

Univerzita Pardubice
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Reception of *The Catcher in the Rye*

Bakalářská práce

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Bachelor Paper

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Reakce na knihu *Kdo chytá v žitě*

Bakalářská práce

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Abstract

This bachelor paper deals with a recent trend of censorship of literature in the United States. The trend may also be called a “textbook or literature activism”. *The Catcher in the Rye* by J.D. Salinger serves as an example novel to demonstrate certain methods used by contemporary censors. The first part of the paper explains key words *censorship* and *literature activism*; it also characterizes groups of people demanding censorship and their reasons for book challenges. Next part recalls the then-reception of the novel and shows various approaches of critics. The third part describes the mystery of the novel and the conspiracy theory, in which the book is reputedly involved. Finally, the last part confronts some of Holden’s controversial quotations with his censors’ opinions.

Abstrakt

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá nedávným trendem cenzury literatury ve Spojených státech. Tento trend můžeme nazývat také jako “aktivismus na poli literatury a učebnic”. Kniha *The Catcher in the Rye* od J.D. Salinger je zde použita coby příklad, na kterém lze ukázat, jaké metody současní cenzori používají. První část práce vysvětluje termíny *cenzura* a *aktivismus v literatuře*, dále popisuje skupiny lidí, které cenzuru vyžadují a jejich důvody k protestům proti knihám. Následující část připomíná přijetí knihy v době, kdy byla vydána a charakterizuje různé přístupy kritiků k románu. Třetí část popisuje záhadu kolem knihy a konspirační teorii, které je kniha údajně součástí. Poslední kapitola práce konfrontuje Holdenovy kontroverzní citáty s názory jeho cenzorů.

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Introduction

Thirty years after its first publication in 1951, *The Catcher in the Rye* was both the most banned book in America as well as the second most taught book in public schools. (Salzman) Censorship and banning of literature, mainly literature for youth, has become quite popular in the United States in last two decades. “During 1994 alone, over 395 censorship challenges were reported in the United States, a radical increase over a 10-year period. Even more alarming, censors succeed 41% of the time.” (Sipe)

These recent challenges of literature used at schools originate mainly from parents who belong to some political or religious groups. “Censorship in the 1990s has converged on schools from both the left and right, and, with increasing frequency, censorship attacks represent well-organized group efforts.” (Sipe) Reasons for book banning are miscellaneous, however, the most problematic topic seem to be confrontation of traditional religious values.

This is also the case of *The Catcher in the Rye*, where the main character has his own interpretation of Bible, calls himself an atheist and once considers suicide. Of course, it is not written in the novel to abet young readers, it solely relates to an explanation of a state of mind during a difficult phase of life when a person is not old enough, but is not a child anymore. *The Catcher in the Rye* is a story of Holden Caulfield, a sixteen year old young man, who has just been flunked out of school few days before Christmas and is on his way back home.

Even though this does not sound very controversial, many people in the United States find *Catcher* a controversial and even a spoiling novel, full of offensive language, alcohol abuse, premarital sex and prostitution, and what is worst, speculation over religion. Some individuals even think that this book can influence people to kill. Surprisingly, the only argument they have is the fact that the book was in possession of Mark David Chapman, the assassin of John Lennon, on the day he had killed him.

On the other hand, there are many defenders of the novel who believe that there is a moral message hidden inside and that *Catcher* is, conversely, an educational novel. Some see the alleged profane language as a perfect example of a 1950s youth vernacular which would be forgotten was it not for the book.

This paper will try to have a look on all of these controversial aspects of the novel and use it as an example of the literature censorship devices.

1) Censorship and literature activism

For understanding the topic of this paper, it is important to explain the key terms *censorship*, *censure* and *censor*; provided here is information from dictionaries and other sources, followed by a description of current literature censorship.

Censorship is the control of the information and ideas circulated within a society, or the removal of information from the public, or the prevention of circulation of information, where it is desired by some controlling group or body.

(<http://www.gilc.org/speech/osistudy/censorship/index.html>, 13. 11. 2006)

Censorship – the process of removing parts of books, films, letters etc. that are considered unsuitable for moral, religious, or political reasons. (Macmillan dictionary)

Censure – 1) strong or vehement expression or disapproval 2) to criticize or reproach in a harsh or vehement manner 3) to give censure, adverse criticism or blame (Webster's dictionary)

Censor – 1) an official authorized to examine printed matter, films, news, etc., before public release, and to suppress any parts on the grounds of obscenity, a threat to security, etc. (Oxford dictionary)

Censorship: The change in the access status of material, made by a governing authority or its representatives. Such changes include exclusion, restriction, removal, or age/grade level changes. (As defined by ALA - the American Library Association)

The most up-to-date definition of censorship is the last one by ALA, and it relates best to the topic of this paper. Rebecca Bowers Sipe in her article *Don't Confront Censors, Prepare for Them* develops this definition by saying that censors often have their own ideas about what should children read and that they confront teachers who want children to be self-contained and allow them to decide themselves what to read and what not.

The dictionary defines a censor as an official who examines books or other material to suppress parts deemed objectionable on moral, political, military, or other grounds. Using their own criteria of acceptability, today's censors are often more interested in teaching children what to think than how to think. This places them in direct opposition to educators who place critical thinking, imagination, independence, self-worth, and tolerance for diversity at the core of their instruction. When these belief systems clash, educators may face confrontations,

and all too often, attempt to neutralize the situation rather than deal with it.
(Sipe)

Sipe also admits that it may be helpful to differentiate between censorship and selection of instructional materials, “which calls for conscious and deliberate judgment.” Also Joan DeFattore reminds us that it would be misleading to suggest that all textbook (or literature) activism - conservative or liberal - is censorship, “since decisions about what to teach and what not to teach are necessary part of every educational system.” (DeFattore 6) Some material may be too advanced, academically or socially, for students of a particular age. She admits that some degree of selectivity is essential to education, although “advocacy groups will, naturally, try to influence textbook content in directions they consider appropriate.” In her opinion, a certain amount of activism is a part of the normal functioning of an educational system in a nontotalitarian state; “the challenge is to determine the point at which attempts to influence textbook content shade into attempts to censor education.” (DeFattore 7)

This means that the “censorship” discussed in this paper is rather a *textbook* or *literature activism*, which would be a more appropriate term, however, all sources cited here use these terms as interchangeable, because they consider literature activism as a kind of branch of censorship.

Not only textbooks are being in the center of interest of activists or censors; it is mainly the literature available in school libraries or curricula. Teachers in the USA choose materials for children to read and they are responsible for appropriateness of texts according to the age of children and the community they live in. Unfortunately, in spite of all effort some parents still disagree with certain book titles. Sometimes, absurd situations may occur, as the one described in article *The Book Police* by Howard Good, where he depicts a banning attempt at his school. A group of parents did not want their children to read a memoir by Maya Angelou *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*; they complained about sexual passages in the book. The school board retained the book in the curriculum of the tenth grade, offering parents an alternative reading for their children. When Howard Good asked the director of curriculum and instruction why was the particular title included, she told him that Angelou’s book had been chosen, in part, because some parents had criticized the previous summer’s reading list for not including

any books by women or minority authors. “Ironically, the attempt to solve one problem had created another,” says Good.

It is obvious that the reasons for censorship or literature activism vary and it is very difficult and maybe even impossible to please everyone, because each group of activists aims their efforts to a different area. The following pages will describe how the current censorship of literature indicates and who the people behind the challenges are.

“In 1998 more than 100 different books were censored somewhere in the United States. Some were burned, others “challenged” (formally requested to be banned) by parents, politicians and zealots,” writes Liz Langley in her article on censorship of literature for *Orlando Weekly*. She is surprised by the recent increase of book banning in the USA and she is not alone. “Most frequently, books are challenged because they contain curse words or violence, sex, homosexuality, the occult, or rebellious children,” says Suzanne Fisher Staples in her article on censorship in American libraries, and she continues with a brief statistics of the book banning phenomenon:

Banning books has become commonplace in the 1990s. From 1991 to 1994 the number of formal demands for the removal of books from public and school libraries has increased by more than 50 percent. There were as many as 4,500 instances of book challenges last year, and 42 percent of the complainants were successful in having the offending books banned (ALA Office for Intellectual Freedom Data Bank).

In her article *What Johnny Can't Read* for the *ALAN Review* (which is probably an allusion at work by Joan DeFattore on textbook censorship named *What Johnny Shouldn't Read*), Staples also says that the content of the banned books can be scarcely described as pestilent or spoiling:

We're not talking soft porn, racist dreck and subversive witchcraft propaganda. Among the most-banned books are some of the best-loved modern classics. In addition to *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, a list of the ten most-challenged titles for 1994 compiled by the American Library Association includes *Forever* by Judy Blume, the Newbery Award-winning *Bridge to Terabithia* by Katherine Paterson, *The Chocolate War* by Robert Cormier, *Scary Stories To Tell in the Dark*, *More Scary Stories*, and *Scary Stories 3* by Alvin Schwartz, and *The Catcher in the Rye* by J.D. Salinger (ALA).

The updated list of the most-challenged books by ALA – American Library Association (which still contains almost the same authors) can be seen in Appendix No.1 of this paper.

Josh Whelan of the Dallas Unified School District explains the process that takes a book from *challenged* to *removed*:

Any person can request that we pull a book from our shelves on the basis of any complaint. District officials then conduct a public hearing on this important issue at its next meeting. A school's students can attend. We listen to all sides. A vote to remove a book from our libraries or lists means removing it from the entire district system, prohibiting their use in the curriculum and prohibiting students and teachers from having the books on school property. (Quoted in Sipe)

1.1 People demanding censorship

This part of the paper will try to explain who the groups of people that endeavor in removing pieces of classic or popular literature from school libraries are; and what are their main reasons for challenging a book. The attempt of the following pages is to answer these questions and later give an example on one of the most banned novel ever – J. D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye*.

Suzanne Fisher Staples admits that parents challenging books are generally members of either political or religious organizations:

Parents who insist books they disapprove of should be unavailable to all children are not necessarily acting on their own. Political-religious group such as the *Christian Coalition* and *Citizens for Excellence in Education* have circulated lists of books with the aim of removing them from libraries (*People for the American Way*).

This list of “forbidden” literature reminds a very root of censorship and literature activism which is called the *Index*, it is a list of literature put together by Vatican, which gathers titles a good Christian should not (cannot) read. The Church and book banning have a long time history:

Formerly, religion was most frequently-cited reason for the censorship of written works. In 14th century England, for example, reading a specific version of the Bible known as the *Wycliff Bible* — named after the scholar who made the first complete translation of the Bible from Latin to English — was forbidden by the

clergy for fear that the translation had corrupted or misinterpreted the original text. In the 16th century, the Roman Catholic Church placed Machiavelli's *The Prince* on the Index of Prohibited Books in the "banned absolutely" category for its "heretical" content. In more recent times however, literary works are challenged, censored and banned for many different reasons, not merely on religious grounds... (National Coalition Against Censorship at http://www.ncac.org/action_issues/Books.cfm, 29. 1. 2007)

This quotation starts with the word "formerly", but religious groups continue to ban books until now; it ends with "not merely on religious grounds", but mostly the challenges occur when a piece of literature confronts traditional religious values. Other challenges emerge from concern over the negative effects of stereotyping and a desire to right past wrongs; or when a book represents race in a way that is deemed objectionable by certain groups.

Unfortunately, some of these people interested in book challenges do not seem they are familiar with the particular title. They act as if they have only heard about the book's subject matter and did not give it a close look, sometimes they do not even want to give it a close look, because it is a spoiling book. "A number of objectors admitted they had never read the book, but were objecting on the grounds of the book's reputation" (Woods) "Frequently, charges are made by those who take materials out of context, or have not read them completely," says Sipe and describes a phone call from a "concerned citizen" she received while working as a curriculum coordinator. The caller demanded that a particular reading series be removed from the school, even though it had never been adopted or purchased in the district. By questioning the person, she revealed that "the caller had not read it, but the series had been targeted in a *Focus on the Family* publication, eliminating the need – in the caller's mind – for personal investigation." (Sipe) Such people do not even seem to understand that a book presenting a bad example may, conversely, embrace a good example for their children. Staples gives an illustration that, possibly, speaks for all and practically summarizes what was said before:

With few exceptions, literature's best, most important books are believable and compelling because they do contain material that readers may find troubling. Take Katherine Paterson's National Book Award winner, *The Great Gilly Hopkins*, which was banned in school libraries in Albemarle County, Virginia, because it contains curse words and 'takes God's name in vain'. The book is

about a tough-talking, angry foster child who is redeemed by love. The parent who filed the complaint listed the profanities in the book without reading it. The school board convened a panel of educators, who reviewed the book and twice recommended it be kept on the shelves. The school superintendent ordered it removed anyway.

Many parents seem to confuse a book's subject matter with the idea that the author or publisher advocates a particular outlook. For example, a book that contains vulgarity may be seen as one that encourages kids to use bad language. Or a book that portrays a rebellious child is seen as urging children on anti-family behavior. Staples suggests that parents want to protect their children and they feel somehow helpless, having no control over the world that seems "increasingly plagued with hazards" and they see the books available to their children as an area where they can have control. She concludes that children are sometimes underestimated by their parents and that keeping some titles from them makes them want to read them the more:

Parents' attempts to protect their children from books that offend are misguided. For one thing, librarians say the primary effect of keeping kids from reading a book is that they want to read it above all others. Children are tough and discriminating. They hear language far worse than *Gilly Hopkins*' in the halls at school. Kids have eyes finely tuned for the subtle and are more capable of grasping complexity than most adults give them credit for. (Staples)

Joan DeFattore in her book *What Johnny Shouldn't Read* widely discusses the topic of groups of people demanding censorship of literature used at schools and she realizes that "only two major groups thereby qualify as textbook censors: fundamentalists and politically correct extremists." (DeFattore 7) To describe the person she calls "fundamentalist", DeFattore gives an explanation of the key term:

The fundamentalist textbook activists (discussed in this book) are determined to color the education of all students with their entire world view. Their protests therefore target a wide range of subjects, including personal decision making, imagination, conservation, world unity, tolerance for cultural diversity, religious tolerance, negative portrayals of religion, unflattering depictions of the military or the police, empathy toward animals, anti-pollution laws, pacifism, socialism, gun control, nontraditional roles of women, minority issues, and evolution. (DeFattore 4)

She also adds that "because the word fundamentalist means different things to different

people, it is impossible to tell exactly how many fundamentalists there are in the United States”, and says that even if no more than three Americans out of a hundred are fundamentalists “they are effective out of all proportion to their numbers because of their intense dedication to what they see as the salvation of American children from political, social, economic, and spiritual ruin.” (DeFattore 4) Rebeca Bowers Sipe even sees religious organizations as the most aggressive force in organized censorship activity:

Groups such as *Citizens for Excellence in Education*, James Dobson’s *Focus on the Family*, and Phyllis Schlafly’s *Eagle Forum* have provided enormous national support for hundreds of local challenges. Five of the most frequently challenged materials between 1982 and 1993 were subject to both direct-mail and newsletter campaigns by national and state-level religious-right groups. (Sipe)

Author Chris Crutcher writes on his web page about his own experience with religious right groups. “Certain members of the Christian Right don’t like my stories and challenge them on a regular basis,” he says. “They seem to believe that if their kids are kept ignorant, they will be safer.” (Quoted in Hart) However, Sipe admits that the religious right is only one piece of the censorship puzzle.

According to her, less-numerous challenges from the political left also have a “pervasive effect” and she presents a case when *The Cay* by Theodore Taylor, was removed from required reading lists as a result of a 1992 petition filed by a chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), in Simi Valley, California.

1.2 Censorship and *The Catcher in the Rye*

As was already said before, one of the most challenged and banned books ever is novel by J. D. Salinger *The Catcher in the Rye*. “Censorship and *The Catcher in the Rye* are almost synonymous” writes Jack Salzman in his introduction to *New Essays on The Catcher in the Rye* and continues that he is not capable of a record which would mark the “formal beginning of the censors’ attacks on *Catcher*”. However, he assumes that the early reviews of the novel that appeared in periodicals like the *Catholic World* and the *Christian Science Monitor* - “reviews that condemned Salinger for recounting

'immorality and perversion'" - certainly set the tone for the formal censorship "that was not far off". The *Christian Science Monitor* review found *Catcher* unfit "for children to read" and the character of Holden "preposterous, profane, and pathetic beyond belief." The reviewer feared that young readers would imitate the main character, "as too easily happens when immorality and perversion are recounted by writers of talent whose work is countenanced in the name of art or good intention." The *Catholic World* reviewer also criticized Salinger's "excessive use of amateur swearing and coarse language." When parents have read these critics, they took them seriously and wanted the novel to be banned. Salzman gives examples of how the censorship indicated in concrete areas:

In 1960, for example, *Catcher* was removed from the library and the recommended reading list at a high school in San Jose, California. In Louisville, Kentucky, teacher who proposed using Salinger's novel in his tenth-grade class was told that he would not be rehired, and the book was dropped from the reading list. (Salzman 14)

The second example from Louisville corresponds with the next quotation by John Holt in his Introduction to a book *Lives of Children*, where he is describing the teacher's situation in confrontation with the book censorship:

It is bad enough that thousands of teachers all over the country who in their hearts would like to assign, for example, *The Catcher in the Rye*, are afraid to do so. But children might learn a great deal about education and society – much more than is in their civic books – if their teacher said to them, "I know a book that I think you would enjoy and from which you would get a great deal, but I don't dare assign it to you, I don't even dare to tell you its name, for fear that some of your parents, or some people in the community, will kick up such a fuss that I will lose my job – and I can't afford to lose my job." Here might be the foundation for the real curriculum and a great deal of honest talk and true learning. (Holt)

This means that those affected by this type of literature activism are not only the students in the classroom and authors of the banned work, but also the teachers who assign controversial readings or introduce provocative films or artworks to their students. The result of such teacher's trying to make the lessons more attractive to students may be his or hers dismissal. "Administrative disapproval and community sentiment frequently result in educators being placed on indefinite leave, reassigned to a

different position, or altogether ousted from their jobs.”

(http://www.ncac.org/action_issues/Classrooms.cfm, 1.2.2007)

One of common results of this situation is a so called self-censorship of teachers who are under pressure by the external groups. “Some, unable to withstand the personal toll of a censorship attack, allow fear to dictate their decisions, avoiding materials or eliminating issues from the curriculum.” (Sipe)

Another case of book-banning described in *New Essays on The Catcher in the Rye* is from Tulsa, Oklahoma, where “a group of parents insisted on the immediate dismissal of a teacher who had assigned what *Time* magazine in its account of the incident called ‘the most avidly admired novel on modern American campuses’”. The parents complained to the school superintendent that the novel had “filth on nearly every page” and was “not fit to read”. These parents were probably quoting the above mentioned review from the *Christian Science Monitor*. Salzman concludes that after much debate, the teacher was retained, but *Catcher* was removed from the reading list. Although some were not successful, such attacks on *Catcher* continued as far as the end of the year 2004. Full list of challenges can be found in Appendix No. 2 of this paper.

Some of the reasons for removal of the novel were (according to the complainants): The book is “anti white and obscene; blasphemous and undermines morality; unacceptable; immoral; centered around negative activity” and contains “excess vulgar language and sexual scenes; things concerning moral issues; excessive violence, and anything dealing with the occult; profanity and sexual references; contains profanities and depicts premarital sex, alcohol abuse, and prostitution; vulgar words and sexual exploits; contains lurid passages about sex, and statements defamatory to minorities, God, women, and the disabled”. Among the last reasons for challenges were “the use of the 'F' word” and “it is a filthy, filthy book” (this particular objection can be found in Appendix No. 3 of this paper in the first newspaper article).

Joan DeFattore explains why it is important to pay attention to the topic of book banning lawsuits saying: “the reason for focusing on recent federal textbook lawsuits that involve fundamentalist ideology is simple: there is none that does not.” (DeFattore 3)

2) Reception of the novel

Since the novel's publication, critics have argued the moral issues raised by the book and the context in which it is presented. Some have argued that Salinger's novel is "fascinating and enlightening, yet incredibly depressing". The behavior and nature of the novel's main character, Holden Caulfield, serve as the basis for critical argument. "Caulfield's self-destruction over a period of days forces one to contemplate society's attitude toward the human condition." (Lomazoff)

Of course, the majority of praise and criticism regarding any novel or piece of literature will come from published critical reviews. When a novel or any piece of literature is published in the United States, critics from newspapers, magazines, and various other sources gather to interpret the book and critique its style. According to Eric Lomazoff, "one of the most widespread criticisms of *The Catcher in the Rye* deals with the adolescence and repetitive nature of the main character, Holden Caulfield."

Young protagonists of Salinger's stories (such as Holden Caulfield) have made him a longtime favorite of high school and university readers, establishing Salinger as "the spokesman for the goals and values for a generation of youth during the 1950s". (Davis 317) However, *The Catcher in the Rye* has been banned continually from schools, libraries, and bookstores due to its profanity, sexual subject matter, and rejection of some traditional American ideals. "Robert Coles reflected general critical opinion of the author when he called Salinger an original and gifted writer, a marvelous entertainer, a man free of the slogans and clichés the rest of us fall prey to". (Davis 317).

Some critics have argued that Holden's character is "erratic and unreliable", as he possesses "many of the middle-class values that he claims to reject". Later commentators, however, have praised the "wry humor" of the main character, his "technical virtuosity", and the "skilled mockery of verbal speech" by Salinger. (Davis 318) These critics have commented that the structure of the novel personifies Holden's unstable state of mind. Alastair Best remarked: "There is a hard, almost classical structure underneath Holden's rambling narrative. The style, too, appears effortless; yet one wonders how much labor went into those artfully rough-hewn sentences." (Quoted in Davis 318)

A larger field of critics at the time of *The Catcher in the Rye*'s publication in 1951 took a positive view of the novel. For example, *Chicago Tribune* reviewer Paul Engle commented that the story was "emotional without being sentimental, dramatic without being melodramatic, and honest without simply being obscene". He also adds that "the effort has been made to make the text, told by the boy himself, as accurate and yet as imaginative as possible. In this, it largely succeeds". Engle's viewpoint is the one that is echoed by many. *The Catcher in the Rye* is not simply a "coming-of-age novel with usual twists and turns", but rather the "unique story of a unique child". He suggests that it is rare to find a character, actual or fictitious, which is "as dazzling and enticing as Holden Caulfield". As Engle wrote, "The story is engaging and believable . . . full of right observations and sharp insight, and a wonderful sort of grasp of how a boy can create his own world of fantasy and live forms". (Engle 3)

In the July 1951 *Book-of-the-Month Club News* appeared a very positive review by the respected literary critic Clifton Fadiman, including one of the most widely quoted early comments on Holden Caulfield: "That rare miracle of fiction has again come to pass: a human being has been created out of ink, paper, and the imagination."

Generally, critics see the novel as Holden Caulfield's melodramatic struggle to survive in the adult world, "a transition that he was supposed to make during his years at preparatory school". Though considered by most to be a tragedy, *The Catcher in the Rye* is found by some critics to be humorous, witty, and clever, "the use of Chaplin-like incidents serves to keep the story hovering in ambivalence between comedy and tragedy". (Lomazoff)

One of the most popular means by which *The Catcher in the Rye* is critiqued is through the comparison of Holden Caulfield to other literary characters. Holden was already compared to Huckleberry Finn, Hamlet and even to Jesus Christ. Some critics, led by Warren French and his essay *The Age of Salinger*, argue that *Catcher* resembles the whole generation of 1950s which explains novel's popularity. "Holden, of course, no more resembles 'most people' of the 1950s than he does Jesus Christ" polemizes Jack Salzman. (Salzman 13)

Holden-Jesus comparison can be found in the first published monograph devoted to Salinger, *The Fiction of J. D. Salinger*, by Frederick L. Gwynn and Joseph L. Blotner. They claim that the reader must realize that “Holden is a saintly Christian person”. On the other hand, it seems that the authors have found it difficult to explain how they really mean it because they also tell the reader that “there is no need to call Holden a Christ figure”. However, the reader is also told a few lines later that “Jesus and Holden Caulfield truly love their neighbors, especially the poor in goods, appearance, and spirit.” As Jack Salzman writes in his introduction to *New Essays on The Catcher in the Rye*, “the idea of Holden-as-saint was to prove appealing to many critics.”

The novel is more often compared to traditional period literature, particularly Mark Twain’s novel *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. Salzman sums up the main similarities which critics see between the novels: “the colloquial language, the picaresque structure have ‘exciting resemblances’; even the ending of *Catcher* is as artistically weak as that of *Huckleberry Finn*, and as ‘humanly satisfying’”. Robert Davis in *Contemporary Literary Criticism* adds some more examples: “Both works feature naive, adolescent runaways as narrators, both commenting on the problems of their times, and both novels have been recurrently banned or restricted.” Harvey Breit of *The Atlantic Bookshelf* wrote about Holden Caulfield:

(He) struck me as an urban, a transplanted Huck Finn. He has a colloquialism as marked as Huck's . . . Like Huck, Holden is neither comical or misanthrope. He is an observer. Unlike Huck, he makes judgments by the dozen, but these are not to be taken seriously; they are conceits. There is a drollery, too, that is common to both, and a quality of seeing that creates farce. (Breit 82)

It would be possible to do an entire character study comparing Holden and Huck. Both are adolescents, runaways from society, seeking independence and stability in their lives.

Another character that Holden Caulfield is compared to, though to a lesser degree than Huck Finn, is Hamlet. Like Hamlet, as Charles Kegel wrote, Holden is a “sad, screwed-up guy, bothered by words which only seem true, but are really quite phony.” (Kegel 54) Eric Lomazoff adds:

The honesty and sincerity that Holden cannot seem to find in others he tries to maintain within himself. Holden often makes a point of using the word “really” to assert the fact that something is really so, to prove to the reader that had not become a phony himself. Holden is distressed often by the occasional realization that he too, must be phony to exist in the adult world. With regard to the insincere “Glad to’ve met you” formula, he (Holden) comments that “if you want to stay alive, you have to say that stuff, though. (quoted in *The Catcher in the Rye*, 54-5)

It is evident by studying the reviews of *The Catcher in the Rye* that most critics enjoy picking apart the character of Holden Caulfield, studying his every action and the basis for that action. Reviewers of the novel have gone to great lengths to express their opinions on Salinger’s protagonist. Some consider Holden to be sympathetic, others consider him arrogant, but the large majority of them find him absolutely entertaining. Behrman found Holden to be very self-critical, as he often refers to himself as “a terrible liar, a madman, and a moron”. Holden is driven crazy by phoniness, an idea “under which he lumps insincerity, snobbery, injustice, callousness, and a lot more”. He is “a prodigious worrier, and someone who is moved to pity quite often”. Behrman wrote:

Grown men sometimes find the emblazoned obscenities of life too much for them, and leave this world indecorously, so the fact that a 16-year old boy is overwhelmed should not be surprising. (Behrman 75)

Another topic discussed by critics of *The Catcher in the Rye* is Holden’s inability of communication. Eric Lomazoff suggests that one of the most intriguing points in Holden’s character, related to his extended inability to communicate, is Holden’s intention to become a deaf-mute. “So repulsed is he by the phoniness around him that he wishes not to communicate with anyone, and in a passage filled with personal insight he contemplates a retreat within himself.” Charles Kegel mentions that Holden’s inability to communicate with others is also represented symbolically in the uncompleted phone calls and undelivered messages which appear throughout the novel. “On fifteen separate occasions, Holden gets the urge to communicate by phone, yet only four phone calls are ever completed, and even those are with unfortunate results.” (Kegel 54)

However, one must remember that the story was written in a different time and if it was published today, the novel would probably not be such famous for its profane language and controversy. The field where it will definitely succeed again and again would be an insight into an adolescent soul with the help of Holden's character.

If originally published today, the novel would probably create little publicity and garner only average book sales. The fact that a novel of such radical social opinion and observation was written in a time of conservatism in America made it all the more controversial. (Lomazoff)

Some critics "scolded" the novel as being too pessimistic or obscene, too rough for the society of the 1950s. On the other hand, some argued that Salinger's concerns represented an entire generation of American youth, frustrated by the phoniness of the world, just like Holden was.

2.1 Readers

We can only guess what the reactions by then-readers were when we do not take in consideration the critics and reviews, but as the novel is widely read and popular among young readers until now, it is more than possible that they share the same opinion on the novel. In her Czech review of the novel Nikoleta Zdražilová writes, that each new generation lives through its own feelings of disappointment and claims its own literature of discontent. For many Americans growing up in the 1950s, *The Catcher in the Rye* appears to be the purest extract of the feeling of discontent with the world. Those Americans who grew up later, also read Salinger's novel, but they have their own versions of the story, with other tastes of the world disappointment. *The Catcher in the Rye* is continually transformed again and again by each new generation, and that makes the novel a literal genre of itself. (Zdražilová)

It is interesting to read the young reader's views on such "controversial" novels as *The Catcher in the Rye* are. In fact, they disagree with some of their parents' attempts to protect them from this kind of literature. Here are four opinions of students collected by Melissa Hart in her article *Attract Teen Readers with an Edgy Plot* in the *Writer* magazine. The first student notices that children are aware of the cruel reality of the world.

I love the more edgy novels because they aren't afraid to deal with the issues that some authors won't write about. They show you what is really going on and aren't afraid to say that it is a violent, cruel world, no matter how much we try to make it go away. - Kelly Finnerty, 11th grade

The second student's opinion is that books teach children to decide themselves, deal with controversial issues, and form their own opinion on problems of the society.

Young-adult novels that explore sensitive themes such as violence, drugs and rape are vital to the education and understanding of young adults. I eased into the real world with the help of books; the real world, where your parents don't protect you and you have to be cautious about these things because no one is standing there telling you what's right and what's wrong. - Sarah Shubin, 11th grade

Following student appreciates that there are novels aimed toward her age group and thinks that reading about important issues from a book is the best way to learn about them.

I like the fact that there are certain novels out there that are geared toward my age group and that there are a variety of these novels to choose from. They teach about important issues through a story, which is often the best way of learning. - Caitlyn Masse, 12th grade

Finally, the last student reminds adults that children are exposed to the same problems as adults are.

I think a lot of adults forget that, though we are younger, it doesn't mean we aren't exposed to the same things an adult is. I know a couple of people who have been raped, a good few that are pregnant now, many on drugs, and more who are sexually active. Books for young adults should reflect this. - Manisha Sethi, 12th grade

Melissa Hart says that many of her high school students are fond of *Catcher*. Even in her mid-30s, she rereads the novel once a year "for fresh insight and a rich, well-told story." She adds that "in fact, it could be argued that Salinger's story, with its plethora of curse words and the protagonist's mental illness, was the original edgy young-adult novel." However, she thinks that "more importantly, the book set a

precedent for authors respecting the intelligence of their readers, no matter how young.”
(Melissa Hart)

Reactions of Czech readers were similar to those of readers from different countries; they were charmed by the main character of the novel, Holden Caulfield. The book was first published in the Czech Republic in 1960 and it was translated by Luba and Rudolf Pellarovi as *Kdo chytá v žitě*. The novel was not found controversial by the Czech audience, because its translation was rather mild in the use of offensive language in comparison with the original text.

Veronika Kucharská in her paper about translation of *The Catcher in the Rye* writes that the question of selection of Czech vulgarisms is wider and it is related to the long term general trend of Czech translations of literature and movies. Because of this trend, the Czech translations ended up milder; as if Czech readers were not able to digest such level of vulgarity as appeared in the original text. Owing to these mild translations, Czech readers often do not understand the uproar that was caused by some novels in the USA. To some extent, Kucharská senses this tendency also in *Kdo chytá v žitě*. However, she assumes that with a view on the period when the translation originated, translators ventured a lot in this aspect. In case of this particular novel and literature translated before 1990, there is no reason to correct translators who soften up a translation in some way in concern of the book's publishing. (Kucharská)

Viktor Šlajchrt adds that it was typical for communist government to suppress such texts. At least, they were modified, so that the characters appeared more as a youth-movement-style ideal. For such arrangements a little was enough – the inner sincerity of characters, the need of freedom and instinctive disgust to hypocrisy – all of this ended up as an anticommunist propaganda. (Šlajchrt) Especially, the topic of hypocrisy was understood as anticommunistic, because in this era, people were often forced to say something different from what they were actually thinking, and their reasons for such behavior varied. This was also the reason for censorship of Salinger's novel in Czech translation. Igor Hájek in his introduction to the book by Jan Culik about Czech literature in exile publishing houses writes that the release of the novel *Zbabělci* by Josef Škvorecký served as a pretence for introduction of long prepared steps that should eliminate all attempts for moderate liberalization from the late 1950s. A

campaign lead by the communist headquarters started together with the banning of the book. A wide-ranging purge took place in the whole cultural area; almost all domains were included, from publishing houses to the film industry. Publishers had to withdraw many publications, the Czech translation of Salinger's novel *The Catcher in the Rye* was one of them. (Hájek) The novel was finally published in 1960. This means that in the Czech Republic, *Catcher* had problems with censorship as well, but it was a different kind of censorship and it was related solely to the communist era.

According to Zdražilová, people in the Czech Republic read *Catcher* for the first time when they are about fourteen years old, because their parents or teachers give them the book to read, because they were given the book to read themselves by somebody else when they were fourteen. In other words, the book is getting new readers by adults who have read it as teenagers and now they pass it to their children; that is the secret of endless popularity of the novel. (Zdražilová)

3) Mystery of the book

The Catcher in the Rye has been covered with controversy since its publication. Reasons for banning have been not only the use of offensive language, premarital sex, alcohol abuse, and prostitution, but also the mystery around the murder of John Lennon and the conspiracy theory connected to this crime.

Some censors think that the book is dangerous because of its main character, Holden Caulfield, who is in their eyes a self-destructive liar and madman that ends in an asylum. They are afraid that some of his deeds may spoil their children when reading the book to either kill someone or go crazy. However, such approach can also be applied to many TV programs, videogames, song lyrics etc., and it is rather speculative whether the above named media can influence behavior of young people or not.

This fear of “homicidal” influence of the book has its roots in two famous assassinations which were caused by murderers claiming to be influenced by the novel. The very first was assassination of a singer John Lennon by Mark David Chapman and the second one was assassination of President Ronald Reagan by John Hinckley Jr. Both of them insisted that their defense is in the book. Specifically, Chapman claimed that “the reading of the book would be his defense” for the murder and Hinckley said “if you want my defense, all you have to do is read *The Catcher in the Rye*. It seemed to be time to read it again.” (Quoted in Whitfield) On the other hand, it might be just a pose by Hinckley, because much more than by *Catcher* he was obsessed by actress Jodie Foster, but that is a different story. There is a forum on the internet dealing with this topic in connection with *The Catcher in the Rye* and provided here is one of the posts where its author agrees with some degree of bad influence of the novel:

I think for a mind that is already on the verge of homicidal activities, *The Catcher in the Rye* could definitely influence them. The protagonist is an anti-hero, extremely flawed, who feels outside of society and thinks that everyone around him is phony and therefore not worthy of his respect. He really did strike me as someone who had a homicidal/suicidal mindset to begin with. So, the book does not kill. The killers merely identified with the story and feelings of the protagonist.

(Author: SerenitysRiver, Oct 6 2005, 02:57 AM at <http://www.unexplained-mysteries.com/forum/lofiversion/index.php/t52364.html>, viewed on 2.9.2006)

Critics see Holden as a disturbing influence on youths who they consider to be “social outcasts.” Holden Caulfield is portrayed as an adolescent who rejects and is rejected by many peers and individuals. People like Mark Chapman come to relate themselves to Holden, the person that nobody understands, that cannot understand anybody else and sees “phonies” in most of the people.

So called “phoniness”, as Holden calls a certain type of behavior of people around him, is one of the major themes of the novel. Some critics add to this topic that Holden “feels surrounded by dishonesty and false pretenses”, and throughout the book is frequently “picking out the *phonies* he sees around him”.

This absolute hatred of the phoniness is probably the main reason for Holden’s communication difficulty. “And he finds that phoniness, that hypocrisy, not only in the world of his personal contacts but in the world of art as well.” (Hamilton)

For example, when Ernie plays piano at his nightclub in Greenwich Village, or when Holden’s older brother D.B. writes screenplays for Hollywood, or when various actors compromise their talents to please an audience, Holden cannot stand it. These adult manipulations are, for him, the same as prostitution. According to him, the artists have sold out; for money or fame or just for applause. Nor can he tolerate what he sees as emotional manipulations in literature. Romance magazines with “lean-jawed guys named David” and “a lot of phony girls named Linda or Marcia” usually set Holden to “puking,” although he does sometimes read them on the train. So do most movies, especially sentimental war movies. (Quotations from *The Catcher in the Rye*, 8)

“Holden used the word ‘phony’ forty four times to cover up all manifestations of idioms, hypocrisy, and reasoning that made him want to *puke*.” (Hamilton)

On the other hand, “there is evidence that Holden exhibits much of the same *phoniness* he denounces in others.” (Hamilton) Holden also pretends, lies, and makes irrational and contradictory assumptions to mask his feelings and actions from others, which further alienates him from society.

However, many others say that this is a misinterpretation of Holden’s use of “phoniness”, and although he lies and shows other flaws, he does not belong to that group of people. Jack Salzman contemplates this topic, defending Holden’s honesty:

Possibly, the “phoniness” is about not being honest with yourself about your feelings of pain and disappointment. Holden’s “phonies” rarely give the impression of admitting their flaws and insecurities, and this could be what he has in mind when he labels them as such. By contrast, he is honest with himself, and the reader, throughout the book. (Salzman 17)

3.1 The conspiracy theory

According to many sources, Mark David Chapman, murderer of musician John Lennon, was carrying the book when he was arrested immediately after the murder. He even referred to it in his statement to police shortly thereafter.

BBC’s report to this day says that John Lennon was shot five times to his back in front of the New York apartment house Dakota. It was on December 8, 1980, Lennon was 40 years old. To read the whole report, see Appendix No 4. Here is a description of the situation from other source, confirming that Chapman was reading the book just a moment after the murder:

A few yards away a pudgy young man stood eerily still, peering down into a paperback book. Moments earlier he had dropped into a military firing stance - legs spread for maximum balance, two hands gripping his 38 revolver to steady his aim - and blown away the very best Beatle. Now he leafed lazily through the pages of the one novel even the most chronically stoned and voided-out ninth grader will actually read, J. D. Salinger’s *Catcher in the Rye*.

The Dakota doorman shouted at the shooter, Mark David Chapman, “Do you know what you’ve done?”

“I just shot John Lennon,” Chapman replied, accurately enough.

(<http://www.john-lennon.com/theassassinationofjl.htm>, 22. 12. 2006)

Chapman claimed that he was forced to murder by a voice in his head telling him: “Do it. Do it.” Unable to find a better version, media announced that rational motive for the assassination was a desire for fame. “Chapman did it for the attention - the troublesome American preoccupation with grabbing that elusive fifteen minutes of fame.” (Quoted in Bresler)

British lawyer and journalist Fenton Bresler in his book *Who killed John Lennon?* speculates that John Lennon’s murder might be a conspiracy and that Mark David Chapman was programmed to kill. He says, “Chapman was a brainwashed hitman carrying out someone else’s contract.” Bresler begins by questioning the “lone

nut” theory. Since 1835, 15 men and 2 women have attacked “nationally prominent political leaders in sixteen separate incidents.” Of those 17, only 3 have been ruled insane by law. Mark David Chapman was never found to be legally insane. “The ‘lone nut’ theory simply does not stand up as an all-embracing explanation covering all - or even most - instances of American political assassination.”

Arthur O’Connor, the detective who spent more time with Chapman immediately following the murder than anyone else was speaking to Bresler (and publicly for the first time), offering his view of the situation:

It is definitely illogical to say that Mark committed the murder to make himself famous. He did not want to talk to the press from the very start. It’s possible Mark could have been used by somebody. I saw him the night of the murder. I studied him intensely. He looked as if he could have been programmed.

Bresler speculates that Chapman was a so called “Manchurian Candidate”, brainwashed and pre-programmed to kill on command. When the moment had arrived, Chapman received his signal and performed his task.

During a December 1971 rally at the University of Michigan, undercover FBI agents recorded remarks made by Lennon and others. This is only one case of many that were all pointing out to a consistent governmental spying upon Lennon. Under the Freedom of Information Act, Bresler obtained U.S. government files on Lennon. The files show that Lennon was under constant government surveillance, especially during the years 1971-1972. Bresler offers the possibility that Lennon was assassinated on the government’s order:

Lennon, the politically most active rock star of his generation, was shot dead outside his own home by a killer who was merely a tool, a human gun used and controlled by others to destroy a uniquely powerful radical figure who was likely to prove a rallying point for mass opposition to the policies soon to be implemented... by the new United States government headed by Ronald Reagan.

Although there is thick evidence about John Lennon being spied by FBI, there is just a little evidence contributing to the conspiracy theory. Bresler quotes the late radio journalist Mae Brussell, who broke the Watergate story two months before the

Woodward-Bernstein expose. Brussell had no doubts about the conspiracy and the government involvement:

It was a conspiracy. Reagan had just won the election. They knew what kind of president he was going to be. There was only one man who could bring out a million people on demonstration in protest at his policies - and that was Lennon.

Great effort was made to blot out traces and evidence. One of the proofs supporting the conspiracy theory is a fly ticket from Hawaii to New York departing December 5:

Chapman had actually purchased a Hawaii-Chicago ticket to depart December 2, with no connecting flight. The ticket found after his arrest had apparently been altered. None of his friends knew that he traveled on to New York. They thought he went to Chicago for a three-day stay.
(<http://www.john-lennon.com/theassassinationofjl.htm>, 22. 12. 2006)

Chapman's friends and wife thought he went to visit his family in Chicago; instead, he went to a bookshop in New York and bought a copy of J. D Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* which he had forgotten back in Hawaii. This book is part of the conspiracy theory as well, because it was this particular novel that Mark Chapman was reading immediately after the murder of John Lennon. Fenton Bresler thinks that this book might be some kind of a starting mechanism in Chapman's brain. Another proof supporting this theory was fact that Chapman has read the book for the first time not a long time before the murder, and became obsessed by the book nearly instantly:

Notwithstanding Chapman's announcement months after the murder that he "killed Lennon to gain prominence to promote the reading of *The Catcher in the Rye*," Chapman never exhibited strong feelings about the novel until shortly before the shooting. (<http://www.john-lennon.com/theassassinationofjl.htm>, 22. 12. 2006)

In January 1981, Chapman got an idea. He would use the trial to promote *The Catcher in the Rye*. He told psychologist Milton Kline: "Everybody's going to be reading this book with the help of the God-almighty media. They'll have to come out with a deluxe edition!" (Quoted at <http://www.crimelibrary.com>, 28. 10. 2006)

He planned to sit and read the book during his trial and from time to time jump up and shout: "Read *The Catcher in the Rye*! Read *The Catcher in the Rye*!" He eagerly

autographed copies of the book that his guards brought to him. This Chapman's "promotion" may be one of the reasons why parents do not like to see their children reading the novel. Although they claim the book is obscene and vulgar, their major fear might be of what may be hidden inside, the signal to go and kill someone. Of course, even if this was true, one has to be *programmed* first to respond it.

As was already said, Chapman declared that as he passed John Lennon before the murder he have heard a voice in his head telling him "do it, do it" all the time. There was something about these voices in his head, because two weeks before he was due to go to trial he called Jonathan Marks, his new lawyer. He said he suddenly realized that God wanted him to plead guilty:

As he was ready to go to trial and his diligent public defender was winding up six months spent assembling Chapman's defense, the accused killer suddenly decided to change his plea to guilty. His lawyer was perplexed and more than a little perturbed. But Chapman was determined. He said he was acting on instructions from a "small male voice" that spoke to him in his cell. Chapman interpreted it as the voice of God. (Bresler)

Whether the conspiracy theory is true or not, it definitely influenced the public profile of the novel. It was just another negative attribute and a weapon in censor's hand.

4) Holden versus his censors

It seems that the controversial issues around the novel have brought it much more popularity than the book has gained itself.

Oddly, this book never made it to number one in the New York Times bestseller list. However, it does have the distinction of receiving, according to the American Library Association, “the most attempts at being banned, with most critics objecting to profane language in the book.” (Whitfield 598)

According to Suzanne Fisher Staples, “most frequently, books are challenged because they contain curse words or violence, sex, homosexuality, the occult or rebellious children.” As was previously mentioned, another – and maybe the most important – reason is that it, so called, “takes God’s name in vain”. In spite of the fact that this may sound odd and old-fashioned, it is a legitimate reason to challenge a book in the United States.

Provided here is a more detailed list of challenges as reported to or recorded by the Office for Intellectual Freedom between 1990 and 2000. It is worth mentioning that the number of challenges and the number of reasons for those challenges do not match, because works are often challenged on more than one ground.

Of the 6,364 challenges: 1,607 were challenges to “sexually explicit” material (up 161 since 1999); 1,427 to material considered to use “offensive language” (up 165 since 1999); 1,256 to material considered “unsuited to age group” (up 89 since 1999); 842 to material with an “occult theme or promoting the occult or Satanism” (up 69 since 1999); 737 to material considered to be “violent” (up 107 since 1999); 515 to material with a homosexual theme or “promoting homosexuality” (up 18 since 1999) and 419 to material “promoting a religious viewpoint” (up 22 since 1999). Other reasons for challenges included “nudity” (317 challenges, up 20 since 1999), “racism” (267 challenges, up 22 since 1999), “sex education” (224 challenges, up 7 since 1999), and “anti-family” (202 challenges, up 9 since 1999).

Eric Lomazoff lists the concrete subjects to censorship as appear in *The Catcher in the Rye*:

Salinger's portrayal of Holden, which includes incidents of depression, nervous breakdown, impulsive spending, sexual exploration, vulgarity, and other erratic behavior, have all attributed to the controversial nature of the novel.

The attempt of the following confrontation of Holden's quotes with the "favorite topics for censorship" is to show that censors sometimes do not read between the lines and have only a flat vision. These lines look controversial only at the first sight, but when a reader takes time to somehow digest the information, the final message is positive. Such system can be, possibly, applied to the whole book.

(Note: There is a list of characters and their connections to Holden in Appendix No. 5 for better orientation in quotations.)

One of the topics that Holden often deals with is the religion; he asks questions and he tries to find some advice for himself in the stories from the Bible. He is not just a passive sheep in a herd that only absorbs sermons without thinking about it. Most of the teachers would appreciate this kind of approach of their student, but not most of the preachers.

As was already mentioned, the early reviews of *Catcher* that appeared in periodicals the *Catholic World* and the *Christian Science Monitor* set the tone for the censorship. Religious organizations do not approve books debating God and religion itself. Joan DeFattore gives few examples of how fundamentalist textbook activists approach topics discussed in literature and textbooks:

At its extreme, fundamentalist textbook activism is based on the premise that the act of creative thinking is evil in itself, regardless of content, because it might lead to thoughts that are displeasing to God. (...) Pollution is a humanist myth promoting international cooperation, which could lead to the world unity and thus to the reign of the Antichrist, which will signal the end of the world. Conservation is an act of human pride and an offense against God. Humans have no business worrying about the extinction of whales; if God wants whales to exist, they will exist. If not, then preserving them is and act of rebellion against God. (DeFattore 6)

Shocking as it may be, such arguments are used by fundamentalist groups to defend their book challenges and to explain what they protect their children from.

Here are some of Holden's quotes that might be a reason for banning the book by religious organizations; again, if a reader gives it a closer look, he/she will *possibly* not find anything untrue or immoral. The problem with the following paragraph would be, probably, Holden calling himself an atheist:

I can't always pray when I feel like it. In the first place, I'm sort of an atheist. I like Jesus and all, but I don't care too much for most of the other stuff in the Bible. Take the Disciples, for instance. They annoy the hell out of me, if you want to know the truth. They were all right after Jesus was dead and all, but while He was alive, they were about as much use to Him as a hole in the head. All they did was keep letting Him down. (*The Catcher in the Rye*, 99)

However, Holden admits that he likes Jesus, and he demonstrates wide knowledge of the Bible during the novel. This means that he had gone through a Sunday school or some similar type of education. The problem is that Holden has his own way how to interpret the gospels:

I like almost anybody in the Bible better than the Disciples. If you want to know the truth, the guy I like best in the Bible, next to Jesus, was that lunatic and all, that lived in the tombs and kept cutting himself with stones. I like him ten times as much as the Disciples, that poor bastard. (*The Catcher in the Rye*, 99)

Holden Caulfield is the good boy that invites nuns for a coffee and friendly conversation, but on the other hand he dislikes being asked by people whether he is Catholic or not. This is his explanation why:

The thing was, you could tell by the way he asked me that he was trying to find out if I was a Catholic. He really was. Not that he was prejudiced or anything, but he just wanted to know. He was enjoying the conversation about tennis and all, but you could tell he would've enjoyed it *more* if I was a Catholic and all. That kind of stuff drives me crazy. (...) I'm not saying I *blame* Catholics. I don't. I'd be the same way, probably, if I was a Catholic. (*The Catcher in the Rye*, 112-113)

Radio City Music Hall with its Christmas show, the Rockettes, and the sentimental war movie, symbolizes much of what Holden despises about inauthentic art that "panders" to the audience. Holden sees nothing religious or beautiful about the stage show.

It's supposed to be religious as hell, I know, and very pretty and all, but I can't see anything religious or pretty, for God's sake, about a bunch of actors carrying crucifixes all over the stage. When they were all finished and started going out the boxes again, you could tell they could hardly wait to get a cigarette or something. (*The Catcher in the Rye*, 137)

The legendary Rockettes' chorus line leaves Holden cold. The movie is worse, because it manipulates the audience into a "sentimental glorification of war and the military", which Holden despises. (Hamilton) Anyway, his friend Sally Hayes loved the Christmas show and Holden contemplates the idea of what would Jesus think about it.

I saw it with old Sally Hayes the year before, and she kept saying how beautiful it was, the costumes and all. I said old Jesus probably would've puked if He could see it – all those fancy costumes and all. Sally said I was a sacrilegious atheist. I probably am. The thing Jesus *really* would've liked would be the guy that plays the kettle drums in the orchestra. (...) (*The Catcher in the Rye*, 137-138)

Holden agreeing with the fact that he is a "sacrilegious atheist" was the imaginary last drop for some members of religious groups. In 1991 Concerned Citizens of Florida challenged *The Catcher in the Rye*. They believed the book was anti-Christian. They did not agree with the profanity, vulgarity, or the references to suicide. Their effort to ban *Catcher* from a library in Leesburg, Florida was in vain. The review committee for this book voted that the book should stay in the library.

(<http://www.cliffsnotes.com/WileyCDA/LitNote/id-53,pageNum-6.html>, 29.1.2007)

According to National Coalition Against Censorship, the conflict arises when traditional religious values are challenged or confronted in an unorthodox manner.

Artists struggle with their beliefs and may manifest their struggles and questions visually in order to explore their fears, the dogma, and the contradictions. They ask questions, provoke thought, and sometimes incite more conservative representatives of a religious tradition to heated protest.
(http://www.ncac.org/action_issues/Religion.cfm, 1.2.2007)

Other "favorite topics for censorship" to be briefly discussed here are – suicide, homicide, alcohol abuse, prostitution and depression. The topic of language and vulgarity of the novel will have its own chapter 4.1 at the end of this part of the paper.

There are references to suicide in the book. Holden tells a story of a schoolmate that jumped out of the window and once even himself gets so much depressed that he contemplates to end his own life, but he changes his mind and that is important. Many teenagers get into such a state of mind that they think of committing suicide. They feel desperate and do not know which way to choose, but finally, most of them find a reason to stay alive and so does Holden, in his own original way.

What I really felt like, though, was committing suicide. I felt like jumping out of the window. I probably would've done it, too, if I'd been sure somebody'd cover me up as soon as I landed. I didn't want a bunch of stupid rubbernecks looking at me when I was all glory. (*The Catcher in the Rye*, 104)

In this excerpt, Holden is thinking of suicide after he was beaten by Maurice, a pimp he met on a hotel elevator, who arranged a date with prostitute for him. Holden is then fancying how he would repay this to Maurice. According to censors, this is possibly the part of the book all real murderers may relate to. However, it is more than certain that Holden is only boasting and would not kill anyone at all:

As soon as old Maurice opened the doors, he'd see me with the automatic in my hand and he'd start screaming at me, in this very high-pitched, yellow-belly voice, to leave him alone. But I'd plug him anyway. Six shots right through his fat hairy belly. Then I'd throw my automatic down the elevator shaft – after I'd wiped off all the finger prints and all. (*The Catcher in the Rye*, 104)

Later in the novel, Holden wants to kill one more person, an anonymous lout who had written “Fuck you” on the wall of his little sister’s school. This quotation affirms that Holden would not be capable of committing a murder, even if he was really angry.

I kept wanting to kill whoever'd written it. (“*Fuck you*” on the wall) I figured it was some perverty bum that'd sneaked in the school late at night to take a leak or something and then wrote it on the wall. I kept picturing myself catching him at it, and how I'd smash his head on the stone steps till he was good and goddam dead and bloody. But I knew, too, I wouldn't have the guts to do it. I knew that. That made me even more depressed. (*The Catcher in the Rye*, 201)

Alcohol abuse was also one of the reasons for challenges; however, it seems to be just a guise for enlarging the list of reasons for the challenges. Holden is described as a boy

who already has some grey hair and looks older than his age. He is aware of this and tries to use it as an advantage to order alcohol time after time, but waiters do not let fool themselves and Holden end up with a glass of Coke.

The bar was closing up for the night, so I bought them all two drinks apiece quick before it closed, and I ordered two more Cokes for myself. The goddam table was lousy with glasses. The ugly one, Laverne, kept kidding me because I was only drinking Cokes. (*The Catcher in the Rye*, 74)

Prostitution in Holden's eyes is a sad way to make money. He is talked into order a prostitute on his hotel room, but then, upon her arrival, Holden feels rather depressed when he sees the girl that might be of his age getting undressed, and he tries to start a conversation with her instead.

"Ya got a watch on ya?" she asked me again, and then she stood up and pulled her dress over her head. I certainly felt peculiar when she did that. I mean she did it so *sudden* and all. I know you're supposed to feel pretty sexy when somebody gets up and pulls their dress over their head, but I didn't. Sexy was about the *last* thing I was feeling. I felt much more depressed than sexy. (*The Catcher in the Rye*, 94-95)

All these incidents lead Holden to the state of absolute depression and exhaustion which finally get him into an asylum. He says that he keeps on talking to his dead brother Allie, when he gets very depressed.

It was getting daylight outside. Boy, I felt miserable. I felt so depressed, you can't imagine. What I did, I started talking, sort of out loud, to Allie (*Holden's dead younger brother*). I do that sometimes when I get very depressed. (...) So once in a while, now, when I get very depressed, I keep saying to him, "Okay. Go home and get your bike and meet me in front of Bobby's house. Hurry up." It wasn't that I didn't use to take him with me when I went somewhere. I did. But that one day, I didn't. He didn't get sore about it – he never got sore about anything – but I keep thinking about it anyway, when I get very depressed. (*The Catcher in the Rye*, 98-99)

Rosemary Hamilton says that this is the point when the reader begins to add it together. "The story is suddenly no longer the series of amusing incidents happening to an incisive misfit - it becomes the tragedy of the fall off the cliff into adulthood." (Hamilton)

When I finally got down off the radiator and went out to the hat-check room, I was crying and all. I don't know why, but I was. I guess it was because I was feeling so damn depressed and lonesome. (*The Catcher in the Rye*, 153)

J.D. Salinger has never commented on the novel and its intended meanings, therefore, interpretations are fractured and vary from reader to reader. However, there are certainly a few themes which are discussed in the book that may be found objectionable by certain groups; it is what Salinger actually meant that is under contention.

4.1 The language of the novel

Reviewer James Stern of the *New York Times* critiqued Salinger's novel by incorporating Holden's style of speech into his review. Stern tried to imitate Holden by using short, incomplete sentences with undeveloped ideas:

That's the way it sounds to me, Hel said (a friend of the author), and away she went with this crazy book, *The Catcher in the Rye*. What did I tell ya, she said the next day. This Salinger, he's a short story guy. And he knows how to write about kids. This book, though, it's too long. Gets kinds of monotonous. And he should have cut out a lot about these jerks and all at that crumby school. They depress me. They really do. Salinger, he's best with real children. I mean the ones like Phoebe, his kid sister. She's a personality. Holden and little Phoebe, Hel said, they kill me. This last part about her and this Mr. Antolini, the only guy Holden ever thought he could trust, who ever took any interest in him, and who turned out queer – that's terrific. I swear it is. (Stern)

Stern's goal in this review was to critique the novel for its length and its melancholy nature. He saw *The Catcher in the Rye* as being too depressive to be of any "redeeming value" to the reader. Stern did praise him, however, when he commented on Salinger's ability to write about children. Just to explain, other short stories by Salinger, such as *A Perfect Day for Bananafish* and *Franny and Zooey*, are also based around children and adolescents.

Donald P. Costello in his article for *American Speech* holds opinion that "a study of the language of J. D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* can be justified not only on the basis of literary interest, but also on the basis of linguistic significance." Costello

mentions *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, which is according to him not only a great work of literary art, but also a valuable study in 1884 dialect, and says:

In coming decades, *The Catcher in the Rye* will be studied, I feel, not only as a literary work, but also as an example of teenage vernacular in the 1950s. As such, the book will be significant historical record of a type of speech rarely made available in permanent form. Its linguistic importance will increase as the American speech it records becomes less current.

Costello also adds that “most of the critics who looked at *The Catcher in the Rye* in the time of its publication thought that its language was true and authentic rendering of teenage colloquial speech.” The only two periodicals that denied the authenticity of the book’s language were the *Catholic World* and the *Christian Science Monitor*, but - as Costello presents - “both of these are religious journals which refused to believe that the ‘obscenity’ was realistic.”

Jack Salzman points out that, by 1954, *Catcher* could be purchased in translation in Denmark, Germany, France, Israel, Italy, Japan, Sweden, Switzerland, and the Netherlands. That international popularity is especially interesting considering the novel’s dependence on the vernacular.

As already mentioned, reputed vulgarity of the novel is one of the main topics of its censors, but apart from frequent curse words, there is only one *truly* vulgar word in the novel and it is used four times in a rather moral way. Here is an example to make this clear:

Somebody’d written “Fuck you” on the wall. It drove me damn near crazy. I thought how Phoebe and all the other little kids would see it, and how they’d wonder what the hell it meant, and then finally some dirty kid would tell them - all cockeyed, naturally - what it meant, and how they’d all *think* about it and maybe even *worry* about it for a couple of days. (*The Catcher in the Rye*, 201)

From reading of this quotation, it is clear that the F-word is not used by the main character himself, but some anonymous lout. Later in the novel, Holden even tells that he would like to erase all of these signs from the world, but he desperately adds: “It’s hopeless, anyway. If you had a million years to do it in, you couldn’t rub even *half* of the “Fuck you” signs in the world. It’s impossible.” (*The Catcher in the Rye*, 202) The

possible “true” meaning of the F-word is discussed by Joyce Rowe in her essay *Holden Caulfield and American Protest*:

In Holden’s postwar lexicon, America and the world are interchangeable terms. And American global hegemony is given its due in the “Fuck you” expletives which Holden sees as an ineluctable blight spreading through space and time – from the walls of his sister’s school, to the tomb of the Egyptian mummies at the Metropolitan Museum, to his own future gravestone. (Rowe, 79)

The F-word was not used by Holden himself; however, his speech is not flawless. He uses many rude and rough expressions. Rosemary Hamilton offers an explanation that “Holden’s swearing is so habitual, so unintentional, so ritualistic that it takes on a quality of innocence” and “his profanity is so much ingrained by habit into the fabric of his speech that he is wholly unaware of how rough his language is.” The truth is, when you read the book, you stop to perceive the vulgarisms, because they are so common in Holden’s speech that they lose their power after a few pages. Here, as a summary, is one more opinion on the topic of vulgarity in this particular example from the novel, recalling again that censors often do not bother to read the novel and understand the context:

Because the word *fuck* appears four times in the novel, *Catcher* has been countless times condemned as obscene by individuals or groups seeking to have it censored or removed from public schools or libraries. Rarely is there any evidence that the self-appointed guardians of virtue initiating these demands have read the entire novel to learn the context in which the word appears. The whole effort in itself only serves to confirm Holden’s cheerless perception that people only notice what they wish; at the same time it provides a depressing example of people’s not recognizing an ally when one appears. Instead of condemning the novelist for using profane language, those concerned should come to the defense of the quixotic hero who tries to rid the world of such outrages and their perpetrators. (<http://www.wahlbrinck.de>)

Conclusion

It is sad enough that books are being censored even these days. One of the latest cases of the book censorship that even an uninterested observer could notice, were international actions (including book-burning) against Dan Brown's novel *The Da Vinci Code*, which was first published in 2003. Most of all, it was a great advertisement for the novel, bringing it the worldwide popularity, but on the other hand it pointed to a problem of censorship and its magnifying range from textbooks over literature for youth to adult literature. The film adaptation which was released in 2006 was, again, a target for censors – some cinemas refused to show the movie. Some governments also tried to officially ban the movie.

Author Judy Blume, who has seen several of her books for young people removed from library shelves says who the real losers of the censorship battle are:

It's not just the books under fire now that worry me. It is the books that will never be written, that will never be read, and all due to the fear of censorship. As always, young readers will be the real losers. (Quoted in Langley)

Liz Langley in her article *How to Beat the Elements* continues by citing some of America's greatest figures who have agreed on this opinion. "Restriction of free thought and free speech is the most dangerous of all subversions," wrote Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas. "It is the one un-American act that could most easily defeat us." Even conservative president Dwight D. Eisenhower spoke out on behalf of freedom of speech when he addressed the American people: "Don't join the book-burners."

Alfred Whitney, author of *Essays on Education*, says that there is also reason for optimism:

Books won't stay banned. They won't burn forever. Ideas won't go to jail. In the long run of history, the censor and the inquisitor have always lost. The only sure weapon against bad ideas is better ideas. The source of better ideas is wisdom. The surest path to wisdom is reading books like these. (Quoted in Langley)

Unfortunately, *The Catcher in the Rye* was made famous mostly by the controversy accumulated around the novel. It had begun by the negative critiques from Christian magazines, followed by Mark Chapman's case and, finally, by the recent book

challenges. However, the book was found inspiring by many people, Jack Salzman comments on this:

Most notoriously, of course, there is Mark Chapman's killing of John Lennon, which is said to have been influenced by *Catcher*; but there also is P.J. Kinsella's novel *Shoeless Joe* and John Guare's play *Six Degrees of Separation*, with their homages to Salinger, to make clear how firmly and deeply *The Catcher in the Rye* has influenced many of its readers. (Salzman 16)

There are much more references to the book in other pieces of works, declaring its popularity among readers and influence of the novel. For example, in the 2002 film *The Good Girl*, Jake Gyllenhaal's character calls himself Holden and is seen reading the book and constantly referring to it. In the film *Annie Hall*, Woody Allen says that he only has books with the word "death or dying" in them, but Diane Keaton holds a copy of *The Catcher in the Rye* and says, "What about this one?" An interesting reference to the character of Holden Caulfield is a part of lyrics of an American band called *Too Much Joy* – "William Holden Caulfield" is a track on the 1991 album *Cereal Killers*. The song's title conflates the names of Salinger's protagonist and the actor William Holden, and the lyrics include the lines "I'm afraid of people who like *Catcher in the Rye* / I like it too, but someone tell me why / People he'd despise say, 'I feel like that guy' / I don't wanna grow up, 'cause I don't wanna die."

Although the main character of *The Catcher in the Rye* may be problematic and seem as a bad example for readers, such evaluation can only come out of the slovenly view at the novel. A closer look will uncover the moral message of the book. Eric Lomazoff sums up the morals and qualities of Holden:

In essence, Holden Caulfield is a good guy stuck in a bad world. He is trying to make the best of his life, though ultimately losing that battle. Whereas he aims at stability and truth, the adult world cannot survive without suspense and lies. It is a testament to his innocence and decent spirit that Holden would place the safety and well-being of children as a goal in his lifetime. This serves to only re-iterate the fact that Holden is a sympathetic character, a person of high moral values who is too weak to pick himself up from a difficult situation.

Rosemary Hamilton also joins the group of those who see an essence of goodness in Holden saying:

Holden is the classic portrait of the crazy, mixed-up kid, but with this significant difference; there is about him a solid substratum of goodness, genuineness and sensitivity.

It is possible that this novel would not be as famous as it is without all these challenges and criticism. “An observer could conclude that Salinger’s novel is kept alive – or at least widely known – for young adults by protests.” (Donelson) However, the question is whether the challenges fell on the fertile ground and whether the attempts to keep the book away from youths were successful or not. Let’s just say that they were fruitful, because it is the taste of the forbidden fruit which attracts readers to this novel. And finally, when they will read the book closely, they will read between the lines and find out that “Salinger’s purpose is actually very moral indeed”. (Frangedis)

Following quotation by Holden is the one that many a reader could identify with, but maybe with one exception – the person you would like to be *a terrific friend of yours* is not the author of the novel, it is the novel’s main protagonist:

What really knocks me out is a book that, when you finish 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. (*The Catcher in the Rye*, 18)

Resumé

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá nedávným trendem cenzury literatury ve Spojených státech. Autorka si zvolila knihu *The Catcher in the Rye* od J.D. Salingera jako příklad, na kterém ukazuje, jaké metody současní cenzori knih používají.

V první kapitole autorka vysvětluje termín *cenżura* a nabízí zde další termín – *aktivismus na poli učebnic a literatury*, což by byl zřejmě přiléhavější název pro tento trend. Nicméně, oba termíny jsou v literatuře týkající se tématu vzájemně zaměnitelné, a proto autorka dále používá pouze kratší výraz *cenżura*. Odborníci připouštějí, že určitá míra kontroly učebnic a literatury používané na školách je potřebná, ale je nutné stanovit mez, za kterou už kontrola přechází v cenżuru.

Dále jsou zde popsány skupiny lidí, které cenżuru vyžadují a jejich důvody k protestům proti knihám. Jsou to zejména politické a náboženské skupiny, ale také různé etnické skupiny. Tyto skupiny se snaží prosazovat pouze knihy obsahující témata, která jim vyhovují a podporují jejich přesvědčení. Jakékoliv odklonění od těchto témat považují za nepřijatelné a nevhodné pro jejich děti a snaží se knihy zakázat nebo k nim alespoň omezit přístup. Díky těmto protestům často dochází k absurdním situacím, když se škola snaží vyhovět všem, což není možné.

Následující část připomíná přijetí knihy v době, kdy byla vydána a charakterizuje různé přístupy kritiků k románu. Někteří považovali román za kontroverzní už od počátku, zejména kvůli stylu jakým je napsán a jazyku, který autor knihy použil. Většina však ocenila Salingerovo převedení řeči tehdejších teenagerů do literatury.

Hlavní postavu knihy, Holdena Caulfielda, srovnávají s dalšími postavami, nejvíce pak s Huckleberry Finnem, se kterým mají společné některé rysy. Mezi ně patří již zmiňovaný jazyk teenagerů dané doby, dalším společným znakem je, že oba jsou naivní mladíci, kteří utekli od společnosti, a oba komentují problémy své doby. Dále tato kapitola obsahuje názory čtenářů a popisuje přijetí knihy v Čechách, kde se překlad románu také potýkal s cenżurou, byl to ovšem jiný druh cenżury spojený s komunistickým režimem.

Třetí část popisuje záhadu kolem knihy a konspirační teorii, které je kniha údajně součástí. Odpůrci románu považují jeho hlavního protagonistu za nevhodný příklad pro teenagery, který ve všech lidech vidí pokrytce a odmítá se přizpůsobit společnosti.

Podle některých tato kniha může mít na děti špatný vliv také proto, že ji vlastnil vrah Johna Lennona, Mark Chapman, a je možné, že se v knize ukrývá nějaká tajná zpráva, která člověka donutí zabít. Mark Chapman prý knihu četl jen okamžik poté, co zastřelil Lennona a odkazoval na knihu i během svého soudního procesu. Britský novinář Bresler, na základě dokumentů od vlády, považuje Chapmana za *naprogramovaného* vraha, jehož spouštěcím mechanismem byla právě kniha *The Catcher in the Rye*.

Poslední část práce konfrontuje Holdenovy údajně kontroverzní citáty s názory jeho cenzorů. Je zde seznam nejčastějších důvodů pro cenzuru knihy a protestům proti ní. Ty nejpodstatnější z nich – náboženství, sebevražda, vražda, pití alkoholu a prostituce - jsou zde okomentovány.

Samostatná kapitola je věnována jazyku románu, který je podle Costella unikátní v tom, že pro další generace uchovává jazyk teenagerů padesátých let dvacátého století v USA; zároveň je však pro některé skupiny příliš vulgární.

Závěrem autorka hodnotí zda tato cenzura a zákazy knize více uškodily nebo spíše prospěly. Je toho názoru, že všechny aktivity cenzorů knihu jen více zviditelňují pro mladé čtenáře, kteří jsou přitahováni jejím statutem zakázaného ovoce. Také připomíná odkazy na knihu v některých kulturních odvětvích.

Za závěrem lze najít kompletní bibliografii a několik příloh k bakalářské práci. V první je seznam nejvíce zakazovaných autorů roku 2005, další obsahuje seznam důvodů k protestům proti knize, v třetí příloze jsou tři novinové články o těchto protestech, ve čtvrté je popis atentátu na Johna Lennona, a konečně, pátá příloha obsahuje seznam postav z knihy a jejich vazby na hlavního protagonistu.

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Appendix No. 1

2005 Most Frequently Challenged Authors

1

Judy Blume, author of *Blubber*, *Forever*, and *Deenie*

2

Robert Cormier, author of *The Chocolate War* and *We All Fall Down*

3

Chris Crutcher, author of *Whale Talk* and *The Sledding Hill*

4

Robie Harris, author of *It's Perfectly Normal* and *It's So Amazing!*

5

Phyllis Reynolds Naylor, author of the *Alice* series

6

Toni Morrison, author of *The Bluest Eye*, *Beloved* and *Song of Solomon*

7

J. D. Salinger, author of *The Catcher in the Rye*

8

Lois Lowry, author of *The Giver*

9

Marilyn Reynolds, author of *Detour for Emmy*

10

Sonya Sones, author of *What My Mother Doesn't Know*

The most frequently challenged authors in 2004 were Phyllis Reynolds Naylor, Robert Cormier, Judy Blume, Toni Morrison, Chris Lynch, Barbara Park, Gary Paulsen, Dav Pilkey, Maurice Sendak, and Sonya Sones.

Source:

<http://www.ala.org>, 14.9.2006

Appendix No. 2

The Catcher in the Rye, J.D. Salinger and challenges

Since its publication, this title has been a favorite target of censors. In 1960, a teacher in Tulsa, Okla. was fired for assigning the book to an eleventh grade English class. The teacher appealed and was reinstated by the school board, but the book was removed from use in the school. In 1963, a delegation of parents of high school students in Columbus, Ohio, asked the school board to ban the novel for being “anti white” and “obscene”. The school board refused the request. Removed from the Selinsgrove, Pa. suggested reading list (1975). Based on parents’ objections to the language and content of the book, the school board voted 5 4 to ban the book. The book was later reinstated in the curriculum when the board learned that the vote was illegal because they needed a two thirds vote for removal of the text. Challenged as an assignment in an American literature class in Pittsgrove, NJ. (1977). After months of controversy, the board ruled that the novel could be read in the advanced placement class, but they gave parents the right to decide whether or not their children would read it. Removed from the Issaquah, Wash. Optional High School reading list (1978). Removed from the required reading list in Middleville, Mich. (1979). Removed from the Jackson Milton school libraries in North Jackson, Ohio (1980). Removed from two Anniston, Ala. high school libraries (1982), but later reinstated on a restrictive basis. Removed from the school libraries in Morris, Manitoba (1982) along with two other books because they violate the committee’s guidelines covering “excess vulgar language, sexual scenes, things concerning moral issues, excessive violence, and anything dealing with the occult”: Challenged at the Libby, Mont. High School (1983) due to the “book’s contents”: Challenged, but retained for use in select English classes at New Richmond, Wis. (1994). Banned from English classes at the Freeport High School in De Funiak Springs, Fla. (1985) because it is “unacceptable” and “obscene”. Removed from the required reading list of a Medicine Bow, Wyo. Senior High School English class (1986) because of sexual references and profanity in the book. Banned from a required sophomore English reading list at the Napoleon, N.Dak. High School (1987) after parents and the

local Knights of Columbus chapter complained about its profanity and sexual references. Challenged at the Linton Stockton, Ind. High School (1988) because the book is “blasphemous and undermines morality”. Banned from the classrooms in Boron, Calif High School (1989) because the book contains profanity. Challenged at the GraysIaKe, III. Community High School (1991). Challenged at the Jamaica High School in Sidell, III. (1992) because the book container profanities and depicted premarital sex, alcohol abuse, and prostitution. Challenged in the Waterloo, Iowa schools (1992) and Duval County, Fla. public school libraries (1992) because of profanity, lurid passages about sex, and statements defamatory to minorities, God, women, and the disabled. Challenged at the Cumberland Valley Nigh School in Carlisle, Pa. (1992) because of a parent’s objections that it contains profanity and is immoral. Challenged, but retained, at the New Richmond, Wis. High School (1994) for use in some English classes. Challenged as required reading in the Corona Norco, Calif. Unified School District (1993) because it is “centered around negative activity”. The book was retained and teachers selected alternatives if students object to Salinger’s novel. Challenged as mandatory reading in the Goffstown, N.H. schools (1994) because of the vulgar words used and the sexual exploits experienced in the book. Challenged at the St. Johns County Schools in St. Augustine, Fla. (1995). Challenged at the Oxford Hills High School in Paris, Maine (1996). A parent objected to the use of the 'F' word: Challenged, but retained, at the Glynn Academy High School in Brunswick, Ga. (1997). A student objected to the novel’s profanity and sexual references. Removed because of profanity and sexual situations from the required reading curriculum of the Marysville, Calif Joint Unified School District (1997). The school superintendent removed it to get it “out of the way so that we didn’t have that polarization over a book”. Challenged, but retained on the shelves of Limestone County, Ala. school district (2000) despite objections about the book’s foul language. Banned, but later reinstated after community protests at the Windsor Forest High School in Savannah, Ga. (2000). The controversy began in early 1999 when a parent complained about sex, violence, and profanity in the book that was part of an advanced placement English class. Removed by a Dorchester District 2 school board member in Summerville, SC (2001) because it “is a filthy, filthy book”. Challenged by a Glynn County, Ga. (2001) school board member because of profanity. The novel was retained.

Source:

"100 Banned Books: Censorship Histories of World Literature" by Nicholas Karolides. pp. 366-68; Newsletter on Intellectual Freedom, Nov. 1978, p. 138; Jan. 1980, pp. 6-7; May 1980, p. 51; Mar. 1983, pp. 37-38; July 1983, p. 122; July 1985, p. 113; Mar. 1987, p. 55; July 1988, p. 123; Jan. 1988, p. 10; Sept. 1988, p. 177; Nov. 1989, pp. 218-19; July 1991, pp. 129-30; May 1992, p. 83; July 1992, pp. 105, 126; Jan. 1993, p. 29; Jan. 1994, p. 14, Mar. 1994, pp. 56, 70; May 1994, p. 100; Jan. 1995, p. 12; Jan. 1996, p. 14; Nov. 1996, p. 212; May 1997, p. 78; July 1997, p. 96; May 2000, p. 91; July 2000, p. 123; Mar. 2001, p. 76; Nov. 2001, pp. 246-47, 277-78.

<http://www.ala.org>, 14. 9. 2006

Appendix No. 3

Catcher in the Rye Catches Flak in South Carolina

A member of the Dorchester District 2 school board has borrowed three copies of *Catcher in the Rye* from two Summerville, South Carolina–area high schools and says he intends to pay for the books rather than return them. Anticipating that his fellow board members will oppose his request to have the title banned from school libraries, Howard Bagwell told the September 7 Myrtle Beach Sun News, “I understand they have their own opinions, and that is OK, but I want everyone to know how I feel.”

Bagwell’s challenge is the second one in a decade that he has brought against the classic coming-of-age novel by J. D. Salinger. A member of the board for 20 years, Bagwell saw his 1993 request defeated on appeal to the board by 6–1.

“It is a filthy, filthy book,” Bagwell told the newspaper. “It has 269 some odd pages or so, and if you took out all the [profanity], the sarcasm, the mockery of old people, the mockery of women and decent people, you would get to read about 10 minutes’ worth.”

Posted September 10, 2001.

Alabama School Board Retains *Catcher in the Rye*

The oft-challenged J. D. Salinger classic *Catcher in the Rye* narrowly escaped being banned from the Limestone County (Ala.) School District March 13, when the school board voted 4-3 to retain the book in high-school-library collections districtwide. Their decision overrode the objections of Elkmont High School parent Mike Taylor, who told the board, “The Lord’s name is taken in vain” throughout the book, according to the March 14 Huntsville Times.

Taylor had support from board member Joel Glaze, who declared the school system is “teaching debauchery,” noting that the nearby Athens Bible School library did not own *Catcher*. Agreeing that some of the language was “extremely offensive,” East Limestone High School student Chris England asked board members to “Please look past the words.”

That same night, the board also learned that a East Limestone High School parent had challenged Carolyn Coman’s *Tell Me Everything* because of its use of profanities. Limestone County Superintendent of Education Les Bivens recommended that the board retain that title too.

Posted March 20, 2000.

Catcher in the Rye Withstands Censorship Challenge in Maine

Catcher in the Rye, J. D. Salinger’s frequently challenged coming-of-age novel, will remain in the ninth grade curriculum at Noble High in North Berwick, ME. The school board rejected a request to ban the book for offensive language and themes. The board agreed to revise procedures to inform parents about book selections.

Posted Winter 2004

Source:

http://www.ala.org/al_onlineTemplate.cfm?Section=september2001&Template=/ContentManagement/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=7423, 14.9.2006

NATIONAL COALITION AGAINST CENSORSHIP

http://www.ncac.org/action_issues/Classrooms.cfm, 1.2.2007

Appendix No. 4

1980: John Lennon shot dead

Former Beatle John Lennon has been shot dead by an unknown gunman who opened fire outside the musician's New York apartment.

The 40-year-old was shot several times as he entered the Dakota, his luxury apartment building on Manhattan's Upper West Side, opposite Central Park, at 23:00 local time. He was rushed in a police car to St Luke's Roosevelt Hospital Center, where he died. His wife, Yoko Ono, who is understood to have witnessed the attack, was with him.

Shots heard

A police spokesman said a suspect was in custody, but he had no other details of the shooting.

"This was no robbery," the spokesman said, adding that Mr. Lennon was probably shot by a "deranged" person.

Witness reports say at least three shots were fired and others have claimed they heard six.

There are also reports Mr. Lennon staggered up six steps into the vestibule after he was shot, before collapsing.

Jack Douglas, Lennon's producer, said he and the Lennons had been at a studio called the Record Plant in mid-town earlier in the evening and Lennon left at 22:30.

Mr. Lennon said he planned to have some dinner and then return home, Mr. Douglas said.

Fans at scene

The Lennons are said to have left their limousine on the street and walked up the driveway when the gunman opened fire.

It is unclear whether the man had been lying in wait in the entrance to the building for Mr. Lennon, or whether he came up behind him.

Witnesses describe the gunman as a "pudgy kind of man", 35 to 40 years old with brown hair.

Other former band members, Paul McCartney, guitarist George Harrison and drummer Ringo Starr are thought to have been informed of Lennon's murder.

Fans have already begun arriving at the scene, many still unaware Lennon has died.

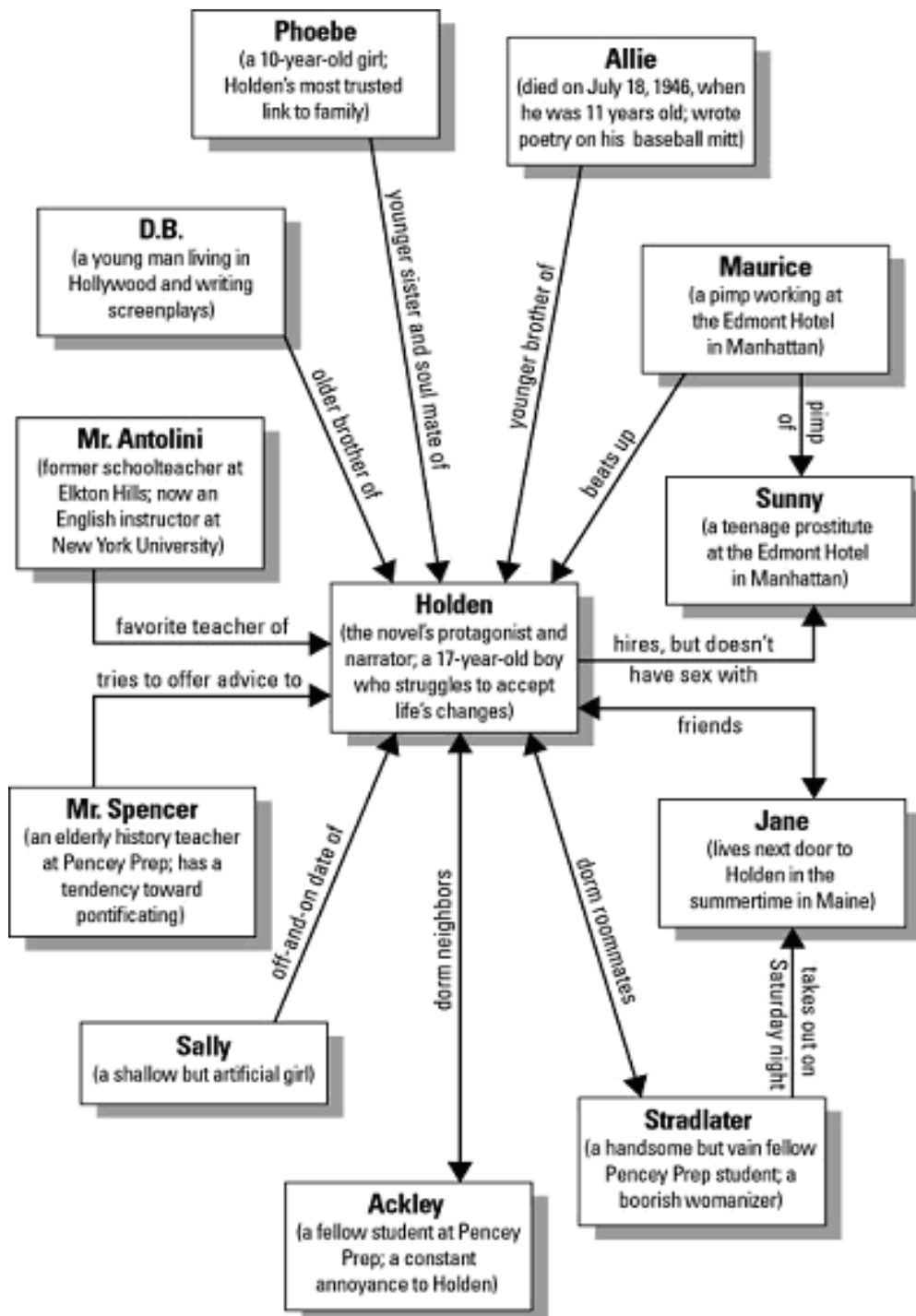
Mr. Lennon is survived by his wife, their son Sean, and his son from a previous marriage, Julian.

Source:

http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/december/8/newsid_2536000/2536321.stm, 15. 11. 2006

Appendix No. 5

Some characters of the novel and their connection to Holden.



Source:

<http://www.cliffsnotes.com/WileyCDA/LitNote/id-53,pageNum-6.html>

ÚDAJE PRO KNIHOVNICKOU DATABÁZI

Název práce	Reception of <i>The Catcher in the Rye</i>
Autor práce	Tereza Miková
Obor	Anglický jazyk pro hospodářskou praxi
Rok obhajoby	2007
Vedoucí práce	Mgr. Šárka Bubíková, Ph.D.
Anotace	Práce pojednává o cenзуře literatury v USA a o skupinách lidí, které se o cenzuru zasazují. Jako názorný příklad je použita kniha <i>The Catcher in the Rye</i> (Kdo chytá v žitě) od J. D. Salingera. Práce také popisuje důvody vedoucí k zakazování této knihy na některých školách.
Klíčová slova	Assassins, Book banning, Censorship, Challenges, Fundamentalists, Holden Caulfield, J.D. Salinger, John Lennon, <i>Kdo chytá v žitě</i> , Mark Chapman, <i>The Catcher in the Rye</i>