conflict—with some showing positive effects for coping and maturity, whereas, most studies show negative effects for surviving siblings: feeling sad, lonely, frightened, and angry; experiencing guilt, anxiety, depression, high-intensity grief symptomology, somatic complaints and sleeping difficulties; and fear of intimacy with others (806).

In *The Catcher in the Rye*, Allie, we are told died from leukemia. Researchers in this Fletcher article explore the long-term economic effects of the surviving siblings, and they conclude that sisters who lose a sibling during childhood "are far more affected than brothers in terms of more severe reductions in human capital" (821). However, the reader can discern how the loss that one brother has felt for the other is intense, and Holden's persistent grief needs to be recognized and caught before he experiences self-destructive behavior.

The titles of each novel suggest terms of endearment. J.D. Salinger has taken a line from the poem by Robert Burns, "Coming Through the Rye" (1759-1796):

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Gin a body meet a body
Coming thro' the rye,
Gin a body kiss a body –
Need a body cry?
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Through this image, Salinger portrays Holden's values: Holden, the dissident, the rebel against pretension; Holden, the nurturer, who clings to a worldview of care and concern. Holden carries with him, too, the fact that his brother Allie had died, and how his family, especially his mother, still grieves. But he does not reveal much about the details leading up
to Allie's death; the story is more about Holden's feeling disconnected after Allie's death, journeying through New York City as a sixteen-year old, meeting up with sordid persons, turning to alcohol whenever his age is ignored at clubs, and trying to live out empty scripts for happiness. Holden, unhappy, discontent, and disconnected from positive parental influence, desperately seeks authenticity in experience. Having grown 6 ½ inches in the past year, and with half his hair prematurely gray, Holden can pass for an older male, yet his behavior shows an arrested development-- his impulsivity, his ambivalence toward others, and his awareness of Allie's phantom in his everyday experiences.

He refers to Allie throughout his narrative in those several days of journeying around New York City after he withdrew from the private academy. He confides in the narrative that he slept in the garage the night that Allie had died, and he put his fist through "all the goddam windows" (Salinger 39). We learn that he missed his brother's wake and funeral to which all of his relatives came. Holden seems disconnected from religion; even though his father was Irish Catholic, and his mother was Protestant, he self identifies as an atheist (99). This absence of religious belief, this assertion of his belief that there is no God seems to intensify Holden's depression about the death of Allie. However, Holden seems to keep memory of Allie alive in different ways. When he plagiarizes a text for one of the males at Pencey Prep, for Stradlater's descriptive paper that Holden agrees to write for him, he chooses to describe Allie's baseball mitt with poems written on it. Of course, Stradlater does not appreciate this essay, but the symbol of the poetic mitt shows Holden's deep connection to Allie, who would allow such text on his baseball equipment. These intermittent references to Allie, especially when Holden describes his mental state as depressed, remind the reader of Holden's unresolved grief.

On occasions, he talks aloud to Allie, almost as a prayer, and he confesses his regret that he excluded Allie once when he and his friend played (98-99). When Phoebe asks Holden about what he likes, he identifies the two nuns whom he had met earlier on his odyssey of the city, James Castle, and the peer who had committed suicide; he also says that he likes talking with Phoebe, and he likes Allie, even though Phoebe reminds him that Allie who now is dead does not count. Allie, though, to Holden, is ever present, ever real. We readers recognize how Holden talks to Allie each time he crosses a street from the end of one block to another. Allie is very much with him all the time. In the carrousel scene
Phoebe gives Holden a kiss, takes his red hunting hat from his coat pocket, and puts it on his head—the ultimate admission of love and acceptance. While Holden has experienced instability and radical changes in his family dynamics, Phoebe seems to remain stolid and nonjudgmental. Through Holden's telling this story, even though he admits to being "the most terrific liar you ever saw in your life" (16), his faith seems restored in experience that is hopeful, joyful, and trustful. While Holden has Phoebe as his trusted connection, and there appears this ray of hope for his wellbeing, his parents ironically send him far away from their home in Lenox Hill, New York to a sanitarium on the other side of the nation, closer to his brother, D.B.

Through Phoebe, though, his other younger sibling who also has survived the loss of a beloved brother, Holden recognizes in her an authenticity, and an altruistic, pure love. Beardsworth in "Overcoming the Confusion of Loss and Trauma: The Need of Thinking Historically" explains how Julia Kristeva's theory of "the gift of love" as "the nucleus of the ego" (66) operates alongside Freudian theory to understand loss and trauma, and to alleviate suffering. Holden's relationship to Phoebe and their shared sibling love seems to show what Kristeva might identify as the nucleus of Holden's ego and his need for "transference love"—that "the ego is founded on transcendence: an otherness that, as non-objectal correlate of the primitive ego, supports affective relationship" (59). With the novel's ending, the reader can see how Holden's journey has led him to break from his isolation to identify selflessly with another whom he loves purely.

Love and its inevitable loss also become the focus of *Child of My Heart*. Alice McDermott takes an expression in Gaelic, "zra mo chroi" which translates to "love of my heart," an endearing expression that second or third-generation Irish Americans would understand as a special term of endearment. The titles of both books suggest deep emotions that underscore beliefs for care and concern of another.

McDermott in an interview with Charles Reilly acknowledges that the more mature Theresa indeed recalls this story of her fifteenth summer "as she is lying alone in bed" (365). McDermott elaborates on this detail, and labels Theresa as "poor Theresa." She emphasizes how as the author, she sees that "Daisy is her ghost." During the interview, McDermott reminds us that Theresa tells Daisy in the story that "ghosts only appear to people who sleep alone" (565). Here is that divided consciousness in the telling of this
story; the trauma of loss has been shared with readers without the more mature narrator, Theresa, having identified her own emotional frailty.

Unlike Holden who shares his need for time in the sanatorium, Theresa deemphasizes her adult loneliness, her emotional pain in that ghost that she must carry with her each day of her existence. In the story though, she acknowledges that "I found I preferred modern art, pictures of nothing, after all" (227).

McDermott also reminds the reader that Theresa is a liar:

She has been a storyteller and a liar since she was fifteen, so what she presents to the reader is something she has sculpted. In the loss of virginity scene and each of the other scenes, you are getting her carefully reconstructed version of what happened. Honestly, when writing the book, I thought I was almost blatant about it, embarrassingly blatant about it. (Interview with Charlie Reilly, 2002, 565)

Theresa reminisces about how things were through careful descriptive details that show a character's concern, values, and beliefs. Through her allusions to many stories throughout the novel, Theresa tries to justify her actions from that summer in her fifteenth year, in such a way that she wants us to believe that her actions were done out of her strong love for all who mattered to her. Caught in the life of the imagination, Theresa attempts to re-script well-known storylines to give hope to those for whom she feels responsible.

Through both narratives, though, Holden's written in the voice of the teen, and Theresa's written by the more mature narrator about her fifteenth summer, each tries to protect those whom they perceive as innocent, and they rail against duplicity in social norms. Yet the reader can recognize in both narrators, the young Holden telling his story one year later while he is at a sanatorium to recover from his mental breakdown, and Theresa, years later, while lying in her bed alone, telling us about events from her fifteenth summer, from a distanced, and more mature perspective, society indeed holds double standards. Theresa's interpretations of her actions and silences that summer, and what they all may now mean to her philosophically and even, spiritually, are woven together. In this journey to adulthood, both Holden and Theresa represent vulnerable teenagers who
criticize and rebel against societal norms and social values. During their journeys toward maturity, each experiences and chronicles their vulnerabilities.

Holden in the post WW II setting of New York City, like Theresa in the early 1960s in the East Hamptons of Long Island, NY, describes people and incidents, trying to show the reader how adults and some young people are "phonies." Holden is a child of wealth, whereas, Theresa is a child of elderly parents who work each day in Manhattan to afford living in this seaside second-home type community for the wealthy. There is a distinct class difference.

During her first sexual encounter, Theresa reminisces about a detail, "some disruption of the sunlight that came through the open doorway… a shadow passing as it will in a dream, unable to get in"(226), she seems to be recognizing in that shadow, a symbol for all moral codes, social conventions, and rules for propriety locked out of this free space in the Artist's barn studio. Like her neighbor Petey's attempts to entrap wild rabbits, society cannot constrain Theresa. Like Holden, Theresa seems to be developing a growing awareness about "phonies," but it is the more adult narrator who justifies her moral rebellion against hypocrisy and prejudice, and her counter-cultural perspective toward sexual mores and cultural traditions.

Like Holden Caulfield, Theresa has this compulsion to let the readers know the entire story with all the delicious and even sordid details, even when she constructs fantasies or little lies. Holden enjoys his lies, too. In M. L. Knapp's Lying and Deception in Human Interaction (2008), two of several special kinds of lying are described, each which could relate to Theresa and to Holden—the Narcissistic Personality Disorder and the Histrionic Personality Disorder. Persons with the Narcissistic Personality Disorder "view themselves as 'special'." As part of the disorder, "lies, exaggerations, and half-truths are used… to support the grandiose self they have created…. [and] narcissists are skilled at self-deception" (177).

Theresa seems further arrested in her psychological development due to the growing tension between her two competing moral voices—one of her care and concern for the underserved in her temporal community, and the other, her voice of growing rebellion in a more spiritual community against those who belong to institutions that remain silent against social injustices, such as racism, sexism, classism. Carol Gilligan in "Adolescent
Development Reconsidered" (1988) overviews results of research about the positive influences upon adolescents in families and schools when attentive adult listeners, especially mothers and teachers, relate to teenagers:

Psychological development in adolescence may well hinge on the adolescent's belief that her or his psyche is worth developing, and this belief in turn may hinge on the presence in a teenager's life of an adult who knows and cares about the teenager's psyche. (xxix - xxx)

Theresa lacks a wholesome relationship with any attentive adult who is interested in her psychological wellbeing. She deceives herself into thinking that the elderly artist understands her, or that he cares.

The younger Theresa is the female counterpart to Holden Caulfield. In this memory story, the narrator, a more mature Theresa, portrays her younger self as a person more comfortable escaping into her imaginary worlds, and orchestrating such alternate reality experiences for the children in her charge rather than discussing her growing doubts and confusion with her mother. Absent emotionally from Theresa, her mother unwittingly contributes to Theresa's growing identity conflict. Psychologists have identified the importance of an adult female mentor for an adolescent girl's healthy emotional and psychological maturation.\(^2\) Theresa's maturation seems thwarted as she seems isolated from peers of her own age and from the positive influence of any adult female mentors who might care for her beyond her most basic needs. Aside from this absence of dialogue or any shared experiences between Theresa and her mother, she seems to trust that Theresa can manage independently. Not recognizing Theresa's absence of peers of her same age, her mother seems unaware that her daughter, while provided for by living in this beachside community, might be lonely, as Theresa retreats into the world of reading and storytelling for the neighbors' children and for her younger cousin.

Through this memory story, Theresa reconstructs the narrative of traumatic events from her youth, and presents untoward details in the story—the story of her own little

understood psychological frailty in that summer of her growing consciousness of her own discontent. Troublingly, silence between mother and daughter pervades this story. By escaping into her dream worlds, Theresa avoids confronting her own growing antagonism for her family and all that they value and represent—Irish-American genteel traditions and Irish-Catholic beliefs, middle class American cultural materialism, and the status quo.

Like Holden Caulfield, who has lost his beloved brother, Allie, Theresa by the end of this story has experienced the loss of her beloved younger cousin, dear Daisy Mae. The story, however, focuses on events leading up to her tragic loss, whereas, *The Catcher in the Rye* focuses on Holden's dealing with his own form of grief shortly after Allie's death. That timing difference for the retelling makes a significant difference as Holden has little time to reflect upon his own growth and connection to others in his family over time. Whereas, the mature Theresa builds into her narrative significant incidents leading up to what she learns about the child's death months later when she is further distanced from Daisy Mae. Also, like Holden, Theresa experiences trauma caused by the death of a beloved younger sibling or cousin, but the trauma for Holden is raw like an open wound. His telling is more open as a wound, whereas, Theresa's telling of events from that summer is filtered. Nevertheless, her pain has been festering to the point that she is compelled to address her need to be understood, especially her desire to expiate her guilt for not having addressed the major life-threatening health issues for Daisy during that summer in the early 60s. She additionally rationalizes her sexual encounter with the elderly Artist. For Theresa, guilt adds to her grief at having lost her younger cousin, Daisy Mae. Charles F. Scott in "Trauma's Presentation" (2009) explains such experiences as "traumas of identity":

> Some traumas do not arise from events that are directly harmful to the body. They can arise from the force of values and meanings that tell us about what happened to us, tell us that because it happened to us, we are not who we think we are, tell us indelibly, perhaps, that we are going to die, that we are terribly vulnerable in our lives, that we have unwittingly done an evil thing, or that we are victims. (117)
Theresa seems to be experiencing such a trauma of identity, especially due to her unwitting prolonged delay in getting proper attention for Daisy Mae. Her guilt, left unaddressed for many years, becomes that shadow in her life, which prevents her from living life more fully. While Theresa's ethic of care and concern for younger children is evident, she lives with the phantom in a memory of her indiscretion regarding Daisy Mae. Love in her present experiences seems absent.

Unlike Holden, Theresa while Daisy Mae is alive creates what she thinks are authentic experiences for the children, thus allowing them to be released into the world of the imagination. Without having described herself as a social director of a summer camp for preschoolers, one intent on cultivating the children's imagination, that is indeed the image that she portrays of herself—she acts like a social engineer of sorts, controlling the experiences of others and creating the activities for each day. The children look to her alone for their entertainment and enchantment, as she tells us. In contrast, in *Catcher*, toward the end of the novel, Holden lets go of trying to control Phoebe; he recognizes Phoebe’s intent to risk falling off the carrousel horse in her attempts to succeed at catching the "gold" ring, and winning a prize.

Readers cannot escape identifying several of these parallels between Holden and Theresa, these two endearing literary characters, yet they may begin to wonder what truly had become of Theresa after that fifteenth summer. The story resonates with a deep silence about those years between then and the time of the more mature narrator’s reminiscence about events from that summer. This narrative may serve as her justification for her life's journey of rebellion against many other societal norms. That the narrative is framed in the telling of her stealing the three newborn bunnies from their nest, we perceive her misunderstanding of the role between mothers and children. She separates them from their natural environment and usurps the role of mother. Sally Barr Ebest in *The Banshees: A Literary History of Irish American Women Writers* (2013) notes how Theresa's moral development shows a displacement of "love and morality" by "dispassionate curiosity, if not cynicism" (202).

By the end of the story in late August of that summer, Theresa, now alone with the little Moran children as her singular charges, leaves the reader with that image of her final choice with its hints again at her own moral negligence. She describes how she found at her
backdoor, "Three baby rabbits, newborn, blind, wrapped in what appeared to be their own sticky cocoon" (241), that mystical caul. As a gift for the next-door children, she removes the newborns from their nest, and places them into a makeshift nursery of a grass-filled box. The Moran children, hungry for love and attention, witness this seeming act of love, something out of a children's storybook. Theresa seems to be caring for bunnies whose mother rabbit had abandoned them, but a careful review of language suggests that the situation might be otherwise. She creates this gift that appears to care for the newborn bunnies without her truly considering the needs of the wild rabbits for their mother.

Neglecting to respect the nature of wild rabbits, Theresa acknowledges that they now are doomed as "hopeless little things" (242). At the beginning of her narrative, she explains about these wild animals, "Not meant to live, as my parents had told me, being wild things, although I tried for nearly a week to feed them a watery mixture of milk and torn clover" (3). Again she defies a natural order by removing the bunnies from their natural habitat. She attempts to create a temporary palliative for herself and for the children, probably knowing full well how crushed they will be when the bunnies die after having been separated prematurely from their mother rabbit. Theresa reasons in this final scene how Petey always wanting to care for a pet rabbit is destined to be disappointed and to suffer "by the irreconcilable difference between what he [Petey] got and what he longed for- by the inevitable, insufferable loss buried like a dark jewel at the heart of every act of love" (242).

Unlike Holden who shares with his reader his reflective self in admitting his need for time in the sanatorium, even though the medical facility is clearly distant from his hometown, Theresa in her narrative deemphasizes her adult loneliness, neglects to admit her part in causing others' pain, and avoids mentioning her guilt as part of the emotional pain in that ghost that she must carry with her each day of her existence. The love that Holden acknowledges for Phoebe allows him to transcend his grief for his loss of Allie. However, for Theresa, by the end of her narrative, love and loss seem inseparable, and her awareness about her own moral development ironically seems thwarted, if not arrested, in that first and final image of her tampering with Mother Nature by her removing those three bunnies from their natural environment. Her model of true care and concern for the children's feelings, too, seems shortsighted, even cruel, as those bunnies, she seems to know, are destined to die without the nurturance of their mother rabbit, and the children who
already are seriously neglected, and somewhat abandoned emotionally by their own mother, are destined to experience yet another kind of grief with the loss of the newfound pets. Sorrow envelopes the lives of characters in this story.


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