

Appendix C, Artifact 15

Anastasia Close Reading, Stages 4-6

Passage

“I went down by a different staircase, and I saw another ‘Fuck you’ on the wall. I tried to rub it off with my hand again, but this one was *scratched* on, with a knife or something. It wouldn’t come off. It’s hopeless, anyway. If you had a million years to do it in, you couldn’t even rub out even *half* the ‘Fuck you’ signs in the world. It’s impossible.” (pg 202)

Stage 4: Grammar, Punctuation and Tense

Punctuation

- The sentence that is the shortest “It’s impossible” acts as a conclusionary statement to Holden’s thoughts about the graffiti.
- Salinger’s uses quotation marks around the phrase fuck you and he capitalizes the f to make it seem less conversational. To Holden, this isn’t just a phrase that has been casually sprayed onto a wall. It could very well be an opportunity for him to preserve the guiltlessness that children Phoebe’s age have. It’s related to the symbolic image of Holden catching children who fall over cliffs after playing in the fields of rye.

Grammar

- The capitalization of the “f” in the word “fuck” could either be Salinger giving an idea of how he imagined the graffiti to be written or it could be used to make it stand out more in his readers’ mental images.
- The pronouns, “I” and “you” suggest that this is a one on one conversation with either Holden and himself or Holden and us readers, (although we’re going to know what he’s saying in either situation). This is also supported by the fact that there are no proper nouns or names to suggest that Holden is talking to anyone else.

Tense

- The sentences in this passage are in the past tense until the second to last sentence. “If you had a million years to do it in, you couldn’t even rub out even *half* the ‘Fuck you’ signs in the world.” At that point, the tense becomes conditional.
- The sentences “It’s hopeless.” and “It’s impossible.” are in the present tense to suggest that this is how Holden currently feels. It could be Salinger’s way of saying that Holden knows, a year or so after the events mentioned in the book, that protecting others from growing up and becoming aware of their sexuality or anything else associated with adulthood is simply impossible.

Stage 5: Themes → Understanding of Novel

- Loss of Childhood Innocence
 - The themes highlighted in this passage and reiterated in other parts of the novel is the preservation and loss of childhood innocence and more specifically, an adolescent’s exposure to sexual maturity.
 - Knowing these themes gives the reader a chance to make the connection between the title of the book and Holden’s misinterpretation of Robert Burns's poem “Comin’ thro’ the Rye”.
- Inability to Move on from Past
 - Holden time and time again, exhibits strange behavior that suggest that he can’t move forward without moving on an acting as if Allie has passed away.

However, it seems that Holden, contrary to what everyone else believes, thinks he can't move on or even *live* without mentioning Allie, or thinking about Allie or holding his old mitten. The passage from page 198 being, "Every time I got to the end of a block I'd make believe I was talking to my brother Allie. I'd say to him, 'Allie don't let me disappear...'" depicts his way of using Allie to comfort himself because of his sudden fear of never being seen by anyone again.

However, this is quite strange since he later talks of moving far away from his family into a cabin and not seeing them again until he's maybe thirty five and one of his family member's is at death's door. This leads me to believe that he's not just afraid of death or physically disappearing but maybe he's afraid of turning into someone that Allie wouldn't recognize if were ever able to see him again. Everyone else he mentions seems to have changed since Allie's death. Phoebe's older and smarter compared to the younger and less cognizant toddler Allie may have known, D.B.'s gone off and become some Hollywood writer that Holden resents in some way. It seems that Holden is the only one is life trying to hold on to who he used to be.

- Knowledge of this theme allows the readers to get an idea of how badly affected Holden was by Allie's death.

Stage 6: Passage → Novel

- Character/Narrator
 - This passage, in particular, is arguably the one where the gap between Holden the sixteen year old's outlook on life and that of Holden the seventeen year old is made more obvious. It operates as a way for readers to compare and contrast Holden the narrator to Holden the character, without relying solely on pre-conceived notions and biases they may have had when reading about Holden in the first few chapters.
- Plot
 - As notorious as this novel is for having a haphazard plot, if one at all, this passage doesn't offer any more organization than most others. It can be read as an isolated event or a unit of passages that build up Holden's character and bridge the gap between the boy failed Pencey to the boy whose told this story repeatedly while locked up in a sanitarium.
- Support/Complications of Previous Themes
 - The belief that Holden has matured within one year is not entirely reinforced by Holden's self-description made early in the novel. For example he says, "I was sixteen then, and I'm seventeen now, and sometimes I act like I'm about thirteen." (p. 9) In this way we understand that Holden *still* harbors some immaturity, so in this way this passage may confuse the reader. However, if the aforementioned quote is supplemented with his this quote, "Sometimes I act a lot older than I am - I really do - but people never notice it. People never notice anything", one that highlights his annoyance at people's inability to seem him at his best, then, it is still possible to say that Holden is capable of growing up, just not in the ways that everyone else seems to want him to. (p. 9)
- Author's Reasoning
 - J.D.'s main purpose in using this passage seems to be to deepen Holden's character development. It's an example of Holden's obsession with curses, but then it shows how he doesn't want to grow up and how he always talks about

how things are ironic but doesn't notice the irony in him, the one who curses so often, cleaning offensive graffiti.