

**CHAPTER – II**

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This chapter intends to compare *Kosla* and *The Catcher in the Rye* at the thematic level. As a point of departure, we may use here a generalization that both Bhalchandra Nemade and J. D. Salinger deal with the common theme of contemporary alienation in their respective novels.

Dedicated to 'ninety out of hundred', *Kosla* begins with two quotations- a sutra by Shri Chakradhar and a Tibetan prayer- both of which are indicative of its thematic thrust, while the title *Kosla* (meaning, cocoon) encapsulates the gist of the novel. Though literally it designates a stage of transition in the metamorphosis of silkworm, as a titular metaphor it opens manifold possibilities of meaning, (we shall explore them later in chapter three) *Kosla* being an unconventional or more precisely an anti-conventional work of art, has no story or plot in the traditional sense of the term. It presents- retrospectively and through first person narration- the bizarre life and world of a twenty-five-year-old youth, Pandurang Sangavikar, who vacillates between Sangavi and Pune, the former being his native place, a village in the Khandesh region and the latter the so called educational and cultural capital of Maharashtra. Prima-facie, it appears to be a story of a youth who, having his schooling at his native place is sent to Pune to take his college education and expectedly make a remarkable career, but returns as a 'failure'. However, looked through the eyes of Pandurang himself, the family he is born in and the society-both rural and urban-he is circumscribed by are almost absolutely

unsuitable for an individual like him; or else, he himself must be an under-socialized misfit in such a society. We have to analyse in detail how Bhalchandra Nemade has depicted the process of alienation of his protagonist and compare it with the parallel thematic current through J.D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye*.

*The Catcher in the Rye*- Salinger's only novel to date-depicts the three-day life-piece of an utterly bored and equally confused adolescent boy, Holden Caulfield, who is dismissed from school. Unwilling to return home until Wednesday- when he is expected for Christmas vacation – wanders aimlessly in the streets, hotels and nightclubs of New York city and desperately struggles to kill time. Various factors like physical and psychological problems of adolescence, his inability to perceive the gap between the ideal and the reality, the conflict between his acute desire for companionship and communion on one hand, and utter boredom and disgust the world he lives in on the other, push Holden in to the abyss of painful estrangement. But he haphazardly fancies for himself the role of a 'Catcher in the Rye' who wishes to save innocent children from falling over a 'crazy cliff' of adulthood, which he equates with multi-sided and disgusting phoniness. Alternatively, he also toys with the idea of being a monk, which is soon replaced by the idea of escaping in the West and living the life of deaf-mute.

In the further discussion we shall come to know that the feeling of disaffiliation, having its source in the childhood of both the heroes assumes alarming proportions in their formative and the most difficult stage of life-

adolescence *Kosla*, as mentioned earlier, is a chronological recollection of Pandurang Sangavikar. Though he considers only his age and name is worth telling, he recalls his de-normalized and fear-stricken childhood in the opening part of the novel. "My whole childhood passed in awe of my father",<sup>1</sup> he bemoans. In a family over-dominated by a 'wicked' and 'cruel' father – who slaps Pandurang frequently whether he is at fault or not, who crushes his sense of innocence by deterring him from planting flowers, playing flute, playing a role in a drama- his life is far from happy. So, though he dare not see 'eye to eye' with his father, his rebellious spirit seeks an outlet in his struggle to kill the rats in his 'huge old house', when he finds them ruthlessly playing with the life of innocent baby-hare.

Pandurang's mother, however, is an antithesis to his father. "For my mother though I felt great love,"<sup>2</sup> says he. Nonetheless, his 'great love' does not fully compensate for the fear of 'sturdy' father. To add to his plight, he is often pestered and intimidated by a halwai's son for no overt reason whatsoever. Interestingly, Pandurang delineates 'terrific dreams of a set pattern' as an introduction to himself. In the dream-world, he is a creature like a horse or something and he has to run at a dreadful speed till his chest is cracked or he is a house among other big houses which start moving further and crush smaller houses noiselessly or he is a cactus from waist up or a boulder, enormous like an elephant, tumbling over and over and smashing to bits. Although Pandurang says he himself cannot make sense of such dreams, they seem to be a fearful nocturnal extension of a child de-normalized life.

If Pandurang Sangavikar's childhood can be described as a patch of fearful existence, Holden Caulfield's is 'lousy' to his own word. For him it is lousy to such an extent that he does even feel like going in to it for at least two reasons. "In the first place, that stuff bores me and in the second place, my parents would have about two haemorrhages apiece if I told anything pretty personal about them, they are quite touchy about anything like that, especially my father."<sup>3</sup> Similarly, Pandurang also does not want to reveal much private about his family his afterthought runs: "a person who tells such things usually happens to be a fool, a listener, for instance, a crook."<sup>4</sup> Although Holden is not interested in sharing with us 'David Copperfield kind of crap' what we gather from his indirect mentions that he too, like Pandurang - whether or not to the same degree- has fear of his father, which is hardly redeemed by love of his mother. Unlike Pandurang's mother- who is typically Indian so far as she dotes on her 'only son'- Holden's gives a parting kiss as says 'Good Night' to him. Thus, a kind of emotional mal-nourishment creates a sense of disaffiliation – literally, detachment from father- in the minds of both Pandurang and Holden. Consequently, The younger sisters, Mani and Phoebe became the centers of emotional gravitation in their respective lives.

Pandurang is a twenty-five-year-old 'youth'. What characteristics does a normal youth possess? For instance, (not in a Nemadian sense), the youth feels/ must feel attraction for the opposite sex which presumably springs from obvious biological transformation. Contrary to this expectation, Pandurang does not seem to have any sexual attraction. Actually, his mind is filled with

utter disgust for sex since his childhood. When, at Pola-the bull festival- he sees the bare body of his father, it seems obscene to him; again, when his mother assists at the delivery of her own daughter, i.e. Pandurang's sister, he finds it repulsive. At college, he is embarrassed to see the beautiful girls in transparent clothes. "Right to the end, I kept my character, my honour intact. I came across so many girls, but I didn't misbehave ever. But even as entertainment, I found girls a nuisance generally"<sup>5</sup>, thus he boasts. He chooses to safeguard his virginity because he finds the prevalent way of 'falling' in love terrifying. "The way love proceeds in film and fiction, so it seems in reality too. This is terrifying. There is no novelty in love anymore."<sup>6</sup> He has not found a girl that would really 'please' him. So, alternatively, he seeks a match for him in his friend Suresh. One should summarily dub this particular gesture of his as a symptom of sexual perversion; rather it is a sign of sexual frustration caused by the mundane nature of the act. Thus, sex has an alienating effect on Pandurang's mind.

On the other hand, his schoolmate Eknath involves in sexual intercourse with several girls. He runs away with a girl from the troupe of tribal Korcu folk and no sooner he safely returns home without the girl, his parents see him through marriage arranging a new bride. Pai, another friend of Pandurang, is no doubt a complete womaniser. Moreover, some 'sincere-looking' girls from Pandurang's class respond readily to Pai's sexual advances.

At a later stage, when Pandurang realizes the meaninglessness of life itself, his disgust for sex further intensifies since he views it the root-cause of

the unbearable cycle of birth and death. So, reluctantly as he responds to the marriage proposal, he asks his parents to find such a bride who would be incapable of bearing children! Again, he feels Mani's untimely death has curtailed a long line of progeny. Thus, far from having any kind of attraction for sex-which would well be acceptably 'normal' in any youth of his age – Pandurang finds it very nasty.

On the other hand, Holden – a sixteen-year-old American adolescent- has a confused attitude to sex. “ In my mind, I am probably the biggest sex maniac you ever saw”<sup>7</sup> he admits. Although it would be nothing but natural for an adolescent to be keenly interested in sex, Holden keeps asking 'typical Caulfield questions' and annoys Old Luce, an intellectual boy gives a lot of 'sex talk'. He has a 'non-sexual' attachment with Jane Gallagher, who, he thinks, would remain a virgin 'forever'. So, naturally, Holden attempts to punish Stradlater, 'the king of perverts', for the violation of Jane's chastity as soon as he hints at having sexual intercourse with her. Among other perverts include Mr. Spencer- his History teacher, who pats on his head at midnight most probably out of pity, and a man and woman in a hotel –who squirt water over each other's face. In the world of such perverts, though he calls himself to be the only 'normal' person, he manages to be so by way repressing his sexual desire. This repression of Holden's sexual desire, as Peter Shaw contends, “is manifested in not only his chaste relationship with Jane but also in his wish to become a monk, his preference for the two (non-sexual) he meets over the other women and his dismissal of the prostitute sent to his hotel room.”<sup>8</sup>

However, we should ignore the fact Holden regards sex as a physical and spiritual experience. This being so, the sexual pleasure depends on who one is doing it with. More probably, that is the reason why he refrains from engaging himself in a sexual intercourse with the prostitute. Merely at physical level Holden finds sex alienating.

One may now jump to the conclusion that both Pandurang and Holden-protagonists of the two novels under consideration- do not 'grow' mature as far as sex is concerned. However, a piercing look in to their mindset may reveal to us under the superficial sexual immaturity of adolescence lies a two-fold search for childlike tenderness and spiritual cleanliness in the coitus. Nevertheless, the manner in which the two heroes seek the satisfaction of their difficult-to-manage carnal desire differs strikingly. As we mentioned earlier, Pandurang seeks sexual gratification by kissing his friend Suresh for he has failed in getting (but, did he really search for one?) a girl who could really 'please' him. Conversely, Holden-who would hardly tolerate Pandurang's homosexual gesture, which is already clear from the 'Mr. Spencer episode'-seeks it by giving Jane a 'chaste' kiss.

Even though Pandurang appears to be inflexible in his attitude to sex, his ambition in life undergoes a sea change with growing knowledge and experience. "That way I myself used to feel often that I must become great. I mean, in my childhood I used to feel that I should fight battles like Bheema with a mace and annihilate all my enemies. Later that I should make inventions like Thomas Alva Edison, later still, I might be able to create witty jokes like



Gadkari, the playwright. While in primary school I'd feel I must become a schoolmaster and 'Sir' at high-school."<sup>9</sup>

At college, he finds his aim and struggle nothing as compared to grand aspirations of his classmates. For instance, Tambe aspires to win the Nobel Prize and Deshmukh wants to establish equality in the world (forget that he also wants to play violin and 'conquer' girls!). True, Pandurang does not strive to conquer girls due to his uncommon and slightly prejudiced attitude to them; but a disturbing sense of inferiority complex rooted in his rustic background triggers off his struggle to 'shine'. With the strong support of Ihalkarangikar, a fellow-hosteller, he gets elected the secretary of 'Debating Association', 'Variety Programmes', and most importantly, 'Hostel Mess'. This 'achievement' boosts his confidence so much that he pats on his own back saying: "I am shining so much even in the intermediate year, so how much more will I shine later on!"<sup>10</sup> This shining spirit of his inflates no more when he slips in to the financial crisis due to over-expenditure in the annual social gathering and mismanagement of the 'mess mess'.

Disillusioned thus, he goes to the other extreme choosing not to achieve anything at all. His preference for inaction and non-achievement reflects in his academic record as well. As Prof. Gune says, Pandurang is a 'bright' but 'careless' student. Notably, however, his carelessness does not spring from otherwise natural tendency of youths but from his unique awareness that the kind of education he receives is hardly relevant to life. That is why he tells

himself: "Let me not get a first class in the exam. What use were mere marks going to be in one's life?"<sup>11</sup>

Let us turn now to Holden. What does he aspire to do in his life? Well, he himself admits that he is a 'moron' who denies growing up. He does not want to be a scientist for he knows he is not good at science; nor does he want to be a lawyer like his father. When his ten-year-old sister Phoebe points out: "you don't like anything that's happening,"<sup>12</sup> he defensively blurts out what he would like to do-an aspiration which is based on a wrong memory of the line, "If a body 'catch' (actually, 'meet') a body coming through the rye", by Robert Burn. He describes his dream thus: "I keep picturing all these little kids playing some game in this big field of rye and all. Thousands of little kids and nobody's around -nobody big I mean-except me. And I'm standing on the edge of some crazy cliff. What I have to do, I have to catch everybody if they start to go over the cliff- I mean if they are running and they don't look where they are going I have to come out from somewhere and 'catch' them. That's all I'd do all day. I'd just be the catcher in the rye and all. I know it's crazy but that's the only thing I'd really like to be. I know it's crazy."<sup>13</sup>

With this magnanimous dream of Holden, however, rivals another idea in his mind: the idea of 'hitch-hiking' his way somewhere out West and doing a job at a filling station pretending to be a deaf-mute. Further, he fancies of getting a selfsame wife. In case they had children, he proposes to hide them somewhere and teach them himself. What is common to both of these

ambitions is the desire to 'save' children. Also, an idea of becoming a monk passes his mind.

Thus, it is clear that unlike Pandurang, Holden does not want to 'acquire personality' nor 'shine' in his school. He does not seem to prefer passivity either. On the other hand, he fancies for himself a role of a 'benevolent protector,'<sup>14</sup> as Tom Davis says. However, it can not be denied that Holden 'holds' unrealizable aspirations compared to that of Pandurang.

Interestingly, Pandurang's finally self-chosen withdrawal in to inertness and Holden's day-dreaming are both a result of their common distaste for multifarious phoniness. Pandurang sees that phoniness or hypocrisy is reigning everywhere from his village to city and in every domain of action ranging from agriculture to education. In fact, it begins from his home itself. His father lives a double-standard life. As a 'varkari' he goes to temple everyday and is madly after money too. He asks his son-that is, Pandurang-to apply for freeship despite his sound economic condition. No wonder, the delicate sense of morality of a school-boy is hurt as he anticipates reprimand from his teacher who teaches 'moral tales' of Saney Guruji. Again, his granny pretends to be over-burdened with work and hates his mother for no reason. His home is nothing but a miniature of his village. Talking about the people in his village he says: "All these people are selfish. I can't get along with them. Mean to say, take any farmer who spends his life contemplating how to extract whatever little cash he can from some source, and how to squeeze seventeen annas in to every rupee of sixteen annas. Such people little care about the aged folk and the

death of infants, especially girls.”<sup>15</sup> Further, they seek to enhance their social status by sending their children to city for education and by giving more gold to their daughters at wedding.

After he comes to Pune, he feels that city life is relatively better for there he can come across at least a few ‘like-minded’ people. Besides, there are no complications like buffaloes to milk. Before long, however, he realizes that city life too is not free from problems. In the city people live even on second or third floor (they have severed their ties with the Mother Earth). Unlike villagers who little bother about whether the bus arrives on time, people in the city curse the administration even if the bus arrives a bit late. More sadly, the urban women plaster their faces with cosmetic powder just like prostitutes.

At his college, he is exposed to various other manifestations of phoniness. Prof. Patwardhan cuts the same joke every year while teaching a particular English lesson. A ‘learned’ professor of Sanskrit just goes on reciting shlokas without analyzing or explaining. On the other hand, ‘an awfully feeble’ professor of Marathi puts his students in an awkward position by asking them a question: “See, you chaps, you have come in to the Intermediate class, haven’t you? Now what’s left that is worth teaching you in this poem, see?”<sup>16</sup> There is also a career-minded professor who has elevated him his earlier position as a school teacher by giving exams externally. So, bored with the teaching of both raw, under-prepared teachers and also scholarly but unenthusiastic teachers he tries to amuse himself and his friends by parodying lines by famous poets. He also parodies activities like arranging debate, guest-lectures, etc. in which

speakers harp on grand issues like 'War and World Peace,' 'Social Education and Women', 'Question of the Minorities,' etc.

A novel mode of attacking the phoniness in the world in general emerges when Suresh and Pandurang fancy themselves to be historians of nine-thousandth century of the Christian era and speak about the 'bygone' twentieth century. They sarcastically comment upon almost all the manifestations of 'bogus' society including so-called higher centers of learning, Government, Nations, Marriage, 'modern' styles of clothing, travelling and what not. Pandurang's innate sense of morality coupled with his sense of humour enables him to attack the omnipresent hypocrisy and hollowness underlying the superficially sophisticated way of modern life.

Like Pandurang, Holden also has strong disgust for everything 'phony'. Robert Jacobs tries to define what is phony in Holden's eyes, thus: "What is phony is not just what is wrong, 'phony' is Holden's label for the consciously artful, for those who work to maintain a pose, for those who do not perform natural immediate acts as children do."<sup>17</sup> From this point view, Holden finds phonies everywhere. He finds them in all the three schools he was admitted to and soon dismissed from. For instance, Old Hass, the headmaster- who treats rich parents with undue respect and is insultingly curt with ones who are not so rich- is a phony. Old Ossenburger- whose preaching to the students contradicts with his own conduct- is a phony. Certain things, among others, which deserve this label include Stradlater's technique with girls, the voices of ministers, the words like 'grand' Good Luck', etc. In the society that surrounds Holden,

education is reduced to learning “ to be smart enough to be able to buy a goddam Cadillac someday”. Besides, as Holden says, “you keep making believe you give a damn if the football team loses and all you do is talk about girls and liquor and sex all day.”<sup>18</sup> Dan Wakefield points out another aspect of phoniness: absence of love. Being madly after excessive materialism, people shower love on ‘things’ rather than on ‘human beings’. They become ‘crazy’ about cars. As a result of this over-dependence on machines, human life is completely de-naturalized. Holden is repulsed by the idea using an elevator even when somebody just wants to go out. Holden’s father- strikingly, like Pandurang’s- is after material prosperity. Therefore, instead of saving innocent guys’ life - which is his primary duty as lawyer as Holden rightly thinks – he strives in everyway to make lot of money, buy a car and earn ‘name’. Naturally, this creates a sense of disaffiliation in the mind of Holden.

Thus, Holden attacks the artificiality, hypocrisy and the absence of genuine love in the American society by using the nastiest word in his limited adolescent dictionary: ‘phony’. It is worth-noting here that both Pandurang and Holden attribute the humanizing values like innocence, genuine love and the like almost exclusively to children, the only honourable exception in Holden’s eyes being the two nuns. Both Nemade and Salinger seem to believe that it is the society, which corrupts its new members in the process of socialization, which is actually the process of alienating dehumanization.

Alienated from his family, friends and the entire society, Pandurang feels alienated from himself. He, then, philosophizes on the very nature of life.

He sees that life is not only momentary but also devoid of any purpose and meaning. "Someone has flung us down from above, to no purpose, so that we might live here like tenants. This body is rented, a hundred-year lease."<sup>19</sup> The 'someone', as Pandurang dreams, is hideous magician.

Pandurang's sense of alienation is deepened by the untimely and painful death of his younger sister, Mani. Unable to comprehend the reason why a barely five-year-old girl's life should be curtailed so cruelly, he becomes emotionally violent. 'Blazed with anger' he vents: "I'll murder father. I'll kill Grandma. Then I will set fire to that house. Spare only mother."<sup>20</sup> But since it is nothing but impossible for him, he brings a 'flame-yellow' sari and burns it after cutting it up in to pieces. Later, on his trip to Ajanta, however, his sorrow is simply a 'narrow chink of pain' compared to the infinite sorrow of the Buddha. He also awakens to a realization that death makes the departed person 'all-free'. So, Mani is "now free from all else. Free from this, free from that. Colour-free, flesh-free, mind-free, perception free, she is even freedom-free. Only her almost erased misty mind-image with me"<sup>21</sup>, he says. Thus, although Pandurang is extremely bereaved by the death of his sister, he realizes that 'there is no limit to our losing ourselves in this mordant universe of feeling'. This philosophical self-consolation, as it were, apart, Pandurang remains perturbed by the inhumanly casual way in which Mani's death is treated by his parents (that too, his mother!) and other people. He learns that the death of a child, especially, a girl, is almost a non-event for the thick-skinned adults. This brutality of the society-which has an alienating effect on Pandurang- prompts

him to escape in to death. He gets his knife sharpened in order to kill himself by piercing it in to his stomach but changes his mind soon. On another occasion, he fancies, "it must be gorgeous to commit suicide in this sea."<sup>22</sup> However, it must be taken in to account that despite his twofold detachment from sickening nature of worldly life and fascination for self-assumed 'all-free' state after death, he does not dare follow the path of Girdhar, who impulsively commits suicide thereby escaping from similar life-crisis.

Apparently, Holden, being younger than Pandurang, is less philosophical about life and its problems. He does not give highly philosophical solace to his heart when he is traumatized by the death of his brother, Allie. Hardly able to survive the shock of bereavement, he chooses to sleep in the garage the night Allie dies and keeps breaking all the windowpanes until his hands are badly hurt. However, his emotional violence is limited to self-injury; it does not assume so alarming a proportion as to think of destroying others. As we have noted earlier, Pandurang at least 'thinks' of killing of his father and Grandma. May be, by doing so Pandurang wants to destroy the predominating age-old patriarchal system (ironically enough, women also-like Pandurang's Grandma- are conditioned to support it) - of Indian society, which treats the life and death of females so casually. Holden does share his desire for self-extinction with his big Indian brother, Pandurang. But he drops the idea of committing suicide not for lack of adequate courage- as does Pandurang- but for a different reason. He figures out how people will come to his funeral and stick him in a goddam cemetery. People will come and



put a bunch of flowers on his goddam stomach on Sunday and all that crap. So, as he realizes that even after escaping in to death he will not be able to go away from ceremonial phoniness, he decides not to die.

Thus far, it should be clear that alienation is the dominant theme in *Kosla*. This theme has many dimensions. Most of the conceptual variants that we took in consideration at the beginning of this chapter such as powerlessness, purposelessness or meaninglessness, normlessness and self-alienation perfectly apply to the theme of *Kosla*. Pandurang realizes that external agents like the patriarchal family and hypocritical society, which demand conformity, whether or not an individual desires it, are controlling his life. Not powerful enough to change unsuitable circumstances - at most he can level ineffective verbal attacks against them - he finally surrenders himself (though, obviously against his will) to the established but 'alien' life-pattern. His sense of alienation is sharpened by his realization that the very nature of life is incomprehensible. If life is fundamentally meaningless or purposeless, it is futile, he thinks, to aim at getting good marks in the examination or material success. He can not 'commit' through active choice to such a momentary and absurd life as the existentialists may expect. His choice is to remain an 'outsider' deep within his heart and somehow pull along his existence for the rest of years (which one does not 'acquire' or 'loose', as he thinks) the way the society may lead or mislead him. So Pandurang is only alienated from his family, college, friends, rural-urban society and the world at large but also from himself.

It should be noted that few literary critics have fully grasped this multi-dimensional theme *Kosla*. Happily, there are a couple of honourable exceptions though. Dr. C.J. Jahagirdar rightly discerns socio-moral and spiritual-existential levels of the theme<sup>23</sup> of alienation in *Kosla*. Prof. Gangadhar Patil compares Nemade's Pandurang to Sartre's Frantz and points out the common 'fore-awareness', as it were, in them about impending alienation after death<sup>24</sup>. Prof. Vasudev Sawant also -in his doctoral thesis on *Kosla*<sup>25</sup> - seems to have come to terms with the total import of alienation in *Kosla*. Now, there is little disagreement that Bhalchandra Nemade expressed the theme of alienation for the first time in the history of Marathi fiction and created in it, as Prof. Gangadhar Patil mentions, the 'myth of anti-hero'<sup>26</sup> through his Pandurang Sangavikar.

As we have discussed, J. D. Salinger also deals with theme of alienation in his novel, *The Catcher in the Rye*. But unlike Pandurang, Holden's feeling alienation is rooted in his critical phase of life- adolescence. Though, he is afraid of growing up he has already lost his childhood. So, already as he has fallen from the 'crazy cliff' - symbolic of undesirable adulthood- he dreams of saving other children. Unable to come to terms with what is real and inevitable, he moves in the world of fancy and illusion. Holden's behaviour could be symptomatic of what Erik Erikson calls 'the prime danger of this age: an exclusively prolonged moratorium'<sup>27</sup>. Nevertheless, it should be noted that E. H. Miller's psychological interpretation – that "Holden's rebelliousness is his only means of dealing with his inability to come to terms with the death of his

brother”<sup>28</sup> - is not satisfactory in that it ignores other aspects of his character like his unsoiled moral vision of a child-centered world. Similarly, Bryan’s comment – that, “Holden is ruled by a suppressed incest wish directed toward his ten-year-old sister Phoebe”<sup>29</sup> - seems to be unjustifiably far-fetched reading Holden’s psychological problem. True, Holden is facing a psychological crisis; but will it be sensible to dismiss his critique of the American society as blabbing of an intolerant and immature adolescent? Albert Fowler seems to be aware of this when he maintains, “the cause of the alienation (of Holden) is placed at the doors of schools, churches, business houses. They are charged with thwarting human aspirations, frustrating conscience and outraging sensibility.”<sup>30</sup>

Interestingly, Salinger ends the tree-day-piece - which is arguably complete in itself- of Holden’s ‘goddam autobiography’ (Holden strongly dislikes this expression!) on a positive note. Prof. Anil Kumar underscores this after discussing Holden’s alienation on the basis of three orientations viz.: necrophilia, narcissism and symbiosis. His comment is worth-quoting at length. He says, “ *The Catcher in the Rye* ends on an affirmative note. Holden, the sensitive, troubled hero of the novel, nervously moving back and forth, finally outgrows his regressive stage.... He realizes that one can not remain forever in a symbiotic state, forever presenting his narcissistic fantasies on others, forever, seeking the symbiotic hand of his mother, forever locating in the museum and the carrousel a permanent stasis in time. His first-person narration of his painful trauma, an honest account of his three-day struggle to his

fragmentation, is a definite proof of his integration with humanity. Far from seeking the enveloping security of symbiosis with Jane Gallagher, who would always keep her kings in back row or being a saviour of children in the innocent fields of rye he is committing himself to the human race in a bond of humanistic love. In his present acceptance of the ineluctable weakness of human beings, he finds nothing human to him.”<sup>31</sup>

Most probably one gets an impression that *Kosla* ends on a negative note. While giving an answer to a question asked in an interview<sup>32</sup> to the effect that why Pandurang has ‘negative attitude’ to things, Nemade has made clear that Pandurang, being committed to what is real, prefers to be genuinely negative rather than fashionably affirmative. Such a genuine negation, as he rightly claims, is more promising. Admittedly, there was an ‘implied idealism’ behind this denial, but it is different from Salingers proposal of an alternative innocent world of children and saints. As Fowler says, “Salinger expresses the alienation by contrasting the child and the adult, early innocence and goodness with later cynicism and corruption on the naturalistic theory that further one goes from purity of the cradle the more tainted one becomes from contact with society.”<sup>33</sup>

*The Catcher in the Rye* and *Kosla* share the theme of alienation at the psychological and socio-moral levels. However, unlike *Kosla*, the alienation in ‘The Catcher’ does not reach the higher spiritual-existential level. Holden, being younger than Pandurang has obviously less mature and philosophical approach to life and its problems. Alienated state of his is simply a phase of

transition as he himself assures his over-anxious teacher. "I'll be all right. I'm just going through a phase right now. Everybody goes through phase and all, don't they?"<sup>34</sup> he asks. So, at the end of the novel, being treated by a 'psychoanalyst guy'. So, Holden's sense of alienation is limited to its conceptual variants like powerlessness, normlessness and self-alienation.

The question whether alienation is artificially transplanted in the Indian soil deserves some discussion. There is no denying the fact that alienation as a theoretical construct got developed in the West. Apart from philosophic-existential and the economic causes, the dehumanizing nature of technological advancement and the two World-wars that the West went through revealed the momentary and hopeless nature of life. This had an alienating effect on human psyche. Though this term alienation was not used, Indian writers have been dealing with such experience. We can trace it back-as do Prof. Gangadhar Patil and Vasudev Sawant- to the 'Abhangas' of Tukaram (to limit our discussion only to Marathi literature), the poems of Keshavsut, and more distinctly to the poems Mardhekar. As for as novel is concerned, it was Nemade, as we noted earlier, who expressed for the first time the disturbing sense of alienation, which was experienced more intensely by his - that is, Post-independence-generation. In an interview, Nemade uncovers the causes of this alienation. According to him the common feeling shared by his generation was that, the preceding generation was luckier in that it had a role to play in the revolution, which took place in the form of freedom movement. In the absence of circumstances that provide a cause to die or live for (Mr.Spencer, Holden's

teacher, says the mark of a immature man is to die for a cause whereas that of a mature man is to live humbly for one, but what if there is no worthy cause at all?) his generation lost its 'competitive spirit' and was rendered inactive. Dr. C.J. Jahagirdar rightly points out the peculiar local situation, which caused the feeling of alienation. He says, "Alienation in *Kosla* is the product of a grassroots crisis; and this crisis can be examined in both sociological terms. In Maharashtra, in the latter half of the nineteenth century, the impact of British liberalism created a middle class generation, which seriously believed that it had a responsible role to play in society. Gradually however the Maharashtra middle-class lost this social conscience and instead cultivated values of material success, careerism, social status and prestige. *Kosla* captures this historical impasse and the contradictions of colonial legacy in the post-Independence period."<sup>35</sup>

To conclude, though 'The Catcher in Rye' and *Kosla* deal with the common theme of alienation, the causes that are responsible for it are peculiarly local.

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- <sup>10</sup> Ibid., P. 68.
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