

AMERICAN FAMILY CULTURE OF THE MID-
20TH CENTURY:

Gender roles, marriage and child-parent
relationship as portrayed in fact and fiction

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J.D. Salingerin romaania *The Catcher in the Rye* on kutsuttu amerikkalaiseksi klassikko-teokseksi. Sitä on opiskeltu kouluissa kautta Amerikan ja myös muualla maailmalla, mutta samalla myös haastettu oikeuteen ja estetty sen käyttö opetuksessa. Tätä ristiriitaista teosta ja sen kirjailijaa on tutkittu ja niistä on kirjoitettu paljon. Tässä tutkimuksessa mielenkiinnon kohteena oli romaanin välittämä kuva 1900-luvun puolivälin amerikkalaisesta perhekulttuurista, jota ei ilmeisesti juurikaan ole aiemmin tutkittu. Tutkimuksen tarkoituksena oli ennen kaikkea selvittää kuinka romaani esittää sukupuoliroolit avioliiton sisällä, itse avioliittoinstituution sekä lasten ja vanhempien väliset suhteet toisen maailmansodan jälkeisessä Amerikassa. Tutkimuksessa oli läsnä myös vertaileva näkökulma, sillä romaanin välittämää kuvaa verrattiin aiempiin kulttuurintutkimuksen parissa tehtyihin tutkimuksiin.

Tämän laadullisen tutkimuksen aineistona käytettiin romaania *The Catcher in the Rye*, jota kutsuttiin fiktiiviseksi aineistoksi, sekä aiempia amerikkalaiseen perhekulttuuriin keskittyneitä tutkimuksia, joita kutsuttiin historialliseksi aineistoksi. Fiktiivisestä aineistosta poimittiin näytteitä, jotka kertoivat siitä, kuinka kirjailija kuvailee oman aikansa ja kulttuurinsa perhettä. Näytteiden analysoimisessa käytettiin hyväksi diskurssianalyysin ja narratiivisen analyysin keinoja. Tärkeimmiksi osoittautuivat sanaston, tekstin rakenteen ja toiston analysoiminen. Tutkimustuloksia verrattiin historiallisen aineiston välittämään kuvaan amerikkalaisesta sodanjälkeisestä perhekulttuurista ja etsittiin sekä yhtäläisyyksiä että eroavaisuuksia.

Tulokset osoittivat, että Salingerin kuvaus oman aikansa perhekulttuurista vastaa melko hyvin historiallisen aineiston kuvausta. Sekä romaanin että historiallisen aineiston mukaan avioliittoinstituutio oli kriisissä sodan jälkeen, ja avioerot lisääntyivät runsaasti. Samalla myös avioliitot lisääntyivät. Tämä toisaalta optimistinen ja toisaalta pessimistinen kuva amerikkalaisesta perhekulttuurista oli nähtävissä sekä fiktiivisessä että historiallisessa aineistossa. Näin oli myös lasten ja vanhempien välisen siteen suhteen; molemmat aineistot kertoivat, että lapset olivat läheisempiä äitiensä kun isiensä kanssa. Sukupuoliroolien suhteen aineistot erosivat hieman. Romaanin esittämä kuvaus kertoi, että äitien rooli oli tuohon aikaan pysyä kotona lasten kanssa ja huolehtia taloudesta, kun taas miehet kävivät töissä ja elättivät perheensä. Historiallinen aineisto puolestaan osoitti, että juuri 1950-luvulla naimisissa olevat naiset alkoivat työskennellä yhä suuremmissa määrin.

Salingerin ristiriitainen kuvaus aikansa amerikkalaisesta perhekulttuurista on todenmukainen. Erilaisia tuloksia voitaisiin kuitenkin saada, jos tutkimuskohteena olisi köyhä tai maalla asuva perhe, sillä Salinger ja tämä tutkimus ovat keskittyneet rikkaaseen kaupunkilaisperheeseen. Myös vertailu modernin perhekulttuurin kanssa tarjoaisi mielenkiintoisen näkökulman.

Asiasanat: *The Catcher in the Rye*, cultural studies, family in fiction

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1 INTRODUCTION

Language is always used in a certain cultural context. Therefore, I chose to place my study in the broad field of cultural studies. As literature is an important field of presenting culture and using language, I also made the choice to use a fictional novel as a starting point of my study. The novel I decided to study is *The Catcher in the Rye* by J. D. Salinger. The novel was first published in the United States in 1951 and immediately it started a discussion because of its language which was seen at that time to be very vulgar. For decades the novel remained as the most censored and banned book in American libraries and schools, but at the same time it was also widely taught in American public schools and has sold about 65 millions copies around the world (Sova 1998: 70-72; www.foyles.co.uk). According to American Library Association (ALA), the novel was the 13th book in the list of *The 100 most challenged books of 1990-2000*, so it has maintained its controversial status through the years. Despite of the contradiction around the novel, or maybe because of it, it has established a status as a classic, and I wanted to study it further.

I chose to concentrate on how the novel portrays American family culture of the 1940s and 1950s, which is when the novel was written and published, and then study how American family culture of that time is described in historical literature. This point of view interested me because family is an important theme of the novel, and I wanted to learn how the fictional image would compare with reality. The novel often gives a negative impression of American family culture, but also different kinds of attitudes towards the matter exist. Entertainment industry, for example, has often portrayed the American family of that period as a tight and loving community living the American dream during the economic boom after the war (Gilbert 1986: 54). However, both images are works of fiction. Therefore, I thought it would be interesting to study what academic texts and previous studies say about American post-war family culture. This point of view also seemed to be worth studying because even though the novel has been widely studied from the 1950s until present, to my knowledge this aspect has not been a focus of any previous studies.

My study is descriptive and qualitative because my data is quite limited and I do not aim at any statistical results. I conducted my research by studying how and in what contexts my topic of research, family, is being mentioned in the novel. Based on the extracts I found, I was

able to demonstrate how the author portrays American family after the Second World War. Then I compared my findings with what academic texts say about post-war American family. I felt this comparative approach could offer new insights into the matter because of the above-mentioned contradictory attitudes towards the post-war American family.

As I studied a cultural phenomenon and used literature as my data, the theoretical framework of my study naturally includes the study of literature as well as cultural studies. They are introduced in the next chapter alongside with the novel and some previous studies concerning the novel. The methods I used to analyse my data come from the fields of discourse analysis and narrative analysis. Therefore they are also a part of my framework and are also discussed further in the study. After introducing my theoretical framework and specifying my research questions, I will present my data and methods of analysis. Then I will analyse my data and discuss the results and their relevance.

2 STUDYING CULTURAL PHENOMENA

As I studied a cultural and social phenomenon, the theories and methods essential to my study come from the field of social sciences. I will mainly refer to theories from cultural studies and the study of literature. In this section I will introduce those theories and their basic terminology more closely. I will also introduce my primary source of data, *The Catcher in the Rye*, and discuss some previous studies conducted from the basis of the novel.

2.1 Cultural studies

Cultural studies are essential to my study in two senses. Firstly, my historical data, which will be introduced later, consists of cultural studies concerning the American family culture in the mid 20th century. Secondly, this study itself is a cultural study. I am interested in exploring how Salinger portrays the family culture of his time, and I also aim at contrasting that image with the one described in the historical data. As culture is such an important aspect of this study, it must be properly defined. I use the definition of the Oxford English Dictionary, since it is quite thorough. According to OED, culture is “the distinctive ideas, customs, social behaviour, products, or way of life of a particular society, people or period. Hence: a society or group characterized by such customs.” In my study, culture is located within a certain society and time, so the definition is suitable.

Defining the field of cultural studies is not easy; there are no clear boundaries. Culture is studied among various academic disciplines, such as sociology and literature, but those should not be understood as cultural studies. Cultural studies is a field of its own, even though it, too, "borrows" and draws on perspectives from other academic disciplines. It is particularly interested in studying how culture is constituted through the use of signs and language. This means that language is not seen merely as a way of expressing meanings, values and knowledge, but rather as the "privileged medium" through which those things are constructed. (Barker 2003: 5, 7, 88). This constitutive view of language is in accordance with literary studies, discourse analysis and narrative analysis, which will all be introduced later in this study.

Barker (2003: 25-30) introduces three different approaches within cultural studies: ethnography, textual approaches and reception studies. *Ethnography* is often used when questions concerning cultures, identities, values and meanings are explored. It concentrates on the "local" issues and uses limited data, but also tries to connect the issues to a wider social context. Ethnographers aim at representing "in a naturalistic way the 'real' experience of people" (Barker 2003: 26). Even though many have criticized the approach because of its interpretative nature, caused by the fact that the researcher has to make choices concerning the representation of the data, ethnography is still an important approach within the field of cultural studies (ibid. 26-28).

The second approach discussed by Barker (2003: 28-29) is the area of *textual approaches*. Barker divides the textual approaches into three more specific categories: semiotics, narrative theory and deconstructionism. *Semiotics* is focused on how a certain way of using signs and cultural codes creates meanings. The cultural codes Barker (2003: 90) defines as cultural conventions which determine how signs should be organized in order to produce a certain meaning within a particular context. *Narrative theory* is interested in studying narratives. Barker (2003: 28) describes a narrative as "an ordered sequential account that makes claims to be a record of events". Narratives offer researchers clues to how social order is constructed. Narrative theory relates closely to narrative analysis which will be discussed later in this study. The last category within textual approaches, *deconstructionism*, involves taking texts apart, or undoing them, in order to expose the "unacknowledged assumptions upon which they operate" (Barker 2003: 29).

The third and final approach within cultural studies introduced by Barker (2003: 29-30) is *reception studies*. This field of study considers the audiences of a text or some other message as active participants in creating the meaning instead of as merely passive observers, and therefore reception studies is focused on audience's role in creating meanings (Barker 2003: 30). Within the field of reception studies, two influential views can be separated. The first one is Hall's "encoding-decoding" model, which Barker (2003: 30) presents in his book. According to the model, messages are polysemic, meaning that they carry many potential meanings. If a decoder (or a reader) of a text shares a similar cultural framework with the encoder (or the writer) of the text, the encoding and decoding meet. (ibid.). This means that the text is understood as the writer meant it to be understood. The second influential field of study which Barker (2003: 30) introduces is hermeneutic and literary reception studies. According to those traditional views, understanding always happens from the point of view of the one who understands. Texts can guide the readers, but they cannot determine the meaning which the reader creates. (ibid.).

2.2 Study of literature

As my data consists of literary products, it is important to pay attention to the theoretical field of studying literature. The theories within that field are also important to my study because the language use within literature, compared to other fields of using language, is specifically characteristic of literature, and I wanted to study the use of language in that particular context (Moseley 1995: 15). Here I will concentrate on the study of prose fiction, since my main topic of interest and data is a novel.

When reading a novel, or actually any kind of a story, the reader should first acknowledge the *plot* (what is happening), the *characters* (who are doing what) and the *theme* (what does it mean) of the story (Williams 1995: 90). Only after those basic realisations is it possible to conduct a more profound analysis on the matter. In my study the more profound analysis means studying literature as a social discourse. According to Williams (1995: 91), when studying social discourses, the focus should be on the variations of language use which reflect social forces such as power relations. In this study I wanted to study particularly that; I aimed at revealing the power and social relations within the American family of the mid 20th century. This is also in accordance with the ideas of discourse analysis, which is another important part

of my theoretical background. Discourse analysis will be presented more closely in the next chapter.

Watkins (1995: 155-169) identifies four significant features which must be considered when reading a work of prose fiction. These are characterisation, narration, language and reader response. The first one, *characterisation*, consists of the way the author portrays the characters in the text and also the way the readers feel about the characters (Watkins 1995: 156-158). *Narration* is "the way the story is told" (ibid. 159). The author can organise narration in several ways. One distinction concerns the person of the narrative; it can be either a first-person-narrative, which means that the narrator acts as a participant of the story and uses the term "I" when describing events, or a third-person-narrative, which means that the narrator tells the story as an outsider who is observing and uses terms like "he", "she" and "they" when talking about the characters of the story. When analysing narration it is also important to observe how often certain things are mentioned in the text; the frequency of appearances indicates the importance of certain events over others (ibid. 165).

Another significant feature of prose fiction described by Watkins is the *language*. The author has different ways of using language, and for one, it makes a difference whether the author uses direct or indirect speech (Watkins 1995: 167). An example of direct speech could be the following sentence: "I will be there" he said", whereas the same sentence using indirect speech would be the following: "He said he would be there". Another aspect of language, which concerns my data, is the term of interior monologue or stream of consciousness. According to Watkins (1995: 167-168), both terms mean that the emotions, thoughts and mental processes of the character are described in great detail. This element is present in *The Catcher in the Rye* as the story is mainly told through the interior monologue of the novel's protagonist. The fourth feature described by Watkins (1995: 169) is *reader response*, which takes shape while reading the text and is different for every reader.

2.3 *The Catcher in the Rye*

The Catcher in the Rye has a controversial status; on the one hand it is a bestseller and is valued by critics, which is proven by the fact that it is ranked among the 100 best novels in several listings (www.foyles.co.uk 2009; www.randomhouse.com/modernlibrary/ 2009; www.time.com 2009). But on the other hand, it has been banned and even challenged in

courts (Sova 1998). It is obvious that the novel has admirers as well as critics. In this section I will discuss the novel and its controversial status briefly, and also introduce some previous studies conducted from the basis of the novel. This is important, because even though the novel has been widely studied for decades, to my knowledge the particular aspect I am interested in, in other words the novel's presentation of family culture, has not been a topic of research earlier. To present the variety and extent of previous studies concerning the novel, and to show that my study can still offer something new to the field, I will introduce some of the studies and articles here.

2.3.1 The novel

The Catcher in the Rye tells the story of a teenager boy named Holden Caulfield. Holden is the protagonist and also the narrator of the novel, so the narrative is a first-person-narrative. Holden has gone through a nervous breakdown and is telling his story in flashbacks from a mental institution. His memoirs begin from the day he has been expelled yet again from another private school. Because he does not want to face his parents with bad news, he decides to spend few days in his hometown New York on his own before going back home. During those few days Holden wanders around the city and tries to discover a purpose for his being. He struggles with the phoniness of society and people and finally goes through a nervous breakdown, which leads to him being institutionalised for some time.

Holden spends most of the time described in the novel alone. The only member of his family who Holden actually encounters is his little sister Phoebe. But even though Holden is mostly alone in the novel, his family is in his thoughts. He tells about his parents and siblings quite frequently. The reader gets to know Allie, Holden's little brother who has died of leukaemia, D.B., Holden's big brother who has moved to Hollywood to write movie scripts and Phoebe, who Holden adores. The extracts telling about Holden's family members offer a great deal of samples to work with when trying to form an image of the family relations, which are the object of interest in my study.

As mentioned earlier, the novel has gained a status of a classic in American literature. Besides having had an effect on the American literature, it has also affected American culture. Teachers around the country have assigned the novel to be read at schools and by doing that, they have assured that a generation after another have become familiar with Holden and his

adventures. However, the parents of students have often objected the use of the novel in teaching. From 1966 to 1975, the novel was the most frequently banned book in public schools in America (Sova 1998: 70). Also before and after that period, the novel has often been banned and challenged (ibid. 70-72).

The critics and protesters who have opposed the novel have justified their legal actions against it by arguing that it contains “obscene”, “filthy”, “profane” and “vulgar” language (Sova 1998: 70-72). The novel has also been accused of being “anti-white” and presenting inappropriate behaviour, such as alcohol abuse, prostitution and premarital sex. It has also said to “undermine morality” and express rebellious and even communist views. Because of these accusations and challenges against the novel, it has been removed from several public schools and public school libraries around the USA. (ibid.). Yet teachers have continued to introduce the novel to students, and the novel has also continued to sell hundreds of thousands of copies every year (www.foyles.co.uk 2009).

2.3.2 Previous studies on *The Catcher in the Rye*

The studies I discovered while searching data were usually focused on the author, the character of Holden Caulfield or the language of the novel. I will exclude the studies concerning Salinger and his career, since those studies have not focused merely on *The Catcher in the Rye* but also on Salinger’s other work and his persona, which are not relevant for my study. Instead, I will introduce some studies and articles focused on both Holden’s character and the language of the novel. It is obvious that also other issues of the novel have been studied, but I found these two aspects to be the topic of numerous studies and articles.

Holden’s character has often been contrasted with Huckleberry Finn, a character from several of Mark Twain’s novels. Both young male characters have been interpreted as being rebellious and both have upset many readers. Consequently, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1885) is also on ALA’s list of *The 100 most challenged books of 1990-2000* occupying the 5th place of the list. In his article, Branch (1962: 209) finds several similarities between *The Catcher in the Rye* and *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, the most obvious one being the characterization of the heroes of those novels. Branch (1962: 206) goes even as far as to say that Salinger’s novel would be a modernized version of Twain’s novel. Grunwald (1962: xiii) has also contrasted Holden and Huckleberry by saying that:

Like Huck Finn, with whom Holden Caulfield is constantly compared, the hero of *The Catcher in the Rye* is usually described as a rebel, either against the materialism and ugliness of "our society" or against the realities of the adult world.

(*Salinger – A critical and personal portrait*, xiii)

This describes Holden quite well. He is a rebel in the sense that he sees a lot of bad in society of that time and refuses to be a part of all that. This rebellious feature of the character has been noted by several writers. Holden has been described as being against movie industry and religious enthusiasm (Galloway 1981: 205) and also against academic and social conformity of the period (Geismar 1962: 90). To sum up, Holden rebels against everything he sees as phoney and insincere.

However, many writers have noted that Holden is not merely a rebel and a critic of the society of his time, but also an individual who has a lot of compassion towards others and who feels sorry for even those who have treated him badly (Hicks 1962: 192). In his article, Geismar (1962: 91) describes Holden as "the innocent child in the evil and hostile universe, the child who can never grow up". Holden is trying to be sincere in a world full of phonies, and finds it extremely difficult (Parker 1962: 257). Holden wants to be good; he wants to love and to be loved – and yet he wishes to run away from everyone and live on his own (Heiserman and Miller 1962: 198). It is hardly a surprise that this controversial character has been studied and discussed a lot.

The other often studied issue concerning the novel is its language. Also in this area of study, many have found similarities between *The Catcher in the Rye* and *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. Heiserman and Miller (1962: 202-204) note that both Holden and Huck use very distinctive and at times quite incorrect language. They give credit to both Salinger and Twain by saying that: "Their genius lies in their mastery of the technique of first person narration which, through meticulous selection, creates vividly the illusion of life..." (ibid. 203). Also Costello (1962: 266) has contrasted *The Catcher in the Rye* and *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* when discussing Holden's language use. He argues that both novels carry not only literary importance but linguistic importance as well (ibid.). Costello states that Holden's language is a great example of teenage vernacular of its time, similar to Huck's language, and therefore it offers data when studying that particular kind of language use.

The language of the novel has often been considered as the most important aspect of the story. According to Leitch (1962: 73), "it is Holden's language, above all, that provides the excitement, the surprises and the clues to character". Leitch (ibid.) also describes Holden and his language as "banal, stylized and repetitive", and notes Holden's distinctive use of adjectives (such as "stupid", "old" and "lousy") and additional phrases at the end of sentences. Parker (1962: 254) has described Holden's language as "absurd exaggeration and complete vagueness", as well as "repetitious". This repetitiveness of the novel, noted by many researchers, has also been a topic of a pro gradu thesis carried out by Valta in the University of Jyväskylä (2007). In her thesis, Valta discusses Holden's repetition of certain words and clauses, as well as the thematic repetition used in the novel.

3 STUDYING WRITTEN DISCOURSES

In addition to the previously discussed theories which give theoretical framework to my study, I also needed methods which would provide me with tools for analysing my data. The methods I found to be most useful come from the fields of discourse analysis and narrative analysis. Those theories and their methodologies are introduced in this chapter. Since they share many views with each other and also with previously introduced theories, I will contrast the theories and indicate similarities between them when such resemblance occurs.

3.1 Discourse analysis

Discourses are generally described as real practices of talking or writing (Phillips and Hardy 2002: 3). In my study, the object of research is a novel and therefore I studied written discourses. According to Phillips and Hardy (2002: 3), the discourses we use construct our social reality. Discourse analysis, then, studies how the language that is used in social discourses constructs social phenomena and gives them meaning. Through the use of language, one can indicate different attitudes and emotions without directly stating anything. This is more obvious in spoken discourses than in written ones, because when speaking, one can use pauses, tones and gestures to convey meanings. But also in written discourses the language use can indicate different attitudes and emotions; by using particular type of vocabulary or by repetition one can express certain things inside a text (Watkins 1995: 165; Jokinen, Juhila and Suoninen 2002: 107).

Study of literature, which was discussed in the previous chapter, and discourse analysis share many views concerning language. Some of them will be introduced here, because of their emphasis in discourse analysis. According to both fields of study it is, for example, important to acknowledge the common conventions of language and also to understand that language has different meanings depending on the culture in which it is used (Moseley 1995: 15-16). In other words, taking cultural context into account is important also when studying literature, as it is when working with discourse analysis. Also in both fields of study, language is seen as a social phenomenon which is tied up with social structures (Williams 1995: 81). Texts must be viewed in relation to the society in which they are produced; they cannot be viewed in isolation (Walsh 1995: 107-108). This means that a reader of a text must learn to read critically. In order to accomplish critical reading, one should bear in mind that there are five aspects which must be considered when reading written discourses: *author*, *context*, *text*, *language* and *reader* himself (Walsh 1995: 101). Walsh (ibid.) describes the relationship between those five elements as follows: "A reader reads a text written by a writer within a specific context and in a particular language". In my study, this means that I read the novel by Salinger written in English within the American culture of the late 1940s and early 1950s. All of these aspects affected my reading and interpretation of the novel, and therefore also my analysis was influenced by the five factors.

After discussing the most important views within discourse analysis, it is also important to acknowledge that there are different trends inside the field of discourse analysis. The trends can be classified in different ways, but here I will make use of the distinction described by Phillips and Hardy (2002: 20-28), since it makes two useful and logical separations between the four varieties it describes. Those four varieties which Phillips and Hardy (2002: 20) distinguish inside discourse analysis are social linguistic analysis, interpretive structuralism, critical discourse analysis and critical linguistic analysis. Firstly, the varieties are separated by their way of approaching discourses. *Constructivist* approaches are interested in how "a particular social reality has been constructed", whereas *critical* approaches are more interested in studying "the dynamics of power, knowledge, and ideology that surround discursive processes" (ibid.). However, Phillips and Hardy (2002: 20) note that good discourse analytical studies, both constructivist and critical ones, pay attention to both processes of social construction and power relations. Secondly, the four above-mentioned approaches differ in their degree of interest to either context or text (ibid.). I will now

introduce all four varieties described by Phillips and Hardy, and indicate what their emphasis on the distinguishing factors is.

Social linguistic analysis and *interpretive structuralism* are both constructivist in their approach to discourses (Phillips and Hardy 2002: 20). However, they differ in their interest in text and context; social linguistic analysis is text-based and often focuses on an individual text, whereas interpretive structuralism is interested in the larger context around the discourse and also uses other material besides a single text (ibid.). When working with social linguistic analysis, researchers focus on individual texts and try to "provide insight into its organization and construction, and also to understand how texts work to organize and construct other phenomena" (Phillips and Hardy 2002: 22). This is partially what I intended to do with my research; I wanted to show how a text, in this case *The Catcher in the Rye*, creates social phenomena by telling about family life in the post-war America. However, I also wanted to include broader cultural context into my study. Therefore, also interpretive structuralism was useful as an approach and way of analysing. As mentioned earlier, it is more focused on the contexts which are supported by discourses (ibid. 23). In my study I took both approaches into account, since neither one of them would have been enough on their own.

The other two approaches which Phillips and Hardy (2002) separate within discourse analysis are both critical ones, meaning that they are interested in studying how power is distributed and maintained through discourses. Similar to the constructivist approaches, also the critical approaches differ in their interest towards either context or text. *Critical linguistic analysis* is more text-oriented, and similarly to social linguistic analysis it usually focuses on individual texts (Phillips and Hardy 2002: 27). But instead of studying how a text is constructed, critical linguistic analysis focuses on "how specific discursive activities and texts help to produce power relations" (ibid. 28). *Critical discourse analysis*, which is the other critical approach, takes larger contexts into account instead of merely focusing on single texts. It considers "how discursive activity structures the social space within which actors act" (ibid. 25).

All of the four approaches discussed above share some views and they are all relevant to my study. In order to conduct a profound analysis, I must pay attention to all of them. Besides sharing views with each other, the approaches also have a lot in common with other theories I refer to in this study. Such similar theories are literary analysis which has already been discussed, and study of narratives which will be discussed next (Phillips and Hardy 2002: 22-

27). This comes to show that in the field of social sciences, it can sometimes be quite difficult to separate the different approaches from each other.

3.2 Narrative analysis

Narration and narrative analysis have already been mentioned earlier in relation to literary studies and discourse analysis. In chapter 2.2 of this study, narration was described as "the way the story is told" (Watkins 1995: 159). A narrative, on the other hand, is a representation of an event or action described by someone. According to Riessman (1993: 2) "individuals construct past events and actions in personal narratives to claim identities and construct lives". In other words, a narrative is the story which is being told and narration is how that story is told. Narrative analysis is interested in studying narratives, and this means that the object of study is the story itself (Riessman 1993: 1). Narratives can be either spoken or written ones. In my study, the object of analysis is a written narrative, and therefore I will here focus on the aspects of written narratives.

A narrative has also been characterised as having a clear beginning and ending and different sequences, or narrative clauses, between those two (Riessman 1993: 17; Thornborrow and Coates 2005: 3). This is clearly visible in written narratives; texts, academic ones in particular, usually have a distinct introduction at the beginning and a conclusion or a finishing chapter in the end. This sequencing, or structuring, holds the text together and conveys meanings (Riessman 1993: 18). By placing events in a particular order within the structure, the narrator can emphasize certain events over others (*ibid.*). Another way of emphasizing certain events is by repetition (*ibid.*). This was already discussed in relation to literary studies in chapter 2.2.

Also in accordance with the previously discussed theories, narrative analysis considers the context in which a narrative appears. However, there are different views inside the field of narrative analysis concerning the extent to which the context is being emphasized (Riessman 1993: 21). When narratives are seen strictly as representing reality, the social and cultural context is mostly ignored. Other researchers argue that narratives not only represent reality but constitute it as well. (*ibid.* 22). In such cases, the context is an important aspect of the analysis. In my study, the context of the narrative is highly stressed; I wanted to study family culture in particular time and place, and therefore that particular context is an inseparable aspect of my study.

It is obvious that a narrative can never be entirely objective. A narrator has previous experiences, attitudes and emotions which affect the narrative (Riessman 1993: 5). This also means that different individuals can form different narratives from the same event (ibid. 64). Therefore, when analysing narratives, a researcher is actually studying how a narrator is interpreting things (ibid. 5). In addition to the narrator's interpretation, also the researcher's interpretation can affect the analysis. This is the case when the data consists of a long narrative, which cannot be analysed as a whole. The researcher has to select the key aspects of the long narrative, and this means that the researcher's own interpretation of what is essential modifies the analysis (Riessman 1993: 60). After the reduction of the data, the researcher is left with the *core narrative*, the data which the researcher finds to be the most essential for his or her purposes (ibid.). This is also what I had to do with my data. It was not possible to analyse the whole novel for this study, so I was forced to select samples that would benefit my purposes the most.

4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

I was interested in studying how the American family of the mid 20th century is presented in Salinger's novel and on the other hand in previous cultural studies concerning the American family of that time. I was particularly interested in examining the inner family relations, and in order to do that, I read and analysed my data keeping these following questions in mind:

1. How are the roles of married women and men portrayed in Salinger's novel and how does the image compare with other literature concerning American family after the Second World War?
2. How is marriage portrayed in Salinger's novel and how does the image compare with other literature concerning American family after the Second World War?
3. How is the relationship between parents and children portrayed in Salinger's novel and how does the image compare with other literature concerning American family after the Second World War?

5 DATA AND METHODS

My primary data was *The Catcher in the Rye*. I refer to it as fictional data, since it is a work of fiction. But, as determined by my research questions, I also had to use other literature concerning the American family of the 1940s and 1950s in addition to the novel. To that other type of data I refer as historical data, since it includes previously conducted studies concerning the American family in the mid 20th century. I have used them as comparative sources to present a more realistic view of the family culture of that time. Here I will introduce the data I have gathered and the methods I have used to analyse the data.

5.1 Fictional data

While gathering my fictional data, I read *The Catcher in the Rye* and searched for samples which would tell me something about the American family of the 1940s and 1950s, and which would help me to answer my research questions. I read the novel through several times and wrote down every extract in which Holden mentions his parents or siblings, or talks about someone else's family or family in general. I did not use all the examples I found when analysing the data, but focused on extracts which clearly indicated how Holden sees family relations. I will provide examples in the next chapter, where I present my analysis and findings in more detail.

5.2 Historical data

I used two books as my primary historical data. The first one is *Another chance. Postwar America 1945-1985* by Gilbert (1986). As can be depicted from the name of the book, it concentrates partially on the exact period of American history in which I am interested. Chapter 3 of the book is titled as *Family Culture*, and it offered very much information on the topic of my interest.

The second book I used as my historical data is *Small worlds. Children & adolescents in America, 1850-1950*, which is edited by West and Petrik (1992) and includes articles from several writers. It also covers the period of interest. Furthermore, it focuses on children and their role within a family and society. As my third research question concerns children, the

book offered useful information. Besides these two primary sources, I will also briefly refer to other studies in my analysis, when considered necessary.

5.3 Methods

I have introduced discourse analysis and narrative analysis in chapters 3.1 and 3.2, but the main focus has been on the theories behind those approaches. Here I will present those two theories from a more practical basis, and discuss the methods of analysis those theories provide. After that, I will compare discourse analysis and narrative analysis with other, often similar theories from the field of social sciences, because discourse analysis and narrative analysis are only two methods in the broad field of qualitative research methods. This means that there are also other methods which share their interest in studying how the social reality is constructed through the use of language (Jokinen et al. 2002: 38; Riessman 1993: 4-5). In order to justify my choice to use discourse analysis and narrative analysis as the basis of my analysis, it is important to know about the other methodologies as well.

5.3.1 Methods for analysing the novel

When conducting a discourse analytical study of a text, in this case of a novel, the basis of the analysis is often the vocabulary which is used in telling the story (Jokinen et al. 2002: 107). Some words are more neutral than others and some carry special connotations with them; by merely selecting particular type of vocabulary, the writer can express various emotions and attitudes (ibid.). When analysing my fictional data, I paid attention to this aspect of language use in particular. In addition to observing how family is mentioned, I also placed emphasis on the contexts in which family is mentioned. In other words, I observed *how* and *when* family is discussed in the novel.

Jokinen et al. (2002: 110-127) discuss two different points of emphasis of discourse analytical study: responsive analysis and rhetorical analysis. *Responsive analysis* pays attention to the differentiation of interaction processes and focuses on either the “turn-taking organisation” of a discourse or on the “turn design” of a discourse (ibid. 110, 116). The first one refers to the turns which participants of a discourse take in social interaction. Because my data is mainly a monologue, this does not concern my study. The latter refers to the format of a discourse. It

includes tones and styles which are more apparent in a spoken discourse than in a written one, but in a written discourse the vocabulary can offer same kind of insights into the matter.

The second view discussed by Jokinen et al., *rhetorical analysis*, focuses on the ways of convincing the other participants of a discourse that certain versions of reality are more preferable than others. When conducting a rhetorical analysis of a discourse, one can observe, for example, the use of metaphors and extreme expressions, appealing to authorities, distancing the issue from one's own interests and affecting through details. (Jokinen et al. 2002: 126, 132-155). I searched for all of these when analysing my data.

When conducting a narrative analysis, it is important to see through the content of the narrative. Riessman (1993: 61) advises researchers to begin the analysis by exploring the structure of the narrative rather than its mere content. A written narrative is usually clearly sequenced, which makes it easier to analyse the structure. Methods of narrative analysis also include the previously discussed study of repetition and deducting the data into the core narrative. (ibid. 17-18, 60).

5.3.2 The advantages of the chosen methods

Ethnography, which was briefly discussed in connection to cultural studies, is one of these methods very close to discourse analysis. They share the same interest in studying cultural phenomena, which is also the goal of my study. However, in ethnography the data is gathered mainly by observing people in their natural environment, whereas in discourse analysis the data often consists of cultural products which exist regardless of the researcher (Jokinen et al. 2002: 41-42). As it is the latter which applies to my study, ethnography would not be of any use for me. Also narrative analysis is often contrasted with ethnography. What separates them is their focus of interest; narrative analysis is interested in the stories people tell, whereas ethnography is more interested in the events which are described (Riessman 1993: 4).

Also such methods as rhetoric and semiotics share a lot with discourse analysis. Rhetoric and discourse analysis both use texts and speech acts as data (Jokinen et al. 2002: 47). They also both share the interest in studying how language is used when producing accounts, but in rhetoric much attention is given to how sentences are formed and how the audience is taken into account (ibid). Discourse analysis is interested in language use constructing broader

cultural phenomena, and as my study also pays attention to cultural context, discourse analysis is more useful than rhetoric.

Semiotics, too, shares common interests with discourse analysis. The biggest similarity between these two theories is the interest in studying how meanings are constructed through the use of language, and also the understanding that reality can be interpreted in different ways in different cultures (Jokinen et al. 2002: 49). This is also in accordance with narrative analysis (Riessman 1993). However, Jokinen et al. (2002: 49) state that semiotics is more interested in individual signs and their relationship inside a text, whereas discourse analysis and narrative analysis are interested in the active use of language and the cultural context of the language use. As mentioned, I am interested in studying cultural phenomena and therefore discourse analysis and narrative analysis are more useful than semiotics.

As all theories presented here share some views, it might be helpful for a researcher to borrow methods from other theories when conducting a qualitative study instead of keeping to just one theory. Very often in the field of social sciences it can even be hard to separate the theories or some methods they use from each other.

6 RESULTS

Here I will discuss my analysis and results. I will present my findings focusing on one research question at a time. I will also separate the processing of each question so that I will first provide examples from the novel and after that discuss how the historical data compares to the view presented in the novel. I chose this consecutive approach instead of a parallel one in order to ease the processing of the results.

6.1 Gender roles inside a marriage

The novel indicates that in the mid 20th century men and women had different roles within a family. Especially men's role as the one who works is emphasised. Example 1 illustrates this:

Example 1

My father's quite wealthy, though. I don't know how much he makes – he's never discussed that stuff with me – but I imagine quite a lot. He's a corporation lawyer. Those

boys really haul it in. Another reason I know he's quite well off, he's always investing money in shows on Broadway. They always flop, though, and it drives my mother crazy when he does it.

(The Catcher in the Rye, 113)

The example indicates that Holden sees his father as the one who earns money for the family. It is also apparent that Holden's father earns quite a lot, so his family is not poor. However, Holden himself does not seem to be very interested in money. The vocabulary he uses in this example even indicates slight contempt towards his father and his profession. The sentence "Those boys really haul it in" includes irony, which is easy to notice when considering Holden's constant irritation caused by "rich phonies".

Example 1 also suggests that Holden's mother does not work. If that was the case, it would make sense that she is concerned about the way Holden's father is investing their money, because that money is most likely all that the family earns. What also supports the image of Holden's mother being a housewife is the fact that there were no extracts in the novel telling about her working. However, Holden does not state at any point that his mother would be a housewife, either. But some extracts do suggest that Holden sees his mother, and women in general, to be the parent who takes care of the children and is more involved in their lives. In example 2 Holden is talking about his dead little brother Allie:

Example 2

He was terrifically intelligent. His teachers were always writing letters to my mother, telling her what a pleasure it was having a boy like Allie in their class.

(The Catcher in the Rye, 41-42)

The example above suggests that teachers were contacting the mother rather than the father in issues concerning children's education. This reinforces the image of women as housewives, as also does Holden's observation illustrated in example 3:

Example 3

Anyway, it was pretty Christmasy all of a sudden. A million little kids were downtown with their mothers, getting on and off buses and coming in and out of stores.

(The Catcher in the Rye, 204)

The observation clearly indicates that mothers, not fathers, are spending time with their children. And since fathers are not spending time with their families, it could be inferred that

they are at work. In addition to his own observations, Holden also sees popular culture as supporting women's role as housewives, as illustrated in example 4:

Example 4

If I'm on a train at night, I can usually even read one of those dumb stories in a magazine without puking. You know. One of those stories with a lot of phoney, lean-jawed guys named David in it, and a lot of phoney girls named Linda or Marcia that are always lighting all the goddam Davids' pipes for them.

(*The Catcher in the Rye*, 57)

It can be concluded from the example that the popular culture of the era pictures women as nice housewives whose most important mission is to please and serve their husbands, while husbands relax and smoke their pipes. This is also visible in other parts of the novel, as Holden discusses movies and their presentation of gender roles. It is also apparent that Holden criticizes this view, as can be detected from his word choices in the previous example. He calls the stories *dumb* and uses words like *phoney* and *goddam* when describing the characters of the stories. The vocabulary in the example is clearly negative and expresses attitudes.

My historical data both confirms and questions the view of men as breadwinners and women as housewives. According to Brown (1992: 238), "women were the world's source of emotional nurturance and moral idealism as well as of food, clothing, and medical care. Men, on the other hand, were the source of financial security". This statement is from an article telling about middle-class family culture and gender differences at the beginning of the 20th century. It does not go as far as to the 1950s, but it does offer insight into the family culture of middle-class before the war. If the period of time of the novel and this statement were the same, the view of the novel would be confirmed by this historical data. But as the historical data illustrates family culture few decades prior to the novel's setting, more data is required in order to determine whether Salinger's vision of family correlates with reality or not.

Gilbert (1986: 57), who presents American family in the 1940s and 1950s, offers different perspectives into gender roles inside a marriage by noting that during the Second World War women were forced to enter the workforce. However, after the war ended in 1945, men returned home and into the workforce, forcing millions of women "out of the factory and into the home" (ibid.). Many women returned voluntarily to take care of the home, but some were forced back home against their will (ibid. 63). The message was clear: women belonged home. Popular culture of the era "pictured domesticity as the most rewarding goal in life" for women

(ibid.). And not only were women supposed to take care of the home, but they also had another roles to fulfil. Gilbert (1986: 64) describes the roles as follows: “As mother, she guided the socialization of her children; as family manager, she directed the consumption of new household products; as sexual partner and seductress, she cemented the loyalty and attention of her husband.” This is in accordance with the examples provided by the novel. Example 4 in particular underlines the importance of pleasing one’s husband.

Also Tallack (1991: 287) presents similar views concerning women at work. According to him, 36 percent of the workforce in 1945 consisted of women but already in 1947, when men had returned home and claimed back their jobs, the figure had dropped into 28 percent. Besides the fact that men returned into workforce in masses, the decrease of women at work was also due to the fact that “economy demanded consumers rather than producers” (ibid.).

Forcing women out of the workforce after the war is in accordance with Salinger’s view of women as housewives. However, Gilbert (1986: 68) also presents a change in attitudes when entering the 1950s. According to him, the 1950s was a decade of large increase in women’s employment. Furthermore, married women in particular started to work during the 1950s (ibid.). Gilbert sees this to be a result of chase of prosperity. This does not seem to be in accordance with the gender roles that Salinger portrays in his novel. However, it must be noted that Holden’s family clearly belongs to middle- or upper-class, and among those groups working mothers might not have been as common as among lower income families.

6.2 The institution of marriage

Holden’s view of marriage is quite sad. He perceives the marriage of his parents and also of other people as unhappy. In example 5, Holden recalls how his former teacher used to take the pupils into a museum quite often. He discusses how the museum would always be the same but he himself would every time be different somehow:

Example 5

You’d just be different, that’s all. You’d have an overcoat on this time. Or the kid that was your partner in line the last time had got scarlet fever and you’d have a new partner. Or you’d have a substitute taking the class, instead of Miss Aigletinger. Or you’d heard your

mother and father having a terrific fight in the bathroom. Or you'd just passed by one of those puddles in the street with gasoline rainbows in them.

(The Catcher in the Rye, 127-128)

The example implies that Holden was used to hearing his parents fight when he was a child. He contrasts their fighting with little things like having a coat on or seeing a rainbow in a puddle. That suggests that his parents were fighting a lot, and it was something Holden considered as normal and perhaps even as an everyday activity.

Holden also observes other marriages in the novel besides that of his parents, and even though he does not clearly state that married people are unhappy, it can be derived from his notions, as illustrated in example 6, where he is visiting his former teacher Mr Antolini:

Example 6

He turned around and yelled out to the kitchen. 'Lillian! How's the coffee coming?' Lillian was Mrs Antolini's first name. 'It's all ready,' she yelled back. 'Is that Holden? Hello, Holden!' 'Hello, Mrs Antolini!' You were always yelling when you were there. That's because the both of them were never in the same room at the same time.

(The Catcher in the Rye, 189)

The example illustrates that Holden has noticed that Mr and Mrs Antolini do not seem to enjoy each other's company very much, but Holden is not making any judgements. As in example 5, it appears that he perceives this kind of behaviour from married people as normal.

Examples 5 and 6 suggest that unhappy marriages were common at that time, and that people rather stayed unhappily married than got divorced. However, there is one mention of divorce in the novel. It is presented in example 7, where Holden is talking about Jane, a girl he used to be neighbours with:

Example 7

'Her mother and father were divorced. Her mother was married again to some booze hound,' I said..... 'She had a lousy childhood. I'm not kidding.'

(The Catcher in the Rye, 36)

It cannot be derived from the example why Holden thinks Jane had "a lousy childhood". It could be because of her parents' divorce and her mother's new marriage, or because Jane's parents were probably fighting before they got divorced. Either way, Holden does not see

divorce as anything unusual. That would suggest that in the 1950s divorces were already quite common.

In spite of the sad models of marriage which Holden has seen, he still believes in the institution of marriage and hopes to get married one day. This is illustrated in example 8, where Holden is trying to convince Sally, a girl he has dated, to run away with him:

Example 8

‘We’ll stay in these cabin camps and stuff like that till the dough runs out. Then, when the dough runs out, I could get a job somewhere and we could live somewhere with a brook and all, and, later on, we could get married or something. I could chop all our wood in the winter-time and all. Honest to God, we could have a terrific time!’

(The Catcher in the Rye, 138)

In the example, Holden is describing his ideal relationship with a woman. It is obvious that he would like to live far away from the city and all of its noise; it would just be Holden and his woman. Perhaps he feels that a relationship cannot work in the middle of modern temptations. However, it is worth noticing that even though Holden has criticized the traditional gender roles inside a marriage, he still imagines his marriage to follow those traditions; he would be the one who provides for his wife.

When comparing the results with the historical data, it is obvious that the historical data confirms the assumption provided by the novel of divorces being quite general at the time, and particularly during and right after the Second World War. Gilbert (1986: 57) presents statistics which indicate that after the war, in 1946, divorce rates peaked, rising up to 18.2 percent of all existing marriages from previous year’s 14.3 percent. However, after that, the percentage dropped steadily and was only 10.2 in 1950. The sudden rise of the figures indicates problems caused by the returning soldiers. As Gilbert (1986: 57) states, the “readjustment often proved difficult for both men and women”. This explains the sudden peak in the divorce rates.

However, after the war, also marriage rates increased. According to Gilbert (1986: 58), in 1950 almost 70 percent of men and 67 percent of women over fifteen were married. Compared to previous and also following decades, the marriage rates were extremely high in

the 1940s and 1950s. The marriage boom and lower average marriage ages lead to a baby boom, which changed the American family culture. (ibid.).

In spite of the brief period of optimism caused by the marriage boom and decrease in divorce rates, the 1950s was characterized by a concern towards the institution of marriage and the family unit. One symptom of this was the enormous expansion in the need of marriage counselling and family therapy (Gilbert 1986: 62). Many depictions of marriage in the 1950s found from literature and entertainment industry portrayed marriage as a hollow institution held together by customs and a struggle to achieve sexual pleasure (Gilbert 1986: 72). Very often women, who were “trapped in unrewarding” marriages, were blamed for the broken marriages and families (ibid.). The reasoning behind this argument was that married women who started to work changed the family culture, and not for better (ibid. 68; Tallack 1991: 288). This controversial and partially desperate image of marriage in the 1950s is quite similar to the image presented in the novel. People often stayed in unhappy marriages, but divorces were quite common as well.

6.3 Child-parent relationship

Even though Holden does not see his parents from face to face even once during the novel, he does mention them, or at least his mother, quite frequently. I emphasize Holden’s mentions of his mother, because he talks about her more often than about his father. Also when Holden mentions someone else’s parents, it is usually the mother who he speaks of. I will illustrate this point in examples 9 and 10. In example 9 Holden talks about his prep school:

Example 9

We always had the same meal on Saturday nights at Pencey. It was supposed to be a big deal, because they gave you steak. I’ll bet a thousand bucks the reason they did that was because a lot of guys’ parents came up to school on Sunday, and old Thurmer probably figured everybody’s mother would ask their darling boy what he had for dinner last night, and he’d say, ‘Steak’.

(The Catcher in the Rye, 39)

It is interesting how Holden first talks about parents, but then specifies that mothers are the ones who are more interested and involved in their sons’ lives. This can also be detected in the way Holden speaks of his own parents; he mentions his father for the first time on page 90. Until that point he has only talked about his mother or his parents. Also after that point there

are only few mentions of his father. As discussed in relation to discourse analysis and narrative analysis, repetition and frequency of mentions are important indicators when determining which issues are emphasized over others. By that definition, it could be argued that Holden is closer to his mother than to his father, because he talks about her more often.

Example 9 also illustrates Holden's opinion on how mothers treat and perceive their sons. The expression "darling boy" indicates that, in Holden's opinion, mothers are more affectionate towards their children than fathers, and maybe even inclined to spoil their children.

Similar to the previous example, example 10 also presents Holden's custom to emphasize mothers over fathers:

Example 10

Boy, it began to rain like a bastard. In *buckets*, I swear to God. All the parents and mothers and everybody went over and stood right under the roof of the carousel...

(*The Catcher in the Rye*, 219)

In the example, Holden is watching his sister Phoebe ride in a carousel and is also observing other people around him. Again Holden already mentions parents, but then emphasizes the presence of mothers. On the other hand, it seems as if Holden wants to make a separation between a parent and a mother. This gives a negative impression of his view of mothers. However, when considering his previous mentions of mothers, I am more inclined to believe that with this statement, Holden does exactly the opposite. By emphasizing the presence of mothers, he indicates that, in his opinion, parents equal mothers.

Holden's mentions concerning his own mother are usually quite brief. He does not directly talk about her, but rather makes notions how she would react to certain things and situations. This is illustrated in example 11, where Holden decides not to go home yet, and in example 12, where he imagines dying:

Example 11

Then, on Wednesday, I'd go home all rested up and feeling swell. I figured my parents probably wouldn't get old Thurmer's letter saying I'd been given the axe till maybe Tuesday or Wednesday. I didn't want to go home or anything till they got it and thoroughly digested it and all. I didn't want to be around when they *first* got it. My mother gets very hysterical. She's not too bad after she gets something thoroughly digested, though.

(*The Catcher in the Rye*, 55)

Example 12

Anyway, I kept worrying that I was getting pneumonia, with all those hunks of ice in my hair, and that I was going to die. I felt sorry for my mother and father. Especially my mother, because she still isn't over my brother Allie yet. I kept picturing her not knowing what to do with all my suits and athletic equipment and all.

(The Catcher in the Rye, 161)

In example 11 Holden, once again, speaks of his parents and his mother, but not specifically of his father. The example also indicates that Holden perceives his mother as the one who would get more upset because of his failure. This suggests that he knows his mother better than his father, and is able to predict how she will react in certain situations. Example 12 also suggests the same, and in addition to that, it also indicates that Holden does not wish to upset or hurt her mother.

The extracts concerning Holden's father usually portray him as being the disciplinarian of the family. It is also suggested that he wishes Holden to educate himself well, as illustrated in example 13:

Example 13

All those Ivy League bastards look alike. My father wants me to go to Yale, or maybe Princeton, but I swear, I wouldn't go to one of those Ivy League colleges if I was dying, for God's sake.

(The Catcher in the Rye, 90)

As mentioned earlier, this mention on the page 90 is the first time Holden speaks of his father alone, instead of talking about his parents. This gives the image of a distant father who has great plans for his son, regardless of the son's own wishes. And in this case, it is obvious that Holden does not agree with his father in the matter concerning Holden's education and future. The disciplinary side of Holden's father is presented in example 14, where Holden is discussing the possible consequences of his expulsion with Phoebe:

Example 14

'Daddy'll *kill* you.' Boy, she really gets something on her mind when she gets something on her mind. 'No, he won't. The worst he'll do, he'll give me hell again, and then he'll send me to that goddam military school. That's all he'll do to me...'

(The Catcher in the Rye, 173)

The example suggests that Holden's father has threatened to send him to a military school even before he got expelled from Pencey. It also indicates that Holden's father will be very angry with him, at least Phoebe seems to believe that. What could be concluded from the two previous examples is that Holden disagrees with his father in many things, and that their relationship is not very close but rather distant and formal.

My historical data confirms the image supported by the novel and suggests that children and adolescents of that time were closer to their mothers than their fathers. Griswold (1992: 257) refers to surveys conducted in the 1920s and 1930s, and states that 76 percent of nine-year-old boys and 68 percent of girls of same age preferred their mothers when asked which parent they liked better. This preference was also detected among urban adolescents, when asking to what extent they confide in their parents. The majority of both boys and girls stated that they confide in their mother rather than their father. (ibid.). Griswold (1992: 257) also refers to a study conducted in the 1930s, in which children were asked to describe their both parents in ten words. According to the results, children associated "instrumental terms", such as "plays with me", with their fathers and "affective terms", such as "love", with their mothers (ibid.). Even though the studies have been conducted before the 1940s and 1950s, there is no reason to doubt that the results would have changed dramatically in one or two decades.

Because of the above-mentioned studies and their results, the relationship of mother and child interested researchers more than the relationship of father and child in the early 20th century, and was therefore also studied more (Griswold 1992: 271). Griswold (ibid.), who quotes Burgess (1934), states that the mother-child relationship was also of more importance because "the key to a confidential relation with the children lies in the hands of mother." Therefore, it was the relationship with mother which attributed to successful "social compliance, emotional stability, desirable character traits and obedience in the classroom" (Burgess 1934, as quoted by Griswold 1992: 271). As Holden does not possess those qualities, it could be argued that his mother did not succeed in raising him. Regardless of that being true or not, it is clear that Holden prefers his mother over his father and has a closer relationship with her.

7 DISCUSSION

In many sense the fictional and historical data correspond, especially when considering my second and third research questions. The institution of marriage is presented quite similarly in

the novel and in the historical data. Both indicate that divorces were quite common in America in the 1940s and 1950s, and it can also be concluded based on both sources that marriage was going through some major changes and even crisis at the time. The relationship of parents and children is also presented similarly in the novel and in the historical data; American children and adolescents of that era were clearly closer to their mothers than their fathers, even though the novel does indicate a rather distant relationship between Holden and both of his parents. But, as also noted by Geismar (1962: 90), in Holden's case the missing child-parent relationship is replaced by deep affection between siblings.

The first research question concerning gender roles inside a marriage requires more consideration, because the fictional and historical data provide different answers to the question. According to the novel, the traditional view was still valid in the 1940s and 1950s; men were working and women were at home. However, the historical data states that during the 1950s, married women started to enter the workforce in masses. This goes against the view provided by the novel, but there might be an apparent explanation for this; Holden's family, which provided most of the samples concerning the American family culture in this study, is quite wealthy. Therefore, the results indicate how Salinger has portrayed a wealthy, upper-class family after the war. Even though the historical data provided information on the American family on a more generalized level, the results have been affected by the examples from the fictional data, which presented a wealthy family.

As a whole, the American family culture of the mid 20th century is best characterised by controversies. Marriage rates as well as divorce rates peaked after the war, and both optimism and pessimism were in the air. This is also described by Gilbert (1986: 55), who states: "From the 1940s to the 1960s, Americans looked at the family with double vision: with optimism and despair." Gilbert also notes that *The Catcher in the Rye* in particular is a great exemplification of this double vision, as both hopeful and desperate views are present in the novel.

On the whole, I consider my research questions answered. Through careful selection of samples and thorough analysis, a clear image of the American family culture of the 1940s and 1950s as presented by Salinger was formed. Comparison between that view and the one presented in the historical data revealed large resemblance. Even though Salinger's

presentation of the American family is quite sad and also controversial, it mainly seems to be in accordance with the views presented by previous cultural studies concerning the matter.

To conclude, it must be emphasized that the findings would have probably been different if the author had written about a poor family. In the 1940s and 1950s, there were differences between upper-class and lower-class people's way of life, as there is today. If one would like to get more inclusive results telling about the American family culture of the era, further study should be conducted with a focus on the lower-class family of the period, since this study has presented the family culture of upper-class people. As well as portraying a wealthy family, the novel and this study have also been focused on urban families. To change the perspective and study rural family culture would also provide different insights into the matter. Comparing the family culture of that time with modern family culture or family culture in another society would also be interesting.

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