

A Study on *The Catcher in the Rye*

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## INTRODUCTION

It has been over 60 years, which *The Catcher in the Rye* (1951) dealing with master's thesis was written. However, there is still a firm worldwide popularity. It is said to have been a bible for some celebrities and some people when they were children. Former Presidents of the United States, for example John F. Kennedy read this text. World economic leaders like Steve Jobs and Bill Gates also did it. I'd like to explore what is the everlasting charm of it.

I'd like to analyze this work of art from the two perspectives. One is the theory of power. It is the idea that we are forced to act by an invisible power of which we can't notice the function. Its power is composed of dominant of capitalism which economic system developed rapidly during the Cold War in the 1950s. For its power, we can do nothing but succumb to it. The other is the theory of hero. It is the idea that we can't be a hero in an actual world who can save people going down to a collapsed to the capitalism in actuality. It has a reason. The world that hero is going to guide is just a fake...

### Chapter I The theory of power

#### A, The world made of fiction

At first, I will explain the American society which becomes the stage for Holden. After winning the Second World War, America got a position as the leader of western liberalism. Of course, this liberalism is on the base of capitalistic economy. The richness in material phase continued growing up. This prosperity is typified by TVs, electrical appliances, and cars.

The capitalism which supported sudden growth of America can be realized by exchange of value which is done through the use of money. Therefore, The American society in the middle of the capitalism must be established by accepting the symbolic value which is the essence of the monetary system. The world is also made up with the common fantasy that people trust the value completely without having any suspicion. If people notice the fiction, the products on which existence as goods are based on symbolic value system become meaningless and lose their reasons of existence. Therefore, the products aren't going to be sold in the market. In other words, if they know the fiction,

capitalism doesn't function well. Therefore, the world of capitalism must hide the fact which reminds us of the fiction. For example, actually, not knowing exactly the facts of the fictive part, we purchase cars having a symbolic value usually. The fictive world in capitalism is constituted by a mechanism to make things of no value into things of having value.

The fictive world is constituted by regarding something as economically valuable things without giving any evidence. 'A fact with having symbolic value' means 'a fact which is different from the contents when we looked from an objective viewpoint'. For example, the ten-thousand yen bill is just the paper originally. However, the value of ten-thousand yen bill is given by a common fantasy which the public entertain without their noticing value-generating system. People don't know this system. In the end, the fact which the value can exist as such by common fantasy is completely concealed. This is the reason why the people get the sense that the symbolic value belongs to a ten-thousand yen bill. As a result, just a paper changes into the ten-thousand yen bill which can be changed for a product with having value of ten-thousand yen.

Capitalism is constituted by assuming the value of money. It is the major premise in the capitalism. We can exchange money for the products which has the same value. And the products produced in the market of capitalism are made of use value and symbolic value. When we think about a car, the function to run is the use value and the design or the brand is symbolic value. Symbolic value, a fiction without any factual grounds in a sense, has nothing to do with the fact that it can run.

Symbolic value functions as a big moment in the postwar American society which surrounds Holden. D.B. who is Holden's older brother comes up as a successful drama writer in Hollywood in the text. "He just got a jaguar. One of those little English jobs that can do around two hundred miles an hour. It cost him damn near four thousand bucks." (1) 'jaguar' which has symbolic value of the brand becomes the mark of success in capitalism.

We think generally that students go to school to study. However, let's change a viewpoint. Spencer of the teacher at Pencey school thinks the value of school is just graduating from it. This educational background is symbolic value. He thinks that we only need graduating from famous school to get to the work we can earn much. The academic background is just a symbol. This shows that 'success' in the American society is constructed by symbolic value. It is constructed by concealing a fiction. In the text, the society is stained with a fiction of capitalism.

B, People live in the fictive world unconsciously

The important thing is that adults coming up on *The Catcher in the Rye* are not conscious of fictiveness of the capitalistic society. D.B. purchased a jaguar and he became a winner of capitalism in Hollywood. In capitalism, to reach the middle class is to have the financial power that we can buy a luxury car. People are convinced that it is the winner of life by the capitalistic power. The power of capitalism forces people to purchase products. The appearance of Holden's aunt is below. "...she's very well-dressed and all, and when she does anything charitable she's always very well-dressed and has lipstick on and all that crap."(103) The woman has no doubt to spend money for her appearances. The power to force people to purchase products with having symbolic value controls people. People don't notice the power. And this power leads the result that capital society induces people to buy products. This situation represented by D.B is also functioned a same power. It dominates people unconsciously and forces them to purchases products.

The power leads the American nation to the action such as their purchasing products. It works on not only action of consumption but also the structure of educational background to assume a school device. For example, Spencer told Holden to graduate from high school.

"I'd like to put some sense in that head of yours, boy. I'm trying to help you. I'm trying to help you, if I can."(13)

Spencer surely persuades Holden to graduate from school. The reason for him to suggest his graduation is because it is a big factor for Holden to graduate from school for getting a high wages on the work. Spencer has no doubt of it.

Michel Foucault who was French philosopher wrote "the birth of the prison". <sup>1</sup> I will explain a little bit about "panopticon" which explains a circular camp in his text. The watchman overlooks the prisoners from the circular central hill. So he can check whether prisoners work or not. However, the prisoners of the circumference cannot watch the watchman. This is because light shines through the ceiling. In other words, prisoners always fall into the sense that seems to be seen from the watchman. Therefore they cannot but work voluntarily. We can say the same thing about the power of the people in capitalism, too. People are moved by the invisible power that forces them to work. The reason is that we do not know what or where the center of the power is. People who live in the capitalistic society cannot but move voluntarily.

American political scientist Robert A. Dahl defined 'the power'. "We can say that a person has power for the other when a person forces the other to do some action. In other words, in the situation on both have their own intentions clearly, when one holds the other and can accomplish his own intention, it is said that one showed power." <sup>2</sup> In *The Catcher in the Rye*, specific people don't come out who force people to move unconsciously. In other words, it is the power of nobody with having the power. The specific main character with having a specific purpose does not give the power on the text. Everyone excepted Holden is moved by action from the center of the invisible power. Power of the man without having power is pervasive. Eventually, the power of the capitalistic society is not visualized directly. Therefore the public cannot pinpoint the center point of the power because we can't watch it. We cannot but move voluntarily because we can't doubt the power.

#### C, Holden is aware of the fiction

But Holden notices the power of capitalism with having symbolic value. He despises a woman who wears a beautiful dress in New York downtown. Clothes are originally intended to make protection against the cold. Elements of her appearance and the brand with the element of protection are symbolic value. He is doubt of the woman who shows off her looks. So he is aware of the symbolic value. But he doesn't know the real identity of the power. He just begins to suspects the existence of the power. Anyway, he disliked the school. The evidence is he escaped from the school. The reason is that he can't endure the force power of the school to compel students to become obedient. In other words, he noticed invisible power of capitalism just vaguely.

Why was Holden able to see through the power? It is caused by parent's absence. In the text, his father does not come back to his house and never appears. His mother appears just once. Therefore, Holden doesn't trust them and doubts adults absolutely. Therefore, he thinks that the adult society is the phony world. Gerald Rosen thinks says as follows. "Holden has no one to teach him how to cope with death." <sup>3</sup> "So Holden cannot get advice on how to leave the world of childhood from the adults around him. Nor can he find suitable models to emulate." <sup>4</sup> If he gets the education from his parents, he should have been able to fit the adult society well.

Anyway, why is it necessary for children to get the education from parents? The reason is that principle of Oedipus complex function to children well. And it lets children bring up to adults and climb the stairs of the capitalistic success. Oedipus

complex is that a son gets mental suppression that he, who wants to get his mother, has the strong rebellious spirit to his father. The son makes an effort to get over his father from the spirit. Then, self-advancement and competition are born with him, and he climbs up the stairs of the success in capitalism. However, Holden's father never comes out in the text. Holden also does not hear what Spencer says. He thinks adults are insane and capitalistic success which adults think is fake success. He decided to drop out from the school because he can't have a meaning to run for the success. In other words, Oedipus complex did not act on him. On the other hand, Stradlater fits the school well because he requests Holden to do his homework. The father for him is a teacher of Pencey school and he is going to get over the teacher. In addition, Phoebe, who is Holden's sister, also climbs the stairs of adults smoothly, too. "Daddy's going to kill you." (155) She said that phrase much. We can read that she is conscious of her father much. And she suggests to Holden to become a lawyer same as father. Therefore she is sure of capitalistic success of adults is true success. In conclusion, Holden walks the way which is different from the way everyone walks. As a result, he notices invisible power which everyone can't notice.

#### D, Holden loses in the society

He does not resist a teacher who persuades him to stay in the school although Holden notices the fiction of the school. He is going to only escape from the school. He drops out of the school and goes to the trip to run away after all. So he is defeated by the capitalistic power. Although he understands that capitalistic society is a fake, he succumbs to it. "Oh, how lovely! Perhaps you know my son, then. Ernest Morrow? He goes to Pencey."(48) With the woman who exaggerates the educational background of the son in a train, he is not going to fight. He won't say that school is just a fiction without having real value.

I must answer why Holden cannot beat the society. I think that has two reasons. One is invisible power as I argued so far. And the other is that the size of the power affects it. It is easy to understand a wave of the power. Sugita Atsushi said about it in this way. "For example when the resistance for a law is strong, the government makes a law. So we can understand the law is powerless and the government is exposed to itself that it doesn't have power. On the contrary, for example, at first many people come to wear a seatbelt. In other words, a new practice roots substantially. After that, the government makes a law that everyone must wear a seatbelt in the car. As a result, a high

percentage of his wearing is provided. It can give the people an impression that the law has a power. Most of phenomena about the power may depend on the effect that is such a surfing mark very much. Even if a person can do a surfing very well, he can't make a wave." <sup>5</sup> In conclusion, the government can do a success because politicians study mood of the people. And the man with having the power always cannot use the power.

Let's think about Holden. We can't identify who has the power in capitalism. People live unconsciously about the power and are moved by the wave. Because the people step on the wave well called capitalism, ordinary people can live in the world easily. But, Holden is conscious of the power's existence although he can't identify it. He drowns in a wave of the big power because he is conscious of it. Of course he can't bring about a big wave. In conclusion, he loses in the society because he can't see an invisible power and the power is too big for him to fight with. Then, he can't force people to accept the fiction of the power. Therefore he struggle and is going to run away.

E, Holden performs willingly

People living in capitalism don't notice that they are moved by the power and are forced to perform. But they can live in capitalism because the people are convinced that there is existence of the symbolic value. They have no doubt to believe that there is a symbolic value, for example to the expensive clothes, cars, much wage, and educational backgrounds. But Holden notices that there is not substantial value in symbolic value. By the reaction, he won't fit the adult's society. Therefore it is hard for him to act on the world because he notices that he, who acts on the fictive world, is also a fake. Although he hates the capitalistic world, he doesn't know where he should fight with. So he cannot but do a performance that he fits capitalism.

American society is the insane world for Holden. What is the normal world for him? It is the world that there is no actual value for the symbolic value. It is impossible because the world is completely stained with capitalism. Holden must survive on the world. Therefore he must lose his sanity in his heart. Actually he does it. For example, he talks with the woman who exaggerates the educational background of her son. It's just a symbolic value. He plays an action voluntarily similar to the people in capitalism like below.

I'm always saying 'Glad to've met you' to somebody I'm not at all glad I met. If you want to stay alive, you have to say that stuff, though. (79)



On this way, he knows everyone must say above manner to the older to live on the world. Therefore his normal consciousness increases and it is harder for him to live on the capitalistic world. For example, He tells the woman a lie. "Rudolf Schmidt,' I told her. I didn't feel like giving her my whole life history. Rudolf Schmidt was the name of the janitor of our dorm." (48) Using a false name, he talks with her and performs as an elite in capitalism. "But I wouldn't visit that sonuvabitch Morrow for all the dough in the world, even if I was desperate." (52) Furthermore, his lie accelerates. He began to swear to the woman just in his heart. We can read from above that the more he tells lies, the more he gets angry. Holden gets angry more because he notices he tells a lie to himself. In other words, his normal consciousness is amplified and suffers more.

He is forced to adapt himself to the adult's manner like below. "The Navy guy and I told each other we were glad to've met each other. Which always kills me. I'm always saying 'Glad to've met you' to somebody I'm not at all glad I met. If you want to stay alive, you have to say that stuff, though." (79) Manner of greetings is words only for forms of the adult society. It is also symbolic value. When he utters the words, the other normal heart appears. In other words, the stress piles up and his pain increases.

F, The meaning for which he goes to Phoebe

A duality occurs in the heart of Holden. One is himself that he performs to adapt to capitalism. I explain why he is going to adapt himself to the society. This is because he feels that it is hard to live on the capitalism society unless he is stained with adult society. In other words, he notices that he cannot live unless he adapt himself to the society which put the real value on the product without having the actuality.

The other heart in the duality is within himself that he watches him performing. From the below, we can read the duality.

She said their house was right on the beach, and they had a tennis court and all, but I just thanked her and told her I was going to South America with my grandmother. (51)

But I wouldn't visit that sonuvabitch Morrow for all the dough in the world, even if I was desperate. (52)

He says to the woman that he goes to see her directly. However, in his true heart, he

never wants to do it absolutely. By uttering it in his heart, he felt the pain which cause him to pretend to adapt to the society. That is exactly Holden who is going to resist capitalism. Ordinary people don't have themselves watching themselves performing. This is because they are unconscious about the power of capitalism and are forced to act unconsciously. Therefore, Holden tries to cancel the duality and go to Phoebe, who he thought, is not stained with the adult society.

Anyway, it is difficult for Americans in the real world to accept limits. "Even if the chance to head for the frontier was largely mythic, its significance as myth was its denial of limits in the imaginations of those Americans who were stuck in the East. Of course death is the ultimate limit, ..." <sup>6</sup> Gerald Rosen thinks the reason which Holden can't accept Allie's death comes from American frontier mind. What is the frontier mind? In the 19th century, people in the U.S.A went ahead to the west to look for the new world. They cultivated the ground, and the town was established. Then, they look for different new worlds and repeated cultivating. They did it again and again. So the American ideal to continue to cultivate the grounds eternally is the frontier mind. So it is difficult for American to accept the limit. It can be said the same thing to Holden. He isn't received Allie's death. He didn't accept his brother's death because he had a frontier mind. Therefore he was going to charge Phoebe with the duty of the child forever. The different reason to go to Phoebe is that he didn't learn how to handle death from parents.

Holden is going to escape from the power of capitalism. And he tries to go the world in 19th century. The purpose for which he goes to Phoebe is making himself understood of ideal that is "good old U.S.A." in the 19th century and dissolve his duality. He thinks he can go to the pure world that it was not poisoned by capitalism. I'll show the evidence from this text at the next chapter. The reason why he idealizes the past world is that he wants to avoid the bogus current world. In other words, he chose the past as the reflection to the actual present world.

Holden assumed Phoebe for just a child. He thought she was just ten-years-old girl and not to be yet an adult. He wanted to see the younger sister with the child on. But, in fact, he found that she was not a child...

## Chapter II The theory of hero

### A, He idealizes the 19th century by the reflection

Holden cannot adjust to the society of capitalism. In the text, he will not be familiar with the present world. It is because he shows rejection to the quack society which is full of fiction and the people who lie unconsciously. He was not going to adapt himself to the society because he thought that the success in capitalism is not a real one. As the reflection, he idealized the pastoral American society of the reclamation era of the 19th century. We can understand that he idealizes pastoral society in the 19th century as follows.

'I have about a hundred and eighty bucks in the bank. I can take it out when it opens in the morning, and then I could go down and get this guy's car. No kidding. We'll stay in these cabin camps and stuff like that till the dough runs out. Then, when the dough runs out, I could chop all our own wood in the winter time and all. Honest to god, we could have a terrific time! Wuddaya say? C'mon! Wuddaya say? Will you do it with me? Please!' (118,119)

It is a scene that Holden suggests to Sally that he lives together with her, who was ex-girlfriend, in the place which is full of nature. After that, he says as follows. "I swear to God I'm a madman." (121) That is to say his ideal to go to the pastoral world is really serious. Then I must answer why he idealized pastoral society of the 19th century. The society for him is the world which doesn't change forever. I will explain it in detail. His thoughts are based on the frontier mind. In the 19th century, a lot of places which could be pioneered were left. After the opening, it became the city. As I explained so far, the city is made of fiction. Holden hates its world. Therefore, the people can go back to the world without the fiction by reclaiming other places again. In the past in 19th century, people were able to always go back to the original pastoral society. However, every place has been polluted by the capitalism. Time passed and every place has become the city. It's the present world. No places to cultivate are left. So we can't reclaim it any more now. Therefore, he idealizes the pastoral society in 19th century.

I will explain another reason why he chose the past. If he escapes from the present, he can go to only the future or the past. Why was not it the future? The reason is the present people can't separate capitalism from the investment. Investment is that people spend money for the future. The future exists on extension of the present capitalism. In other words, he was able to imagine that capitalism, which Holden disliked, exists in

the future. Therefore he avoided going to the future. He wants to escape from the present and the future. As the result, he could only go to a past. He could imagine the past from the movie or novel. There is the scene when he deeply attach to a past. "I felt so damn happy all of a sudden, the way old Phoebe kept going around and around." (191) It is the emotion of Holden when he looks at Phoebe from the outside of merry-go-round who rides on it. When he looks at her from the outside, Phoebe seems to continue going around to the same place endlessly. She looks always same figure for Holden. It means that he wish he wants to stop time. Time continues advancing eternally, but the time in the past which he dreams of is stops. Therefore, he was going to go to the world of the 19th century.

B, Why is Phoebe ideal for Holden?

The heart of Holden expresses the halfway point between an adult and a child really faithfully. There is a scene that the figure like the adult is shown to a girl. He is interested in the opposite sex actually. "Would you be interested in meeting me for a cocktail somewhere?" (8) He telephoned her and asked her to come with him and drink something. I think it is the scene only adults do. On the other hand, although he is interested female, he can't do sexual intercourse. It shows his pure heart of child that he wants to remain the child. "I remember this one afternoon. It was the only time old Jane and I ever got close to necking, even." (70) From the above, he can't do sexual intercourse even for Jane who kept company with him at a past. In this way, his heart sways like a seesaw between a child and adult. It is called a moratorium period. Halfway point between an adult and a child has the same structure of the frontier mind as I stated. Leo Marx who is a professor at the Massachusetts institute of technology stated it in his book. <sup>7</sup> A child is equivalent to the wilderness in the reclamation era, and an adult is equivalent to the town. Holden almost does sex with Jane. But he won't and returns to the pure association with her. The scene is as follows. "I held hands with her all the time, for instance." (71) Holding hands each other is association like children. He repeated going to the adult and going back to the child. The land repeated going to the town and going back to the wilds. They have the same structure.

Why does Holden dislike adults? When time passes, they begin to be conscious of the opposite gender. It is the proof that they become an adult. As I stated so far, he has the base of the idea that adult is buried in capitalism. Peter Shaw thinks Holden's resistance to adult is one of diseases. "If Holden is unable to move on from mourning, he

is equally unable to commence the being-in-love portion of his maturation process. He is suffering through what Erik Erikson calls “the prime danger of this age”: an excessively prolonged “moratorium” on growing improves. I spoke it in front of (Such prolongation can also be referred to as a “moratorium of illness.””<sup>8</sup> If I suppose his idea is real, it is certain that Holden was not able to mature into an adult normally.

Why is Phoebe ideal for Holden? Actually, he loved Allie and idealized him. I can understand it from the following. “I know he's dead! Don't you think I know that? I can still like him, though, can't I? Just because somebody's dead, you don't just stop liking them, for God's sake – especially if they were about a thousand times nicer than the people you know that're alive and all.”(154) Holden still likes the human being who has already been dead, and we can see he had such deep love towards Allie. He is in favor of Phoebe as the compensation for Allie. Because Phoebe is a blood relationship with Holden, she can avoid being a woman as an adult. She is still a 10-year-old child. He can't love adults, women, parents, and Allie. Therefore, he couldn't but idealize her.

Why is Allie special for Holden? It is important for him to have been dead of Allie. That is to say he remains a child eternally for Holden because he can only image Allie as a child. Holden regards his everlastingness as a charm point. Holden let Phoebe ride on the merry-go-round. He can see that she disappears and appears again and again. SO he wishes to want a younger sister to remain the child forever. He evaluates her as a symbol of the children as a substitute for Allie. I will state the conclusion in this chapter. Why is Phoebe an ideal for Holden? The reasons come from Holden's avoidance to women, Allie's death, blood relationship with Phoebe, and substitute for Allie.

C, The point where he arrived was Phoebe, but she was incorporated in the capitalism.

Holden continued to run away to the pastoral American society in the 19th century. He arrived at Phoebe after all whom he trusted, but she has been incorporated in the adult society. He understood that she was incorporated in the capitalism same as adults in capitalistic world.

How did Holden find that she was incorporated in the capitalism? We can find that she suggested to him to become scientist or lawyer. The scene is as follows. “Stop swearing. All right, name something else. Name something you'd like to be. Like a scientist. Or a lawyer or something.” (155) She notices the success in capitalism unconsciously. She is sure that getting to the work he can get high wages is his purpose in his life. She has already become a captive of capitalism. And her father's influence is

strong for her. The scene is as follows. "Daddy's going to kill you. He's going to kill you," she said." (155) She wanted Holden to succeed like father. She becomes a prisoner of capitalism. We can read it from the scene that she is conscious of her father like above.

Why was Phoebe affected by her parents? At first, let's think about Holden. He was not incorporated in the capitalism because he had no contact with his parents. The reason is that he lived in the dormitory of the high school. And both his parents hardly appear in the text. However, Phoebe was different. She lived together with her parents at his house. So I think she must have been influenced by her parents. D.B., her older brother, must have made an effort to overtake his father. The reason is that he could succeed as a writer in Hollywood.

"I'm going with you. Can I? Okay?" (185) Phoebe said to Holden that she followed him. However, he rejected it. The reason is that he found that she is incorporated in the capitalism. He understood that he can't lead her to his ideal world any more.

D, Holden wants to become a hero and save children who are going to be corrupted to the capitalistic society.

Nobody can accept Holden's thoughts. Even Stradlater and Phoebe who were cloth association with him refused his thoughts. His thoughts are like this. "This is the bogus adult society which is overflowed with a thing without having the fact. It is stained with the corrupted society to become an adult from a child." The reason why they refused his thoughts is that they know that his ideal world doesn't have reality. He arrived at Phoebe who was his only hope. He thought that she can understand his ideal world. However, he found that she was stained with the adult's society. And she persuaded him to become a lawyer or a scientist. He was shocked at it. Therefore he thinks of the idea that he becomes a catcher which is the title of this book and becomes a hero who saves the child who is going to be corrupted to the capitalism. The scene that he confesses it to Phoebe is below.

'Anyway, 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.' (156)

That he is going to be corrupted to the capitalism world equals that children grow up to be adults. Phoebe and Stradlater had become adults. Holden loves only Allie who has already been dead. Therefore, his ideal world is the world where children can stay as children forever. So only children exist in the world he dreams of. A hero for him is to keep the child as the child. It is a world of fantasy like Disney. Time doesn't exist for Disney world, so every character doesn't change as it is. In the fantastic world, time stops. In conclusion, his ideal world cannot be realized in the real world. A scene he persists in eternity is below.

Certain things they should stay the way they are. You ought to be able to stick them in one of those big glass cases and just leave them alone. I know that's impossible, but it's too bad anyway. Anyway, I kept thinking about all that while I walked. (110)

He talked it in natural history museum. History exhibits things stopping in the same world. "Just to leave them alone" (110) means that is to say keeping a child as a child. So it reminds us of eternity. Why does he persist in eternity? Peter Shaw says as follows. "In Holden's case the reaction formation manifested in the catcher fantasy is combined with another kind of guilt that may follow the death of a sibling, that felt by virtue of being a survivor." <sup>9</sup> He says that the reaction that Holden wants to be a catcher is tied to his guilt of Allie's death. So he decided to become a catcher to cut his thoughts of Allie's death. Furthermore, Peter Shaw says again as follows. "His fantasy of rescue in the rye comes out of the same impulse to protect youngsters (and the youngster in himself) from vulgarized sexual knowledge." <sup>10</sup> As I explained it so far, he also thinks that he is going to prevent children from becoming adults. The world he lives in is going to be stained with the bogus society of adults. And the children have sexual knowledge in the world. So Holden dreamed of the world that only children continued living forever and decided to become a catcher as a hero.

E, But he couldn't become a hero. He finally got to the mental hospital.

In the real world, he couldn't realize his ideal world where only children live.

"A lot of people, especially this one psychoanalyst guy they have here, keeps asking me

if I'm going to apply myself when I go back to school next September." (192)

From the above scene, we can read that he is put in the mental hospital. Therefore we can understand that he is put in a mental hospital. We can express mental hospital in other words with asylum. Asylum has the meaning of hiding place, too. It is not accidental to agree with his hiding place where Holden arrived.

I think Holden suggests two important things. One is that nowhere is the escape in this world. Although he continued to run away looking for his ideal world, he arrived at the mental hospital after all. A place of refuge is the world that is far apart from the place where people live commonly. So we can't escape from this bogus society. Holden informed us of the fact.

The other is negation of the hero's existence. We can read that he can't become a hero after all because he is in the mental hospital. Why can't he become a hero? The reason is that the world he dreamed of is also a fiction which the media created. The pastoral society of the 19th century is fiction made by the media and the film industry. In the actual world where we lived, a movie "*Gone with the Wind*" (1939) was popular. The rural scenery of the country is drawn in it. It is the society which Holden dreamed of. Anyway, the media inspired Holden's ideal to the people. It is very ironical that it was also the fictive world which Holden who disliked fiction idealized.

Koji Fujimoto defined American Hero as follows. "He must be courageous, kind, powerful and a person whom people long for. Strength which hero should have is based on the moral. Therefore, hero is a human being and also immortal. The strength brings about happy ending because justice achieves a great triumph." <sup>11</sup> Hero existed in some movies as "*Superman*" (1941) or "*Batman*" (1943). They save people who are going to be killed by assassins. Why did not Salinger allow Holden to become a hero? We can find the reason from the situation of America then. After World War II, it was composition that Soviet Union, central position of the world of communism, vs. U.S.A., central position of the world of liberalism. U.S.A. was going to push liberalism rapidly. Holden was going to be opposed to it by running away. However, the society was not able to accept his action. Therefore, it was necessary to make him lose in the society. In other words it means victory of liberalism. Actually, the sale of "*The catcher in the Rye*" was prohibited by a lot of publishing companies then. I think the purpose was to prevent the movement that people were going back to the past as Holden tried to do. Everyone couldn't stop the movement that the people in capitalism were going to accomplish rapid economic development from that on. Salinger must have insisted on the nihilism from this text.



## CONCLUSION

As I have argued so far, I analyzed *The Catcher in the Rye* from two perspectives. One is the theory of power. The world of capitalism where we live is fictive world with having symbolic value. The people are unconscious for the power of capitalism which has symbolic value. Holden felt that people are forced to perform by the power because he noticed the power. However, he could not fight against the big power alone. I think there are two reasons. One is it's an invisible power for people. And the other is the size of the power. It is so large that we can't beat it. Therefore he couldn't but adapt himself to the society. Holden tells us that there is nowhere for escaping from this world.

The other is the theory of hero. Everyone cannot become the hero who saves children going to be stained with the fictive world. The reason is that the hero whom Holden images and the world which he dreams of are also the fiction which the media created. This capitalistic society is full of fiction. In the 1950s, U.S.A. pushed the capitalistic economy system rapidly and took the national isolation. The whole land of America was ruled by the power of capitalism. In the world, it is impossible for hero to prevent economic development. So Salinger is going to convey negation of the hero's existence in this real world.

## NOTES

1. Michel Foucault, "Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison", New York: Random House, 1975
2. Sugita Atsushi, "Kenryoku" Power, Iwanamisyoten, 2000, p.1.
3. Edited and with an introduction by Harold Bloom, "Modern Critical Views J.D.Salinger", Chelsea House Publishers, 1987, Gerald Rosen, p.98.
4. Gerald Rosen, p.100.
5. Sugita Atsushi, p.17.

6. Gerald Rosen, p.101.
7. Leo Marx, *Middle Landscape*, The John's Hopkins University Press, 1977
8. Edited by Jack Salzman, "New Essays on the Catcher in the Rye",  
Cambridge University Press, 1991, Peter Shaw, p.101.
9. Peter Shaw, p.104
10. Peter Shaw, p.105
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